

SPECIAL THANKS TO

GRAIN TRAIN NATURAL FOODS MARKET in Petoskey, **RED MESA** and **CAFÉ SANTE** in Boyne City, and **D&W FRESH MARKET** in Petoskey, who donate a percent of sales to help feed the hungry.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF NORTHWEST MICHIGAN and **GROUNDWORK CENTER FOR RESILIENT COMMUNITIES**, whose recent grant enabled Manna to place a new refrigerator or freezer at Joppa House, Nehemiah Project, Pellston Area Food Pantry, and Charlevoix Community Food Pantry.

CHRIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH in Charlevoix, **LAKE LOUISE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY** in Boyne Falls, **FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HARBOR SPRINGS**, **UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CONGREGATION** in Petoskey, **ST. JOHN'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH** in Harbor Springs, and a host of other faith communities, who supported Manna throughout 2020.

CULVER'S, whose owner David Newland selected Manna for its March "Give Local" fundraiser. Welcome to Petoskey!



ODAWA CASINO raised \$7,992.96 through their "Spare Change" donation program to share equally among three local nonprofits—Manna, Brother Dan's Food Pantry, and Charlevoix Community Food Pantry—each receiving \$2,664.32.



SPRING 2021

8791 McBride Park Court, Harbor Springs, MI 49770
231.347.8852 · www.mannafoodproject.org



WHAT'S UP WITH ALICE

SOME GOOD NEWS, SOME UNCERTAINTY

It's nice to share good news once in a while.

United Way just released its newest report on the condition of Michigan's working families, also known as ALICE households—Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed. The annual report tells us the number of Michigan households earning above the federal poverty line but still unable to afford the basic costs of living.

This year's report shows some progress throughout the state. Here in Antrim, Charlevoix, and Emmet counties, we've seen a positive change: from 43 percent of ALICE and poverty households in 2018 to 36 percent in 2019. That's a good trend.

On the flip side, over 1 million or 25 percent of Michigan households are still under the ALICE threshold, with another 13 percent in poverty. According to the report, an additional 10 percent of households are on the cusp—just one income bracket away.

The bottom line: in 2019, nearly 30,000 of our neighbors in our Northwest Michigan tri-county area were still forced to make difficult economic choices, such as skipping preventative health care, paying for accredited childcare, and buying healthy food. Then COVID came.

Mike Larson, CEO of the Michigan Association of United Ways, notes that the ALICE population was completely unprepared to weather the COVID-19 storm that everyone faced this past year. Among the most vulnerable were essential workers and seniors. In 2019, for example, 14 percent of Michigan adults over the age of 60 had experienced food insecurity in the prior twelve months, and we can only assume that number has increased due to the pandemic.

While Manna cannot address many of the economic issues, we strive to help where we can. Last year, we helped our seasonal hospitality workers by hosting mobile pantries at Boyne Highlands and Odawa Casino. Since summer, we've been distributing thousands of USDA food boxes—over 600 of them last month alone—to senior Friendship Centers in partnership with the Commission on Aging.

We don't know what the future holds, but we're hoping for the best.

—Kim Baker, Executive Director

FORGING AHEAD

MANNA RESUMES FOOD RESCUE

After a year-long suspension, Manna resumed its Food Rescue program and started to accept food donations from the public once again. This decision comes after diligently tracking community transmission of the COVID-19 virus in Northern Michigan and assessing the safety of our staff, volunteers, partners, and food pantry clients.

Our Food Rescue program collects donated and surplus food each week from local businesses. These items range from soon-to-expire canned goods, discontinued and overstocked items, day-old baked goods, and produce naturally being rotated off the shelves. By diverting this food from landfills, we not only fill hungry bellies but also reduce food waste in our community—about 500,000 pounds each year, accounting for approximately 25 percent of the food Manna distributes.



Our staff came together and re-evaluated the Food Rescue situation many times throughout 2020, but the nature of the virus and its spread throughout the community was too difficult to predict. But now that many of our staff and volunteers have been vaccinated and we have better capacity, we feel more comfortable resuming the program. We're grateful for our community partners who have patiently stuck with us and continue to support our mission.

If you would like to donate canned goods or organize a food drive, keep nutrition in mind. Here are some items we suggest:

- Whole grain, low sugar cereal or oatmeal
- Whole grain pasta, bread, rice, crackers, or granola bars
- Low-fat, shelf-stable milk or milk alternative
- Canned goods with low sodium or no added sugar
- Lean protein like canned tuna, salmon, and chicken, or peanut butter

For our full "Healthy Food Donation Guidelines" and a printable list of suggested items, visit mannafoodproject.org/food-donations.htm.

PARTNER PROFILE

A HOT MEAL AND A HELPING HAND

Safe Haven is a ministry of Community Reformed Church in Charlevoix that reaches out to serve its neighbors.

Their first ministry, the Free Breakfast Club, started in March 2012 and offered a hot community breakfast twice a week, year-round. Volunteers whipped up pancakes, eggs, sausage, coffee, and other morning staples just after 6 a.m. Their guests found joy in both the food and the friendship.



"At breakfast, we tried to meet physical and relational needs," says Jan Boss, the Safe Haven Ministries director. "We provided a place where people could get a free hot meal and meet friends for support throughout their lives. The most touching quote I've ever heard from one of our clients was, 'I don't feel poor when I come here.'"



This past year, COVID-19 forced the breakfast club to adapt, and they now operate their meal site through curbside pickup, serving 70-80 take-out breakfasts each Tuesday and Friday morning. Though she's not sure when they will return to in-house dining, Jan's happy they can still help their local community in these trying times.

"With the take-out meals, you're not building relationships. People still need food, but they miss being together, that's for sure," Jan says.

While the Free Breakfast Club keeps them busy, Jan and Safe Haven volunteers offer a helping hand in other ways when needs arise. Last year, they partnered with area restaurants and stores to provide elementary school families with 1,900 grocery bags, 1,400 to-go lunches, and 200 backpacks full of school supplies.

Manna Food Project partners with nearly 60 food pantries, community meal sites, and other human service agencies throughout our tri-county area—all of which stay operational thanks to everyday heroes like Jan.

—Jessyca Stoecker, Program Coordinator

SIMPLY GIVE

SPRING CAMPAIGN UNDERWAY

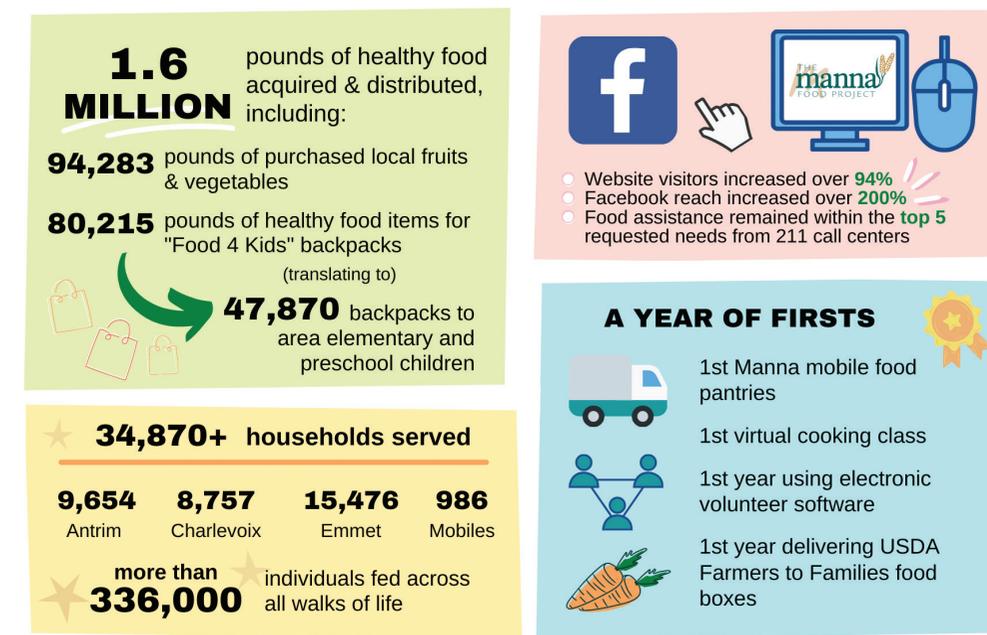
Meijer is a family company that focuses its corporate philanthropy on enriching lives in the communities they serve. Since 2008, the Grand Rapids-based retailer has contributed over \$61 million to food banks and pantries throughout its Midwest service area.

Since 2013, Manna has received an astounding \$815,000 from the program—over \$500,000 of which was designated for our "Food 4 Kids" backpack program for at-risk preschool and elementary students. We are fortunate that Meijer has once again chosen Manna as part of its "Simply Give" Spring campaign, which runs now through Saturday, July 3. Double Match Day is Saturday, June 19.

There are two ways to participate:

- Purchase a \$10 "Simply Give" donation card at a Petoskey Meijer checkout lane, or
- Send your "Simply Give" tax-deductible gift directly to Manna.

Whichever way works best for you, rest assured that your donation goes directly to feeding the hungry. Thank you for your support!



ALL THANKS TO *Supporters Like You*