

# Switzerland County High School Pantry

How we're fighting food insecurity in rural Indiana

As students across our tristate area prepare for the school year ahead, it's important to remember that the need for food assistance doesn't end when class is back in session.

Sadly, the need continues in areas already hit hard by hunger and poverty ... like Switzerland County. As one of Indiana's most food-insecure regions, the rural nature of Switzerland County makes it challenging for families to get their kids to school — or reach their local grocery store.

"We're in a food desert," says Rahe Jean, a math teacher at Switzerland County High School. "The closest stores have high prices and not great selections."

Thankfully, students can receive the nourishing meals they need to thrive at the Switzerland County High School Pantry, a Freestore Foodbank community partner.

"It's amazing to have programs like this," says Casie, a guidance counselor who helps run the high school pantry program with Rahe Jean. "The food helps both physically and mentally."

It's true — without nutritious meals to fuel their bodies and minds, students can have a hard time staying focused and ready to learn in school.

"It comes down to helping the kids," Casie says.



Thanks to friends like Rahe Jean, Casie and YOU, students can keep their minds and bodies nourished.

"They come in hungry and struggle academically. When they have what they need, you can really see the change."

The pantry delivers food boxes to families every other week, coordinating with INcompass Healthcare to ensure continuous access on off weeks, weekends and school breaks. This vital resource would not be possible without the generous support of friends like you.

**Thank you for ensuring every child in Switzerland County and throughout the tristate has access to healthy, nutritious food — and the resources they need to succeed in school and life.**

Stay connected to the work you support! Visit us at: [freestorefoodbank.org](https://freestorefoodbank.org)



## YOUR LEGACY MAKES A LASTING IMPACT

Many people, like you, are extending their impact by leaving a gift to Freestore Foodbank in their will. Visit our website to learn about creative ways to support our mission.



For more information, contact Maureen Gregory at [donors@freestorefoodbank.org](mailto:donors@freestorefoodbank.org) or visit [mylegacygift.freestorefoodbank.org](https://mylegacygift.freestorefoodbank.org).



# CONNECTION

News and information for friends of Freestore Foodbank

JULY 2025

## Grateful for the Extra Help

Jessica's bright future is fueled by your compassion

As a senior undergraduate at Northern Kentucky University, Jessica has her sights set on an ambitious future. Right now, she's deciding between two career paths: athletic training or exercise science.

"I want to do research ... so that takes a Ph.D. to do," she says with a wince. "So, it's going to be a minute before I do anything!"

Sadly, Jessica also feels the pressure of falling below the poverty line — facing significant financial challenges while pursuing her education. "I'm not provided [for] by anybody in my family, so I have to supply for myself," she says.

That's why her university food pantry, Fuel NKU, has become such a lifeline. It keeps her nourished, stretches her limited resources, and helps her access food items she otherwise couldn't afford at the grocery store.

"I grab the free soups; I grab everything I know I can use to cook, and then that lasts me for the whole week," she says.

What sets Fuel NKU apart is its accessibility and grocery store-like approach. Unlike other campus pantries that require appointments, students can simply walk in and select what they need. "I wish all other places did it like this," Jessica says. "It's just really helpful for people."



Thanks to you, Jessica doesn't have to choose between a nourishing meal and her education.

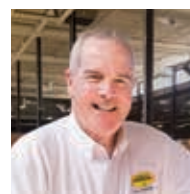
With this vital resource, Jessica can focus on her education and have enough food to eat each week.

"This place is probably one of the most helpful things here," she says. "I use it as a means to live. It really helps because I'm able to pay for my tuition and be able to eat."

For donors like you who make the pantry possible, Jessica shares her heartfelt gratitude: "Thank you for making my life a little bit easier. It's already hard as a student to do a lot of things, and having a little extra help gets us through a little bit better."

**Jessica is so grateful to have a friend like you who cares. Thank you!**

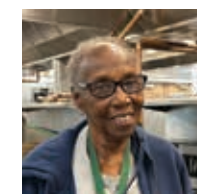
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Kurt's  
Corner

## A Message From Our President & CEO

Summer is in full swing, but fall is just around the corner. The new school year will be starting soon, bringing excitement and new routines.

Sadly, for many neighbors in our tristate area, food insecurity and hunger are part of that routine. As the cost of food remains elevated, our neighbors continue to have a difficult time buying the nutritious food they need to stay nourished and healthy.

Some children will start receiving free meals when they go back to school, easing the challenge families face in providing extra meals at home. But we still have weeks before that happens, and children need a steady source of vitamins and nutrients to grow, develop and thrive. And they're not the only people experiencing hunger and hardship right now.

Thanks to you and your tremendous support, we can help provide the nutritious meals our neighbors need. I hope you enjoy this edition of *Connection* and are reminded of the vital difference your support means to families in our community.

I hope you'll consider giving to help even more children, families and older neighbors. When every \$1 provides up to 3 meals, you can change countless lives this summer and provide a strong start to the school year.

Gratefully,



**1 in 5**  
children is at risk of hunger

**Here in the tristate, children are experiencing  
an increased risk of hunger.**

**BUY A  
DUCK.**

**FEED A  
CHILD.**



To purchase a duck, please scan our QR code or go to  
[www.rubberduckregatta.org](http://www.rubberduckregatta.org).

## Finding Purpose in Helping Others

Miss B found a welcoming community at Cincinnati COOKS!



Miss B holds a special place in her heart for the Cincinnati COOKS! program.

Miss B will tell you firsthand: she didn't have much of a game plan going into retirement. Her only goal was to learn how to play the guitar.

But when a co-worker suggested she volunteer with Cincinnati COOKS!, a free culinary training program at Freestore Foodbank, she promised to check it out.

"I said, 'I'll tell you what. When I retire, I'll go down and see what Cincinnati COOKS! is all about,'" Miss B says.

What was intended as a quick visit to fulfill a promise became so much more. Miss B arrived on the first day of a new class session and was immediately drawn to the program's approach.

"I was impressed with the way they did stuff. How the chefs and everybody was expected to treat people who came there for help," she says. "They were firm but kind. And I fit in."

Miss B was so impressed, in fact, that she

asked to complete the entire 10-week program herself ... and graduated with Class 48! Cincinnati COOKS! is now on Class 215! For over a decade, she has remained a devoted volunteer, helping with administrative tasks, mentoring students, and being a steady presence.

She finds the most meaning in helping students who are looking for a fresh start: "There are those who have fallen on their luck or missed something along the way that they didn't know how to get out of, and seeking help to start a new life in a new way," she says. "The students that I have met along the years, they touch your heart."

As for that guitar? "I haven't even thought of the guitar. It sits in the corner saying, 'Yoo-hoo, remember me?'"

**You and Miss B are natural helpers! Thank you for helping us work toward a healthier, hunger-free future.**