



Northern Illinois  
Food Bank

# Birds of a Feather Volunteer Newsletter

Volume 1, Issue 3

Fall '09

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## A Year in Review

During Fiscal Year 2009 NIFB reached many new highs, and we want to make sure you are aware of how together we helped our hungry neighbors.

### After-School Nutrition Program:

- 399,311 snacks and meals
- 2,927 kids fed each day
- 80 sites participated

### BackPack Program:

- 404,244 meals
- 1,044 kids per week
- 32 schools participated

### Express Stamps:

- 2,158 households approved
- \$621,839 in benefits
- \$288 average benefit

### Food Recovery:

- 4,606,636 total lbs saved
- 81 stores participated
- 100 pick-ups each week

### Mobile Pantry:

- 184 visits
- 1,667,260 lbs distributed

### Senior Boxes:

- 899 boxes provided
- 5 sites participated

### Summer Food Service Program:

- 98,630 meals
- 2,984 kids fed each day
- 80 sites participated

### Total Pounds Distributed:

- 27,245,820

### Volunteer Hours:

- 60,598

Without your support and involvement, we would not have been able to reach over 50,000 hungry individuals every week. For this, we are truly grateful.

**Take the  
Pound for  
Pound  
Challenge!  
(See page 3)**

## What's With All the Frozen Meat?

If you regularly volunteer at either our Park City or Rockford Area Branches or at our Headquarters in St. Charles, you have most likely worked or noticed other volunteers working with frozen meat. Since this is one of our key volunteer projects, we want to make sure you know where this meat comes from and the impact it has on our communities.

Each weekday, we have anywhere from three to five trucks picking up donated frozen meat, dairy products, produce, baked goods and shelf-stable items from area grocery stores. We are currently partnering with 101 stores throughout our service area, including 62 Jewel-Osco, 19 Wal-Mart Supercenters, 9 Sam's Clubs, 7 Hilander (Kroger), and 2 Food-4-Less (Kroger), and 2 Dominick's.

Every week our trucks - and drivers - make 165 pick-ups to collect these donations.

During the month of September alone, we brought in 266,907 pounds of frozen meat. With the help of our volunteers, we were able to evaluate, sort, label and box this frozen meat for distribution to our partner agencies and shipment on NIFB's Mobile Pantry. Even the meat that isn't fit for human consumption doesn't all go to waste; most of it goes to wild or exotic animal rescue and refuge centers.

During Fiscal Year 2009, with help from Protein Partners like Sara Lee, our Retail Recovery Program saved over 2.5 million pounds of meat that would have otherwise been thrown into the dumpster and in turn provided these highly nutri-

tious products to thousands of hungry neighbors. This would not happen without the continued dedication and willingness of our volunteers.



A volunteer placing Food Bank labels on the packages of frozen meat.



## A Group You Should Know...

Thomas Jefferson High School in Rockford strives to educate its student body both inside and outside of the classroom. The Cooperative Education or Internship Program is a great example. This class provides students with employment experience in various fields from manufacturing, skilled trades and health care to legal, business, and education. Students in this program are paired with a sponsor organization in the community where they can learn job skills and training. Coupled with classroom discussion, this experience is a positive building block for future success.

NIFB sees the value of this program as well. Each week, a group of students arrive at the Rockford Area Branch ready to work. They help sort, evaluate, and label donated canned goods as they wait to be placed at internships in the area. The outcome and benefit of all their hard work has been phenomenal. This daily influx of volunteers allows

NIFB to continue to provide our agency partners with much needed food. It also allows the students to gain valuable work skills while helping ease hunger. Vocational teacher, Ms. Mary Ann Gerber, agrees wholeheartedly. "[NIFB] serves as an organization where students can give back something to the community. It also is a place they can learn more about how our society helps the less fortunate." These are valuable lessons that can't always be taught in the classroom. As she states, "the purpose of the class is to provide employment experience and career exploration. This course allows students to experience the benefits of work training."

Volunteering at NIFB also has a practical application. Ms. Gerber adds, "I want the students to consider their volunteer time as an actual job, or position with the food bank." According to her, these students need to take volunteering seriously. If they do, they will be able to

perform well in their internship and beyond. Through their work at NIFB, students learn how to be a good employee. They learn important traits valued by prospective employers including responsibility, dependability, time management, and teamwork.

"Volunteering also shows initiative and involvement," she adds. "Volunteering on [a student's] resume is the most sought after skill that a future sponsor looks for." The students participating in the Cooperative Education or Internship Program have definitely learned these skills and more.

Rockford Branch Manager, Chris White, couldn't agree more. "The students have been a delight," he states. "They are all good workers. I hate to see them go."

Even though many will move on to their new internships, the positive effects of helping at the Food Bank will remain both in their memories as well as the many people their efforts help feed.



Volunteers helping at our Rockford Area Branch and at the St. Charles Headquarters.

## Seasonal Flu & H1N1 Flu: Symptoms & Precautions

As most of you are aware, there have been a significant number of cases of influenza in the area. The CDC has reported that both seasonal flu as well as H1N1 are circulating in the United States. The following information will help us keep a healthy and safe environment. You can find additional information at [flu.gov](http://flu.gov).

- Please cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.
- Practice good hygiene. Avoid touching of nose, mouth, and eyes. Properly dispose of all contaminated tissues.

- You will be advised to go home if you are sick and also to stay home if any of your family members are sick until at least 24 hours after you/they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (without using fever reducing medicine). Do not report to NIFB if you have any flu-like symptoms.

The symptoms for all flu, including H1N1 flu, are similar:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- runny or stuffy nose
- body aches
- headaches

In addition to the above symptoms, a number of H1N1 flu cases reported:

- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Frequently clean work surfaces and items that have a lot of hand contact. Examples include desks, doorknobs, keyboards, and pens.

We ask that you use your best judgment to help keep yourself, other volunteers, and NIFB employees healthy.

Thank you!

## Take the Pound for Pound Challenge!

### Lose Nationally. Feed Locally.

For the second consecutive year, Feeding America will partner with General Mills, *The Biggest Loser* and other corporate partners to encourage Americans to lose weight through the Pound for Pound Challenge. For every pound pledged to lose, General Mills and other partners will donate 14 cents to Feeding America. Sponsors will contribute a total of up to \$1.5 million. Feeding America will distribute the money to local Food Banks, based on the zip codes of participants. YOU can participate and know that you'll be helping our

hungry neighbors as you work toward a healthier you!

### Our Goal

To rally the NIFB community to take the PFP Challenge. The more people that take the Challenge in our area, the more money that will be donated to serve those in need and the greater health of our nation. The more people participating will also create a significant impact on hunger awareness and ultimately help more and more people who are depending on us.

### When does the Challenge begin?

The campaign coincides with Season 9 of *The Biggest Loser* on NBC, from January 5th to the Season Finale of the show in May of 2010. People can begin taking the Challenge in December of 2009 when the new Pound for Pound Challenge website goes live.

NIFB is planning a kick off event in January. More details will be forthcoming via our website and at our facilities. For more information, please contact Shannon Thompson at [sthompson@northernifoodbank.org](mailto:sthompson@northernifoodbank.org).

## Express Stamp Volunteers Needed

Over 269,000 people live in poverty in northern Illinois. Of these, more than 95,000 are children. In 2009, the Federal Poverty Level for a family of four rose to \$22,050 per year. Yet, that's still \$26,000 or more below the living wage for a family of four residing in any of the counties within our service area.

If you break it down, a family of four is left with about \$28.00 each week to purchase groceries as well as any additional hygiene items they may need. That's barely enough money to cover these costs for an individual, let alone a family with growing children.

In order to bridge the gap between those in need and the assistance available, NIFB became part of the Express Stamp Program, a national pilot project designed to increase access to SNAP (formerly Food Stamps) Benefits. As of September 2009, the Express Stamp Program has helped 2,924 families receive first time benefits.

Now it's your chance to help even more people through this program. NIFB is in search of committed, friendly individuals who want to make a difference in the lives of others who are unable to afford food for themselves or their families. Volunteers for this

program will:

- Receive training and ongoing support from NIFB. This training will include the internet application process, the project goals and an overall understanding of the benefits of the federally funded food stamp program to a hungry family or individual.
- Work directly in food pantries and assist individual pantry clients complete an on-line application for food stamps.

Volunteers are needed in Aurora, Carpentersville, and Wheaton. Spanish-speaking volunteers are needed for pantry sites in Aurora. For more information, please contact NIFB.

## Meet the Rockford Area Branch Staff

**Chris White, Manager of the Rockford Area Branch** has been with NIFB since September 2001. Chris is responsible for organizing, overseeing and leading the warehouse projects that require volunteers to complete. The Rockford Area Branch focuses on the identifying, sorting, labeling, and packing of canned fruit and vegetable "brites". Through cultivation of relationships with Del Monte plants in its service area, NIFB has been able to secure over 1 million pounds of these canned goods over the past year.

**Debbie Zegunis, Warehouse & Volunteer Assistant** has been with

NIFB since August 2003. Debbie is often the first person people see when they come to the Rockford Area Branch. As part of her role, Debbie helps prepare the warehouse and stations for the volunteers' tasks. During volunteer shifts, Debbie trains and helps with material handling and insures the projects run smoothly.

Look forward to learning about the staff who work with volunteers at our Lake County Branch in an upcoming newsletter.



Chris White & Debbie Zegunis at the Rockford Area Branch



**Northern Illinois  
Food Bank**

delivering food assistance  
to your community

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Rockford, IL 61102  
Phone: 815.961.7283  
Fax: 815.961.0036

**Email Us At:**  
volunteer@northernilfoodbank.org

## Can You Help?

The following is a list of where additional volunteers are needed:

### St. Charles Headquarters:

- **Agency Loading Assistants:** Volunteers are needed Monday-Friday from 8am-Noon to help load agency vehicles when they come to pick up their orders. Must be 18 years old and able to lift 50 lbs.
- **Food Recovery:** Volunteers are needed Monday-Friday from 7am-2pm to assist a NIFB driver pick up non-perishable and perishable goods from area grocery stores. Must be 18 years old and able to lift 30 lbs.

### Lake County Branch & Rockford Area Branch:

- **Cleaning:** An individual or two is needed one or two times each week.
- **Receptionist:** A volunteer is needed Monday-Friday from 8am-Noon to help answer phones, greet visitors and complete other office tasks.
- **Volunteer Supervisors:** Individuals interested in taking on a leadership role are needed to help supervise volunteers during the 1st Saturday of the month shifts.

### Rockford Area Branch:

- Individuals and groups are needed to sort, label and pack DelMonte can goods. Times vary throughout the week.

Please check out these and other volunteer opportunities on our website at [www.northernilfoodbank.org](http://www.northernilfoodbank.org).

To sign up for any of these opportunities, please contact us: call 630.443.6910 or email [volunteer@northernilfoodbank.org](mailto:volunteer@northernilfoodbank.org).

## Many Thanks!

The following groups volunteered their time to NIFB during July, August & September:

Abbott · Accenture · Allstate · Alpha Baking · Alpha Phi Omega · Alternative Behavior Treatment Center · Amcore IL Public Health Association · American Express · Astellas Pharma · AT&T · Aurora Education Center · Avnet · Awana International · Baxter · Bethel UCC · Bible Boys · Boy Scout Troop 21 · Cardinal Health · Carmel Catholic High School · Central Lake YMCA · Christ Community Church · Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints · Church of the Brethren · CNA Insurance · Coca-Cola · Community UMC of Naperville · ConAgra · Crown · CVS/Caremark · Disney Store · Elmhurst College · Epiphany Lutheran Church · Faith Evangelical Covenant Church · Fireman's Fund Insurance · First Baptist Church of Richardson, TX · First Trust Portfolios · First UMC of Downers Grove · Freedom Baptist Church · Gap, Inc. · Grace UMC · Grainger · GSK · Harvest Bible Chapel · Highlife Adventures · Hope Worldwide · IMSA · Jefferson High School · JP Morgan Chase · Knowledge Infusion · Kraft · Lake Forest College · Lawson Products · Lewis University · Liberty Mutual · Light House Family Chiropractic · McHenry County Garden Quarter Resource Center · MidValley SAFE · MidValley SAIL · Muslim Society, Inc. · Naperville Presbyterian · National University · Navistar Financial · Navy · New Horizons · Nielsen Company · Noon Rotary of St. Charles · North Point Community Church · Northwest Filipino Baptist Church · Pampered Chef · PepsiCo/Quaker · Premium Ingredients · Pulte Homes · Riverchase UMC · S. Rosen's Baking · Sara Lee · Siemens Hearing Instruments · Society of Actuaries · SPR Companies · St. Charles Kiwanis · St. Charles North High School · St. Francis High School · St. John AME · St. John Neumann · St. John the Apostle · St. Marks Lutheran · St. Peters Catholic Church · St. Thomas Church · Team SOUP · The Chapel · Trinity Lutheran Church · Tri-Town YMCA · U.S. Cellular · Unilever · UPS · Wagener Insurance Agency · Wal-Mart · Wells Fargo · West Chicago Park District · Western Springs Church · Willowcreek DuPage · Willowcreek McHenry County · York High School · Youthbuild

In addition to all of these groups, we had over 2,000 individuals give their time towards the fight against hunger!

Visit our website at [www.northernilfoodbank.org](http://www.northernilfoodbank.org) for additional information on Northern Illinois Food Bank as well as our volunteer opportunities.