

Like You, Ruth Steps Up To Help Others

Ruth is the type of person that would give you the shirt off her back. She always leads with kindness and strives to help others. That’s just who she is!

That’s why there were no questions about her stepping in to help raise her 11-year-old grandson. But this big transition has had its bumps along the way. With another mouth to feed, Ruth’s already tight budget is stretched to its limit.

“I had retired to take care of him ... and then he needs school stuff,” Ruth says. “So, I went part time back to my job. I could work full time, but then I have to worry about not being there for him.”

Sadly, the strain on her budget is especially painful in the summer months — when the free school meals her grandson depends on aren’t available.

That’s when she decided to turn to her local food pantry for a little help. To say it’s been a relief for Ruth is an understatement.

“It helps because I end up getting little snacks for him that otherwise I couldn’t afford,” she says. “I feel like he shouldn’t be deprived.”

But what began as a way to bridge the hunger gap became so much more. Ruth now volunteers at her local food pantry twice a week, giving back to the community that helped her family.

“I’ve been given, so I give back,” she says. “I look forward to seeing people because I love to talk. So, it’s really joyful. It keeps me going.”



When times got tough, Ruth wondered how she’d put food on the table for her grandson.

And to those who support Freestore Foodbank, she offers her heartfelt gratitude: “I appreciate every little penny they put in!”

And we do, too! Thank you for helping families like Ruth’s get through the long summer months.

Stay connected to the work you support! Visit us at: freestorefoodbank.org



YOUR LEGACY MAKES A LASTING IMPACT

You can make a lasting impact in the fight against hunger! A gift in your will, trust, or retirement plan is often the easiest way to make a legacy gift and may allow you to make much greater gifts than you could during your lifetime. Please consider Freestore Foodbank as a beneficiary.

For more information, contact Maureen Gregory at donors@freestorefoodbank.org or visit <https://mylegacygift.freestorefoodbank.org/>



CONNECTION

News and information for friends of Freestore Foodbank

MAY 2025

A Life-Changing Difference

Adriane embodies the spirit of giving back to her community

Adriane’s house is never quiet. And that’s a good thing!

Adriane and her husband have seven kids. Their lovely, blended family is a result of Adriane’s vow to keep as many kids out of the foster care system as possible after experiencing the difficulties of the system when she was a child. In total, the couple has helped raise 15 kids. They also have what Adriane calls the “neighborhood house,” opening their door to all local kids who need a place to go.

“Any kids in the neighborhood that need looking after or trying to stay out of trouble, we take them to church,” she says. “If they’re over when we cook, we feed them as well.”

Adriane was in the military for six years and worked as an EMT for another 12 years before health problems — including two strokes — forced her to retire. But that hasn’t kept her from working hard. Now, her real labor of love is making sure these children are cared for.

But feeding dozens of kids in today’s economy is no easy feat, especially during the summer months when there are no school meals they can rely on. That’s why Adriane visits her local pantry to ensure she always has plenty of food to go around.

“With how much stuff costs, this is a very big



Adriane and her daughter, Zoe, visit their local food pantry.

help,” she says. “Having this means that none of the children we come in contact with or in our household go hungry.”

Adriane makes sure all the kids who come and go from her house know the importance of looking out for others, too.

“Even when you can’t do anything, at the very least you can feed them. And of course, I teach my kids that. So this is a huge blessing, being able to feed somebody and make sure that their belly’s not hungry, just so they can get to the next day. It makes a difference,” she says. And for all those kids, that difference is life-changing!

Thank you for making pantries like the one Adriane visits possible. Because of your gifts, so many children and neighbors can live healthier, happier lives.

Inside



KURT’S CORNER
A Message From Our President & CEO
2



Childhood Hunger Is a Reality
2



Unilever’s Legacy of Compassion
3



Like You, Ruth Steps Up
4



Kurt's
Corner

A Message From Our President & CEO

Summer is just around the corner! Many of us — especially children — are starting to think about vacations, swimming, picnics and all the fun that comes with summer break.

But for families whose children rely on free and reduced-price meal programs at school, summer is a more challenging season. Parents are stuck trying to figure out how to provide enough food for their children during the months when free breakfast and lunch are no longer available. Add the heavy expense of summer child care, and families are left to make impossible choices.

This issue of *Connection* features children and the people working to help make summer a little easier for families.

As you know, summer hunger affects more than just children. For many of our tristate neighbors, food insecurity is a year-round issue.

But thanks to your generosity, Freestore Foodbank is ready to provide meals for children, families and seniors. As we head into summer, I'm so grateful for your support.

Remember, every \$1 you give provides up to 3 meals — and brings relief to a family experiencing hunger. Thank you for your compassion.

Gratefully,



With help from donors like you, children in our area are ready to take on all the fun that summer has to offer.

Childhood hunger is a reality, and it exists in our own neighborhoods. Over 82,000 children living in the 20 counties served by Freestore Foodbank are food insecure, meaning they aren't always sure where they will get their next meal.



Your support means kids like Lily will have nutritious food this summer. This precocious 8-year-old knows who she wants to be when she grows up: "I want to be myself," she says with a grin. Lily says she likes math and really likes the food she gets at a summer meals program she visits with her older sister Makaila.

Corporate Spotlight:

Unilever's Legacy of Compassion

We are grateful for our decade-long partnership!



Unilever employees are dedicated volunteers!

Unilever is not just one of the world's largest consumer goods companies — they are also one of our valued local partners, investing time and resources to improve access to nutritious food for our tristate neighbors.

Over the past 10 years, Unilever has donated nearly half a million dollars to Freestore Foodbank. Their generosity helps people access stabilizing services, increases community awareness of hunger, and inspires other neighbors to get involved. They sponsor Triple Power Hour during the fall Double Your Dollars Day, and last year, they helped raise over \$600,000. As one of our event sponsors, they help to distribute holiday meals to over 11,000 families each year, engage over 3,000 people at our Hunger Walk, and raise community awareness at our Taste of the Bengals event.

Above and beyond their financial commitment to Freestore Foodbank, Unilever employees are dedicated volunteers — organizing an annual coat drive, bringing a team to Hunger Walk, and filling 28 volunteer packing shifts. They also coordinate

product donations by the truckload, including a full tractor-trailer of personal hygiene products.

Unilever's support of Freestore Foodbank isn't just random kindness — it's enshrined in their corporate values: *"We are people with purpose, bringing hundreds of brands to homes, kitchens and bathrooms across the country. We aim to make sustainable living commonplace with high-performing brands that are a force for good, taking action for a more sustainable and equitable world."*

We are grateful to have so many corporate partners like Unilever who are committed to increasing equitable access to nutritious, healthy food for all.

It takes a robust support network to serve our local community, and we appreciate each and every partner! If you're interested in becoming a corporate partner with Freestore Foodbank, or sponsoring one of our events, contact Jonathan Mann at jmann@freestorefoodbank.org or 513-482-7520.