

# INSIDE SCOOP



Eastern Illinois  
Foodbank



## SCHOOL PANTRIES ALLOW STUDENTS TO FOCUS ON LEARNING, NOT HUNGER



Imagine: You're back in high school. It's 9:15am, time for the algebra test. You've got your calculator, a sharpened #2 pencil. You studied last night and reviewed the formulas again this morning. You're ready; you've got this.

But you can't focus, can't concentrate. Your stomach growls, and you remember the last time you ate was yesterday at lunch. No dinner last night, nothing this morning. Oh well, what's new? Test time. Algebra.

### Focus.

It's no secret that under-nutrition can delay brain development and has an effect on a child's ability to learn. Key findings from a study by the Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy report:

- Poor children who attend school hungry perform worse on standardized tests than poor children who attended school well-fed.
- Improved nutrition can change the effects of not getting enough to eat early in life.

Eastern Illinois Foodbank's School Pantry program addresses the issue of hunger in the classroom by distributing food to students at school. School pantries are located on the grounds of a school, and are intended to provide a more readily accessible source of food assistance to low-income students and their families. In the last six months, EIF has added three additional school pantry sites in our service area, bringing the total to ten school pantries available to students and families struggling to make ends meet. Let's take a look at two:

"The number of families that we have been able to help continues to increase. It is wonderful to see our students feel pride in their ability to contribute to their families through our pantry."

*Carrie Elko, RAS teacher & Pantry Supervisor*

### Regional Alternative School (RAS)

**Regional Alternative School (RAS)** in Bloomington opened the doors to their school pantry last October. They are open every Friday and are already serving 25 students. This school is unique in that 100% of students qualify for emergency food service. The School Pantry is also able to serve families during times of crisis.

Additionally, RAS is a pilot location for testing perishable food distribution, such as fruit, to students in the classroom. This option allows for healthy options when a student is hungry and needs an immediate snack.

Carrie Elko, a teacher at RAS and one of the School Pantry partners, shares how the pantry has impacted their students:

*"We had a student who was homeless, staying on the couch of an acquaintance. She was unable to contribute to this household and was going to have to be on the streets had it not been for her ability to bring food from our pantry. Another student, whose mother had lost her job suddenly, was able to get immediate help from our pantry. His mother had to choose between rent and food and we were able to help them with our pantry until they got back on their feet. We also had a student whose family lost their home due to a fire and were able to receive instant assistance. All families were so grateful to receive help, which strengthened our partnership with both the family and the students."*

**How can you be involved with the RAS School Pantry?** The School Pantry accepts non-perishable food donations and is also in need of diapers. Contact RAS at 309-828-5807 if you'd like to make a donation.

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# SCHOOL PANTRIES

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## Tuscola High School

What do you do with an old storage space and a photography dark room? Turn it into a school pantry! The **Tuscola High School Warrior Pantry** did just that when they opened their doors on March 2nd. This innovative space currently serves any student in need throughout the Tuscola school district.



An impromptu survey at a youth group meeting in 2015 revealed nearly half of the 7th thru 12th graders attending the meeting struggled with hunger. A formal survey of the entire high school was conducted in 2016 and found that 37% of Tuscola High School students faced hunger. The school hoped they could create a program within their school district to help get food directly into the hands of the children who needed it in the community. They contacted the Eastern Illinois Foodbank to come up with a solution and the Warrior Store was born.

*It was devastating as parents and heartbreaking as community members that we did not know hunger was a problem or the magnitude of it.*

*Casey Salmon,  
School Pantry Supervisor*

The pantry is housed at the high school but serves all students in the district. The pantry coordinators and volunteers are also considering summer hours to serve students while school is out.

**How can you help the Tuscola High School Warrior Pantry?** Volunteers and donations are not just essential, but vital to the success of The Warrior Store. The Warrior Store is fully funded by community donations. If you would like to make a donation, contact Tuscola High School at 217-253-2377.

### In addition to RAS and Tuscola, EIF's 8 additional School Pantry sites include:

Centennial High School, Champaign  
Garden Hills Elementary School, Champaign  
Central High School, Champaign  
Urbana High School, Urbana

Charleston High School, Charleston  
Clay City Elementary School, Clay City  
Mattoon High School, Mattoon  
Rantoul High School, Rantoul

## BANK OF AMERICA

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Bank of America Give-A-Meal campaign. Including the triple match, **\$80,784.63** was raised – that's **403,924 meals** for our neighbors in need. We are incredibly grateful to our community for their support and the generosity of Bank of America.

To learn when giving opportunities like this become available, add yourself to our newsletter list. Visit [www.eifoodbank.org](http://www.eifoodbank.org) and click on "Get Email Updates."



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Shawna had a great idea after her first volunteer experience at EIF – bring her friend, Diana! Shawna and Diana have volunteered at EIF since 2014 and have donated a combined total of **109 hours**.

Shawna became involved with EIF through her workplace, Yahoo! The company set up a daytime repack for their summer service project and, as she put it, she “was immediately hooked.” She instantly wanted to come back with her friend, Diana.

Shawna explains the benefits of volunteering with a friend: “First, I generally want to do most anything with Diana, so it only makes the entire experience more fun. Next, I’m super passionate about the Foodbank, and I want to share that with other people. I love to volunteer with EIF, because I find the idea of people anywhere, but especially in my community, struggling with food insecurity simply heartbreaking. I want to help those in need, and EIF does such a wonderful job, I can’t help but want to have a small part in that.”

*“We’re always looking for something new to do, and meet new people as well as get out of the house and keep moving. EIF has been a great place to make an impact.” – Diana*

Diana had heard about EIF through community drives but was soon “hooked” after volunteering with her friend. Diana explains, “I volunteer at EIF because it takes a village, and I want to do my part. It doesn’t hurt that I have such a blast doing it with a great friend!”



The duo has also recruited family and other friends to get involved. They’ve volunteered on weekends at Foodmobiles, in the evening at repacks and special events, like the Prom Benefit. “The more people we can introduce to the awesome work EIF is doing, the better,” Shawna says. Shawna and Diana even took on the role of “Lead Volunteers” at the Prom Benefit this year, managing 14 volunteers during the 7-hour event and ensuring the night ran smoothly.

The Foodbank greatly depends on our community for volunteer help. If you or your organization is interested in volunteering at EIF, email Kristen Costello at [kcostello@eifoodbank.org](mailto:kcostello@eifoodbank.org) or visit [www.eifoodbank.org](http://www.eifoodbank.org), click on “Take Action” and “Donate Time.”

## KIRBY MOBILE MARKETS

Our first Mobile Market was held on February 1<sup>st</sup> in the former County Market at 312 W Kirby Avenue in Champaign. These distributions are open to the public who self-attest to meeting income eligibility guidelines (having an annual household income of \$3,746 or less for a family of 4). Mobile Markets are first-come, first-serve food distributions and are designed to supplement a household’s other food resources. Items such as fresh produce, bread and toiletries are available to individuals and families in need.

These weekly distributions have served approximately 32,270 pounds of fresh produce to 2,319 individuals from 631 households. 1,136 of these individuals were children under 18.

Beginning in May, these distributions will be moved to the EIF warehouse (2405 North Shore Drive, Urbana) on Tuesday afternoons from 4:30 - 6pm.

These distributions are possible thanks to volunteers in our community. Volunteers help set up, tear down and distribute food from 3:30-6pm (or until food runs out). This volunteer project requires volunteers to lift, bend and stand during distribution preparation and throughout the distribution period. To ensure visitors are properly served, volunteers are asked to stay for the entire shift.

If you or your group is interested in helping with these distributions, visit [www.eifoodbank.org](http://www.eifoodbank.org) and click on “Take Action.”



# PROM NIGHT HELPS FIGHT HUNGER

Jackson Chiropractic and the Hilton Garden Inn hosted the ninth annual Prom Benefit in support of the Eastern Illinois Foodbank on Saturday, March 11, 2017. The Prom Benefit was founded in 2009 and every year we bring together fun-loving folks from our community to relive Prom night or experience it for the first time, all while helping fight hunger.

At Prom 2017, we had a sold-out crowd with 350 attendees. It was a record-breaking year as the event raised \$95,000—that's 475,000 meals - to support our mission of alleviating hunger and nourishing stronger communities. The Prom Court alone set a new record, raising more than \$38,000 for the cause.



The top-raising male and female Prom Court members were named Prom King and Queen with the crowns going to Brian Stark and Heather Vazquez. Prom King Brian Stark also set a new record by securing more than \$12,625 in votes — beating the previous record by more than \$1,000. 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.

Next year's Prom Benefit will mark the tenth anniversary of this annual event, and we need your help to reach our goal of surpassing the \$100,000 mark. Prom Benefit 2018 will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Champaign. Stay tuned for more details!



## EVENTS & PROMOTIONS

### AMAZON SMILE:

Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to Eastern Illinois Foodbank whenever you shop on AmazonSmile and select EIF as your charity. Learn more at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com).

### MIDAS DRIVE OUT HUNGER:

Visit **Midas in Champaign** and they will donate \$1 from every oil change to Eastern Illinois Foodbank. Since November 2014, more than 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](http://www.outnumberhunger.com). Each code you enter by January 31, 2018 will help Feeding America secure five meals for the Eastern Illinois Foodbank. It's that easy!

### SCHNUCKS ESCRIP:

Register your Schnucks card at [www.escrip.com](http://www.escrip.com) and earn up to 3% of your purchase amount for Eastern Illinois Foodbank.

### SCHNUCKS REUSABLE BAG PROGRAM:

During the month of **May**, for every Schnucks reusable HUNGER BAG sold at participating Schnucks stores, EIF will receive \$1 (equivalent to 5 meals). Stop by one of the following Schnucks stores to participate in this promotion and help feed our neighbors in need:

**109 N. Mattis Rd, Champaign**  
**200 N. Vine, Urbana**  
**1301 Savoy Plaza Center, Savoy**



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