

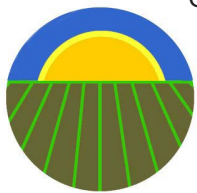
INSIDE SCOOP



Eastern Illinois
Foodbank



SOLA GRATIA FARM



Created by St. Matthew Lutheran Church and Faith in Place in 2012, Sola Gratia Farm is a 4-acre CSA (community supported agriculture) program that operates from May

through October. Located next to St. Matthew Lutheran Church in Urbana, the Farm grows 50 different vegetables in 150 varieties. All resources used in the Farm's production are derived from natural sources and no synthetic pesticides or fertilizers are used. The Farm engages CSA members and community volunteers in farm operations which include ground preparation, weeding, seeding and planting. Volunteers work throughout the season in the greenhouse, field, on pickup days and at special events. Sola Gratia Farm is committed to sustainable farming practices, community building and hunger assistance.

Over the past 4 years, the Farm and its members have donated more than 30,000 pounds of chemical-free produce to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. Produce donations arrive at the Foodbank two ways: directly from the Farm or from a CSA member. "Typically, 20% of our share sales are for donation to the Foodbank. This is in addition to our commitment to donate 10% of our yearly harvest, each year. Last year, this resulted in 9,603 meals donated from Sola Gratia Farm to the Eastern Illinois Foodbank," explains Traci Barkley, Director of Sola Gratia Farm. The Farm also donates directly to the TIMES Center, Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, and Courage Connection's women's shelters – all of which are EIF member agencies. Last year, almost 40% (12,000 pounds) of their harvest was donated to those in need in our community.

The partnership between the Farm and the Foodbank is truly centered around

our agency's clients. Traci describes how they plan their growing season: "Each year, our staff sits down with the staff from the Foodbank to discuss the previous year's operation to identify strengths and weaknesses and also to discuss the upcoming year's crop plan. The Foodbank tells us what products are most popular, which have the most stable shelf life and what they are not seeing enough of from other produce vendors. Our crop plan is then designed to ensure enough of the desired products for the Foodbank as well as a large variety and abundance for our CSA (community supported agriculture) member program."

Our relationship with Sola Gratia Farm allows us to receive fresh quality produce for 24 weeks out of the year. As many of our neighbors struggling with food insecurity are forced to sacrifice quality for cost, this program gives low income individuals and families the option of

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THE HIRES REPORT



“...summer means something completely different for those children of families that struggle with food insecurity.”

I loved summer as a kid. Bike riding, swimming, playing baseball, staying outside, family vacation, back yard camping. It's a wonderful time of year for most kids. But summer means something completely different for those children of families that struggle with food insecurity. The daily planning to secure enough to eat, deciding how to provide for children who are out of school and not receiving breakfast or lunch; these worries fill the summer.

The Foodbank and its agency partners prepare each year for this time when supplemental food becomes so important to many of our neighbors. And with strong collaboration and the help of all our partners, we are able to ease the “summertime blues” for these families, easing their worries and providing much-needed food.

Summer feeding programs for children, provided through the USDA, local schools and community groups, help relieve the strain for many families throughout our region. However, not all communities in our 17 counties have the capacity to provide these types of programs. We work hand-in-hand with our agencies and our food sourcing partners to make sure food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters across our service area can provide for the increase in demand.

Our supporters and volunteers increase their involvement by working with us in our warehouse or manning our Foodmobiles.

Some of our school pantries remain open over the summer and a few of our Backpack sites continue to distribute packs to students. We become a clearinghouse for referrals to summer feeding sites across east central Illinois.

All in all, addressing summer food insecurity has come to symbolize the collective effort of all our partners, friends and supporters. We recognize that we are fortunate to have relationships that make our work even more effective. Together, we will continue to alleviate hunger in our area.

As always, we couldn't do it without your support. Thank you for your generosity and commitment to Eastern Illinois Foodbank.

Enjoy the summer!

Jim Hires, President & CEO

CONTACT US

Eastern Illinois Foodbank
2405 North Shore Drive
Urbana, IL 61802-7221
(217) 328-3663


www.eifoodbank.org



Eastern Illinois
Foodbank



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT US!

 **Bronwyn Cain** reviewed Eastern Illinois Foodbank — 5 stars
November 26, 2014 · 🌐
We feel blessed to have this organization in our community. My son had a great experience saving for and bringing in his donation. What a great staff! They helped him further appreciate the significance of his donation, something he will hopefully remember for a long time!

 **Rachelle R Nickey** reviewed Eastern Illinois Foodbank — 5 stars
April 12, 2014 · 🌐
Excellent day for my son and I. We volunteered and helped those in need. Thank you, Eastern Illinois Foodbank for all that you do.

Here's what our agencies, volunteers and supporters are saying about us:



Because my family needed help one day and it wanted to give back to my community.
— *Robert Wilson*

Because eating is not a choice. Eating is a right!
— *John*

The idea of people going hungry is heartbreaking and I want to do my part to help. Plus it's lots of fun!
— *Sharon A. Hales*

We want to hear from you too! Tell us why you support EIF with your time, dollars or advocacy efforts by writing us a note, email or reviewing us on Facebook.

SOLA GRATIA FARM

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choosing fresh, healthy food for their families. Sola Gratia Farm makes healthy food a viable option for those in our community that struggle with hunger.

Sola Gratia Farm also offers outreach and education opportunities to the public. They have partnered with Champaign Park District and Champaign County Farm Bureau on a "Beginning Farmer" day camp for youth and developed community gardens at Douglas Park with the help of students from Booker T. Washington STEM academy.

While we encourage visiting the Farm, you don't have to make a trip out to Philo Road to get ahold of their produce. You can purchase produce from Urbana's Market on the Square, Champaign's Land Connection Farmer's Market, and Common Ground Food Co-op. Their vegetables are also served at Red Herring Vegetarian Restaurant, Big Grove Tavern, Bacaro, DISH Catering, and Piatto Cafe, Catering and Organic Food Nanny.

For more information on becoming a CSA member and donating a half or full share of product, visit solagratiacsa.com or call 217-367-1189.

PROM BENEFIT 2016 SHATTERED RECORDS



The eighth annual Prom Benefit presented by Jackson Chiropractic was held on March 12 at the Hilton Garden Inn in Champaign. The DJ played to a sold-out crowd of more than 350 attendees. It was a record-breaking year as the event raised more than \$90,000 to support Eastern Illinois Foodbank's mission of alleviating hunger and nourishing stronger communities. The top-raising male and female Prom Court members were named Prom King and Queen with the crowns going to Chas Holder and Denise Bates. This year's event was highlighted by silent & live auctions, raffle prizes, heavy appetizers and desserts, an open bar, photo booth, and of course, dancing.

2016 Prom Committee

Clint & Tiffany Jackson, *Co-Chairs*
Lorianne Bauer
Wendy Davis
Paula Hopkins
Meghan Kluesner
Elisa Palacio
Sara Palacio
Dawn Van Buskirk
Joanne Vician
Kristen Bosch, *EIF Representative*
Kristen Costello, *EIF Representative*

Two more records were broken on Prom night. Our amazing Prom Court raised almost \$30,000! That's \$4,000 more than last year and the equivalent of 150,000 meals! Prom Queen, Denise Bates, raised over \$10,500 – the most raised by any single individual in the history of the event!



COMMUNITY MATTERS



#HAM

September marks **Hunger Action Month™** and we have a lot in store! Keep an eye on our Facebook page and your mailbox for more details. You won't want to miss **Operation Orange**, EIF's 12-hour food repack featuring food, activities, games, music and fun around the clock. We'll also invite you, elected officials and other prominent community members to take the **SNAP Hunger Challenge** to gain insight into what it's like living on a food stamp budget for one week.

EIF will also host our annual Partner Luncheon, honoring the top Food Donor, Business and Community Partners of the Year as well as our Mission Impact Awardees.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY: May is **Older Americans Month**. Help us provide hope to seniors and families in need and **#SOLVESENIORHUNGER**. Like and share our posts on Facebook and Twitter to help spread the word!

MAY 14: The National Association of Letter Carriers is holding its 24th annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive – the nation's largest single day food drive. How can you help? On Saturday, May 14, simply place your nonperishable food donation in a plastic bag next to your mailbox. Your mail carrier will pick it up and do the rest! Please make sure food donations are unopened and in non-breakable containers.

SEPTEMBER: September is **Hunger Action Month™**, a time to learn about local hunger and the needs in your community.

SEPTEMBER 14: Mark your calendar for the Hickory Point Bank Food & Funds Drive! Drop off your food or monetary donation at 202 W Park Ave in downtown Champaign.

CURRENT PROMOTIONS

JUNE: Visit Common Ground Food Co-Op during the month of June and round up your purchases to benefit the Foodbank! Remember, **\$1 is equivalent to 5 meals**.

MIDAS DRIVE OUT HUNGER: Visit Midas in Champaign and they will donate \$1 from every oil change to Eastern Illinois Foodbank. Since November 2014, 1,100,000 meals have been donated to foodbanks nationwide.

OUTNUMBER HUNGER: Purchase specially marked General Mills products and enter codes from these packages by visiting www.outnumberhunger.com. Each code you enter will help Feeding America secure **5 meals** for the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. It's that easy!

WHAT'S HAPPENING



/Eastern Illinois Foodbank



@eifoodbank

Visit www.eifoodbank.org to stay up to date on our upcoming events. Contact the Development Office at 328-3663 ext. 217 for more information on specific events.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

Western Avenue Community Center Pantry

On February 2 the Foodbank held its first weekday Foodmobile distribution in Bloomington at EIF member agency, Western Avenue Community Center Pantry. This distribution was the first of its kind for the Foodbank's newly acquired community in McLean County. The Foodmobile provided clients with additional fresh produce and staple pantry items such as cabbage, onions, potatoes, peanut butter and granola bars. Nearly 12,000 pounds of food – including 1,900 pounds of produce – were distributed to more than 470 individuals in need. This Foodmobile not only strengthened a new member agency but also provided another emergency food option for those unable to attend traditional Foodmobiles which are scheduled on Saturday mornings.

No one should ever go to bed hungry in America, regardless of their income or status. That is our mission today. It will change your life forever, seeing those empty shelves for weeks and months.

- Rev. Jackie Dunson

Western Avenue Community Center is a multi-resource agency. The food pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from noon - 3:00pm and is located at 600 North Western Avenue in Bloomington. The pantry serves an average of 1,083 individuals and 360 children per month. Additionally, the Center is open Monday through Thursday from 9am-5pm and Fridays from 9am-noon offering an after school program, senior programs, Hispanic outreach and many other services. Rev.

Jackie Dunson, Food Pantry Coordinator, describes their inventory and distribution method, "We have a good assortment and variety of food to serve our patrons, including government commodities, household products, hair/body care, clothing, etc. Our goal is to give our clients emergency meals including snacks for five days proportioned by family size. Items include rice, pasta, cereal, beans, canned vegetables, fruit, pasta sauce, tomatoes, tuna, salmon, or chicken, baked goods and other food items."

Rev. Jackie has been with Western Avenue Community Center for 7 years and has gotten to know many individuals and families in her community. One family in particular stands out in her mind however. Five years ago, a homeless family of six came to the food pantry for help. The mother had purchased one-way bus tickets for her family to Bloomington, after her two sons faced repeated death threats for refusing to join a gang. The Pantry is still serving their family but they are no longer homeless and all are thriving - including her two sons who are both in college and on the honor roll.