



# HARVEST TIME

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

OZARKS FOOD HARVEST - THE FOOD BANK

NEWSLETTER FROM THE O'REILLY CENTER FOR HUNGER RELIEF

## FRESH PRODUCE VALUED AT PANTRIES

### Families benefit from nutrient-dense fruits and vegetables

For children facing hunger, a simple bag of oranges or a carton of strawberries can mean so much.

Fresh fruit is often a rare treat for those who struggle to make ends meet. So when produce is available at local pantries and feeding sites, many families feel overwhelmed with gratitude.

Christy See, director of Harvest Fellowship Food Pantry in Aurora, witnesses these moments firsthand.

"I'll never forget meeting this one mother and her three children," See said. "They were new to the pantry, and they desperately

**"I watched the children's eyes light up as they pulled out a full bag of mandarin oranges. They couldn't believe the entire bag was theirs to take home."**

-Christy, Director at Harvest Fellowship Food Pantry

needed food assistance. When we gave them the food, I watched the children's eyes light up as they pulled out a full bag of mandarin oranges. They couldn't believe the entire bag was theirs to take home."

Too many families in southwest Missouri have to choose between affordable nonperishable food and more expensive, nutrient-dense food.

"Produce is very beneficial to our clients because it allows them to stretch their dollars at the grocery store," See said. "We also try to provide them with one or two protein items that will allow them to prepare complete meals."

Since certain fruits and vegetables can be unfamiliar for pantry clients, Harvest Fellowship Food Pantry works hard to provide

recipes and education. "We love visiting the resource room at Ozarks Food Harvest for recipes and educational tools," See says.

Harvest Fellowship is a client-choice pantry, which means they allow visitors to choose their own food items. Since each family can have dietary restrictions and preferences, client choice prevents food waste and provides a better experience.

"We try to make sure every client gets items that we have a lot of, but we believe everyone deserves the dignity to pick out their own food."

At Ozarks Food Harvest, we have a commitment to ensure fresh produce is 25 percent of all food distributed. Our *Full Circle Gardens* program helps put us closer to that goal. During our last fiscal year, the Glean Team harvested 35,000 pounds of fresh produce.

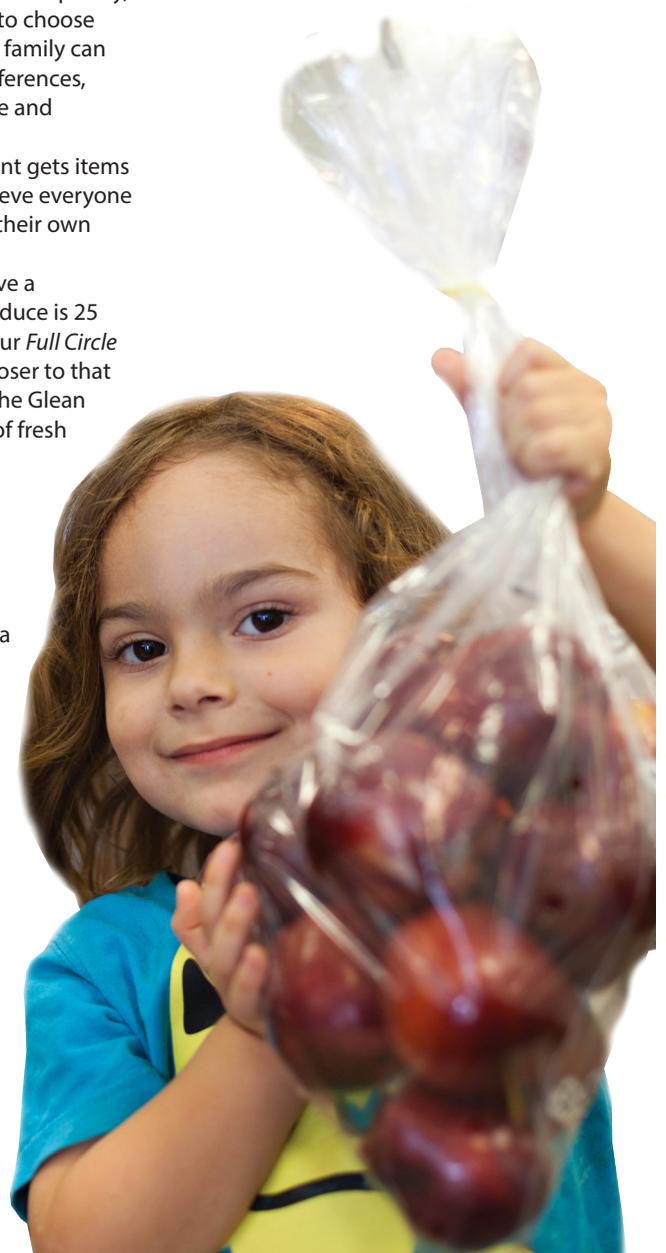
"There has been an increase in community awareness about how to get involved through volunteering, planting giving gardens and donating extra produce to The Food Bank or area pantries," said Alexa Poindexter, *Full Circle Gardens* coordinator. "We have a great core volunteer group at the Ozarks Food Harvest Garden, and with their help, we successfully grew [produce] throughout winter for the first time."

Sadie, 91, attended an Ozarks Food Harvest *Mobile Food Pantry* distribution with her daughter, Linda.

Both women agreed that the produce was especially appreciated.

"I wouldn't ordinarily buy it because it's too expensive," Sadie said. "We really enjoyed

the corn we got last month. I appreciate it a lot. I'm on a fixed income and it sure helps me make it through the month." ■



# SPS FOOD FIGHT SETS NEW RECORD

This year, forty-two Springfield Public Schools and 33 partnering organizations kicked-off the year by hosting the annual Food Fight competition to benefit Ozarks Food Harvest.

Thanks to compassionate students, teachers, administrators and community partners, this year's drive set a new record. They collected enough food to provide 39,350 meals, and the donations will benefit Ozarks Food Harvest's partner food pantries in Springfield, including SPS school pantries at Jarrett Middle School, Hillcrest and Central high schools.

A portion of funds collected will sponsor 12 students who participate in the *Weekend Backpack Program*, which provides children with six meals to take home each weekend for an entire school year.

The middle school that collected the most food and funds was Cherokee, and Parkview was the winning high school.

Five elementary school classes won field trips to Ozarks Food Harvest, where they will get to see how The Food Bank processes food donations. These classes are from Boyd, Pershing, Robberson and McGregor elementary schools, as well as Bright Stars Early Childhood Center.

"Food Fight is unlike anything I've ever witnessed," said Marty Moore, executive director of Learning Support and Partnerships at SPS. "It's exciting to see the enthusiasm of students competing in the Food Fight each year and to see firsthand their engagement in our community."

Since the competition began in 2010, SPS students and partners have provided nearly 145,000 meals for children, families and seniors served by The Food Bank. ■



THANKS TO COMMUNITY PARTNERS AND STUDENTS, 39,350 MEALS WILL BE PROVIDED TO THOSE IN NEED.



SEVENTY-SIX GROCERS PARTICIPATED IN THE 19TH CHECK OUT HUNGER, INCLUDING PRICE CUTTER.

# OZARKS RAISES \$50K FOR 19TH CHECK OUT HUNGER

Grocers participate in annual holiday drive to provide 200,000 meals.

For the past 19 years, area grocery stores have partnered with shoppers to help those in need through Check Out Hunger. During the 2017 campaign, seventy-six southwest Missouri grocery stores and their customers collected more than \$50,000, which will provide 200,000 meals.

Although the fundraiser ran from November through December 2017, The Food Bank continued to receive checks from participating grocers throughout the first few months of 2018. Since donations tend to drop after the holiday season, the beginning of the year is an ideal time for Ozarks Food Harvest to receive the financial boost from Check Out Hunger.

Check Out Hunger gives shoppers the opportunity to add a \$1, \$3 or \$5 tax-free donation to their grocery bill when checking out at area retailers. Since the annual fundraiser began, Check Out Hunger has raised a grand total of \$512,000 — providing nearly 2.5 million meals for those who are hungry.

"This campaign is truly a wonderful collaboration between area grocery stores



CUSTOMERS SIGNED GREEN APPLES WHEN THEY MADE A DONATION.

and their shoppers," said Denise Gibson, director of development & communication at Ozarks Food Harvest. "It is amazing what we can accomplish together to help our community thrive. Check Out Hunger also plays a vital role in educating the public about the one in five people across the Ozarks who receive assistance from us."

Heartfelt thanks to all the grocers and shoppers who got involved, in addition to the communities in our 28-county service area who participated. ■

# THE FOOD BANK RECEIVES 100 PERCENT RATING

Greetings from the O'Reilly Center for Hunger Relief!

There are many reasons why my family and I are proud supporters of Ozarks Food Harvest. Each time you make a contribution to The Food Bank, you can trust that every dollar is effectively put to use to help our community.

While I've always known that Ozarks Food Harvest accomplishes great work, Charity Navigator, the leading evaluator of nonprofits in the nation, reaffirmed what I already knew.

Charity Navigator recently awarded Ozarks Food Harvest a 100 percent rating.

This is the second time The Food Bank has earned this prestige. As the first charity in Missouri to earn a perfect score, this rating proves that donors can rely on Ozarks Food

Harvest to be good stewards of each dollar and pound of food donated.

According to Charity Navigator, attaining a four-star rating means that Ozarks Food Harvest exceeds the industry standards. Only six percent of the charities evaluated by Charity Navigator have received at least six consecutive four-star ratings like Ozarks Food Harvest.

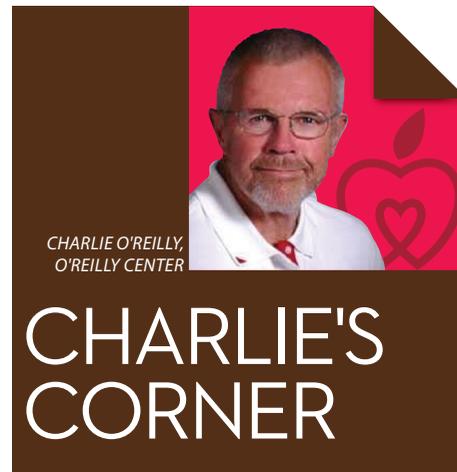
I know that The Food Bank's staff worked hard to earn this score.

The rating is the result of years of research and strategic planning on how to effectively use your gifts to help the most people in the Ozarks.

Thankfully, the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced

that poverty and food insecurity rates have slightly declined in recent years.

However, there is still much work to do to ensure that no children, adults or seniors go to bed hungry.



Valli receives help from one of Ozarks Food Harvest's member agencies.

She began visiting the food pantry when her 8-year-old granddaughter who lives with her was diagnosed with osteosarcoma bone cancer.

Shortly after the diagnosis, Valli's husband was permanently laid off from his job. "I want to thank you all for the food and encouragement we have received from our food pantry," she said. "The pantry has helped us make it."

Thanks to The Food Bank's hard work, donors can have confidence that their money is being used to the fullest to help families like Valli's family.

And thanks to your compassion, Ozarks Food Harvest is reaching more people and distributing more meals than ever before. Each dollar donated is able to provide four meals, so will you consider making a gift today? ■

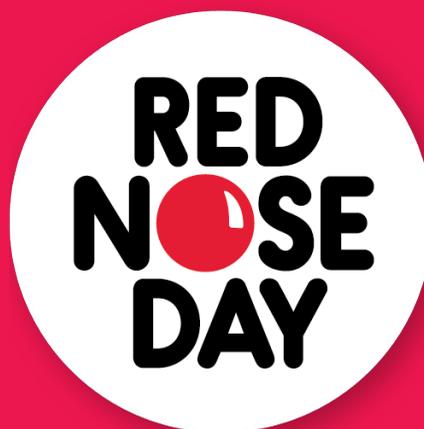
## UPCOMING EVENTS

### RED NOSE DAY - MAY 24

Join Feeding America and Ozarks Food Harvest as we raise money to help end child poverty through the Red Nose Day campaign on May 24. Each year on Red Nose Day, NBC rallies generous donors to help children in need. NBC's night of special programming will feature the campaign's iconic red nose. Get involved by purchasing a red nose at Walgreens, or host a Red Nose Day fundraiser at your school or office. ■

### STAMP OUT HUNGER - MAY 12

The 26th annual Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive will take place on May 12. You can participate by leaving a bag of food by your mailbox. ■



### WALMART FIGHT HUNGER. SPARK CHANGE. - APRIL 2-30

Purchase specially marked products or make a donation at the cash register in Walmart stores to provide meals for the one in five children and one in seven adults who struggle with hunger in the Ozarks. Learn more on page four. ■

### ARVEST'S 1 MILLION MEALS - THROUGH JUNE 2

The eighth annual campaign continues from now until June 2. Partner with Arvest Bank by donating nonperishable food or funds at branches in Springfield and Nixa. ■

# BART'S HOPE NOTES



BART BROWN,  
PRESIDENT/CEO

It's already been a productive year at The Food Bank, and there are still many exciting things to come. Breaking ground on our building expansion funded by our generous community was a rewarding and exciting experience. It puts us one step closer to a hunger-free Ozarks.

Currently, we provide 16.8 million meals each year to those in need. We are only able to have such a large impact because of our amazing community of donors. Since 2010, we've doubled our distribution with your help. However, we need to nearly double our distribution once again in order to effectively close the meal gap of 30 million meals.

By the end of this year, we will have the space to adequately store enough food to make sure no one goes hungry in southwest Missouri. To meet our goal of closing the meal

# OFH BENEFITS FROM FEDERAL, PRIVATE FUNDS

gap, we will need to depend on both federal and private support more than ever before.

In fact, we already rely heavily on federal support to serve our hungry neighbors. Around 20 percent of all the food donated to The Food Bank is USDA Commodities. This program benefits both farmers, producers and hungry people by subsidizing certain crops for charitable distribution.

In addition, our SNAP outreach program was able to approve 360 applications last year, which brought 682,581 more meals to our 28-county service area. Between 2009 and 2012, the SNAP program in Missouri kept 221,000 people out of poverty, including 109,000 children. With one in eight Missouri citizens accessing SNAP, this program allows many people to feed their families while they work to get back on their feet.

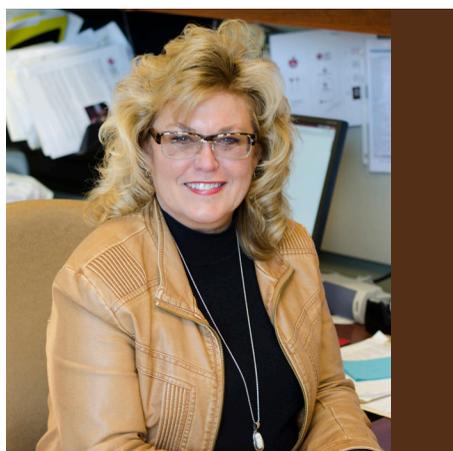
Even those we serve rely on a combination of federal and private donations to make ends meet. Anna is a 67-year-old woman who depends on help from Ozarks Food Harvest to supplement her SNAP benefits. She told us how she appreciates it when she can get milk, oats and canned goods from the pantry. "[This] extra food helps, and I use it all," Anna said.

If we continue to use a combination

of federal and private support, we are confident that there will be a day when seniors like Anna won't have to struggle with hunger. ■



SENIORS LIKE ANNA BENEFIT FROM SNAP.



DENISE GIBSON,  
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

## FROM DENISE'S DESK

# SMALL DONATIONS HAVE BIG IMPACT

There is a great way to get involved in the fight to end hunger this month. Our friends at Walmart are once again teaming up with customers and suppliers to help those in need through its Fight Hunger. Spark Change. campaign.

Your contribution can be as simple as purchasing the specially marked items that give back, or take it a step further and add a \$1, \$2 or \$5 donation to your bill at checkout.

Or, simply use social media as a way to help. If you share Walmart's Fight Hunger. Spark Change. Facebook posts, Walmart will make a donation to Feeding America food banks.

It's heartbreaking to hear stories of hunger, but they remind me of how small donations can add up to make a huge impact in the lives of thousands. Just last year the Fight Hunger. Spark Change. campaign raised \$125,000 for Ozarks Food Harvest!

We recently spoke to Emily, age 9. Even at such a young age, she knows what it is like to

worry about where her next meal will come from. "Sometimes my mom says we don't have food, and I get upset," she said. "It makes me scared."

Never underestimate what a small act of kindness can do for a person. Thanks to supporters like you, we are able to help children like Emily have a brighter future. The campaign continues through the end of April, so there is still plenty of time to get involved. ■



YOUR DONATIONS HELP CHILDREN LIKE EMILY AND HER FAMILY.

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**Mike Doubledee**, Inventory Manager

**Steven Henry**, Operations Administration

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**Eddie Hicks**, Operations/Compliance Coordinator

**Steve Roberts**, Transportation Manager

Due to growth and limited space in the newsletter, all warehouse and transportation associates on the Operations team are now listed online at [ozarksfoodharvest.org](http://ozarksfoodharvest.org).

# SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE FRIENDS OF THE FOOD BANK

## DONORS HELP MEET J.E. & L.E. MABEE FOUNDATION

Thanks to the compassion and generosity of our donors, we successfully met a \$700,000 J.E. & L.E. Mabee Foundation Challenge Grant, which closes The Ending Hunger, Building Hope capital campaign. With these funds, we are adding a 56,000 square-foot warehouse addition to the O'Reilly Center for Hunger Relief. Thanks to the Mabee Foundation and our donors for allowing us to make the expansion a reality!

## MISSOURI STATE EMPLOYEES PROVIDE 27,300 MEALS

Thanks to the state of Missouri employees who participated in the Missouri State Employee Charitable Campaign! Last year, these generous donors gave \$6,800 through a payroll deduction program. Their gift will provide 27,300 meals to children, adults and seniors who face food insecurity in southwest Missouri. Since 2008, Missouri State Employees have given more than \$52,800 to Ozarks Food Harvest through this program.



LONDON RODGERS USED HIS SENIOR PROJECT TO HELP HIS HUNGRY NEIGHBORS.

## WILLOW SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR RAISES OVER \$2,000

For his senior project at Willow Springs High School, Landon Rodgers chose to provide meals for hungry people in the Ozarks. Rodgers is a dedicated volunteer at MUNCH, an OFH pantry in Willow Springs. He partnered with OFH to host an online fundraiser, and through his fundraising efforts, he raised \$2,110. He also coordinated a volunteer session for 22 Willow Springs students and parents to pack 792 food bags for the *Weekend Backpack Program*. His efforts provided 13,192 meals.

Rodgers advocated for hunger-relief and support of Ozarks Food Harvest during many community events and speaking engagements. To recognize his hard work, the American Red Cross presented him with an Everyday Hero award.

## OPAL FOODS MAKES ANNUAL DONATION BEFORE EASTER

Fresh eggs are a great source of protein and staple for many dishes, which is why they are a prized item at The Food Bank. Thanks to a donation of 280,800 eggs from Opal Foods, a franchisee of Eggland's Best, families all across southwest Missouri will receive eggs this spring. This year's gift brings the total donation from Opal Foods to 2.5 million eggs since the annual Easter season donation began in 2008.



OPAL FOODS HAS DONATED MORE THAN 2.5 MILLION EGGS TO OZARKS FOOD HARVEST.

## PRIME CHILI COOK-OFF RAISES \$16K

Prime Inc. employees raised \$16,000 for the *Weekend Backpack Program* through the annual Prime Chili Cook-Off. Their gift will sponsor 53 students for an entire school year. Congratulations to John Hardin who won first place in the red chili, Brenda Behnke who once again won for her white chili and Andrea Lawson who won people's choice. Since 2011, this contest has provided nearly 200,000 meals!

## BAKER CREEK DONATES \$10,000 TO OZARKS FOOD HARVEST

Heartfelt thanks to Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company for their generous gift of \$10,000. This donation will support The Food Bank's hunger relief efforts all across the Ozarks. Last year, a donation from Baker Creek allowed OFH to construct the first water catchment system on a high tunnel growing structure in Missouri! Their continued support has helped grow The Food Bank's Garden Program and provide fresh, healthy produce to those in need.

# HUNGER HERO NEWS

VOLUNTEER & FOOD DRIVE PROGRAMS

APRIL 2018



OZARKS FOOD HARVEST VOLUNTEER GARY DEHAVEN LOOKS FORWARD TO VOLUNTEERING EACH MONDAY AND FRIDAY.

## OFH CELEBRATES VOLUNTEERS

At Ozarks Food Harvest, we are thankful for our volunteers year-round. In honor of National Volunteer Appreciation Month, we are celebrating the remarkable work that our volunteers accomplish.

Without these amazing Hunger Heroes and their hard work, we would need an additional 15 full-time employees. Volunteers help us sort food, pack Senior Food boxes and *Weekend Backpacks*, assist with events, distribute food at Crimson House pantry and *Mobile Food Pantry* distributions, take care of the Ozarks Food Harvest Garden and participate in emergency gleanings.

In fiscal year 2017, 4,600 volunteers freely gave 31,200 hours, which provided 3.7 million meals! We are incredibly thankful for their caring hearts and drive to make our community a better place.

We only have so many hours on this earth, so a gift of time is a truly meaningful and special gift. As a way to show our gratitude, there will be a special display in the Volunteer Center throughout the month.

To learn more about how to get involved as a volunteer, visit [ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer](http://ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer), or contact Jolene Thompson at [jothompson@ozarksfoodharvest.org](mailto:jothompson@ozarksfoodharvest.org).

## OFH VOLUNTEER ENJOYS HELPING AT MOBILE FOOD PANTRIES

Gary DeHaven begins his Monday and Friday mornings the same way – by donating his time. On these days, you can find him hard at work in the Volunteer Center or a *Mobile Food Pantry* distribution.

After a career in television – including time as the general manager for KY3 – DeHaven retired. He purchased several acres of land and found that he loved spending the warmer months mowing and maintaining his yard.

However, when winter came, he needed something more to do with his time, and he wanted it to be meaningful.

So he began researching various volunteer opportunities until he found Ozarks Food Harvest. He started volunteering at The Food Bank over a year ago and hasn't looked back since.

"One of the things I enjoy most about volunteering is the positive spirit from other

volunteers and the staff," DeHaven said. "Everyone is just so positive and really seems to enjoy what they do at Ozarks Food Harvest to help others. I enjoy getting in my car and driving here, I look forward to volunteering. It's a rewarding place to help out."

One memory that stands out for DeHaven was when he first helped on the front lines of a *Mobile Food Pantry* distribution. He got to meet the people he worked hard to serve and realized just how important it is to give back to the community.

DeHaven is very excited about the 56,000-square-foot addition to The Food Bank. "I've always been impressed with the enormity of Ozarks Food Harvest and the impact it has on the community," he said. "It is amazing to imagine the greater impact that Ozarks Food Harvest will have on the community when the expansion to the warehouse is complete." ■



LAST YEAR, OFH VOLUNTEERS GAVE 31,200 HOURS.

# FULL CIRCLE GARDENS UPDATE

There are some exciting things happening through the *Full Circle Gardens* program this spring! Our water catchment system, which stores and reuses rainwater, is installed and ready to go for the season. This new addition will provide the irrigation needed to grow food in our new field patch.

In addition, Steinert's Greenhouse and Gardens is once again helping us start our tomato and pepper plants for the year.

These types of plants love the sun. Once transplanted, they will thrive and be well on their way to producing much-needed veggies.

Our partnership continues with Harvest on Wheels, Grow Well Missouri, and Victory Garden as they provide support for gleaners during the harvesting season. To join the Glean Team, contact Jolene Thompson at [jthompson@ozarksfoodharvest.org](mailto:jthompson@ozarksfoodharvest.org) ■



YOU CAN ALSO GET INVOLVED WITH FULL CIRCLE GARDENS BY DONATING HOMEGROWN PRODUCE.

## THANK YOU!

### FOOD DRIVES 250+ POUNDS

Springfield Public Schools *Food Fight* — 17,743  
 McDonald's of the Ozarks *Cans for Coffee* — 1,055  
 Greater Springfield Board of Realtors — 1,012  
 Do Outdoors, Inc. — 654  
 Grant Avenue Freewill Baptist Church — 503  
 Williams Elementary Student Council — 218  
 Summitt Truck Group — 180  
 Hope Church — 141  
 Wil Fischer Companies — 128  
 Boy Scouts of America Ozark Trails *Scouting for Food* — 84  
 Mercy Clinic Medical Spa — 84  
 Vital Farms — 70  
 Dickerson Park Zoo *Zooperbowl* — 63  
 More Student Living — 51  
 Emily McAllister, LLC — 47  
 Mu Phi Epsilon — 45  
 Hamra Management Company, LLC — 30

Jan. 6- March 12, 2018

### INDIVIDUALS 20+

Sam Bivins	Linda Lange
James Blackwell	George Lawrence
Margaret Blackwell	Rodolfo Martinez
Charles Bowen	John McClelland
Trudy Bowen	Libbey McDaniel
Karla Carroll	Dave McGee
Tom Carson	Karlene Negus
Henry Choe	Charlene Nelson
John Cooper	Christopher Phillips
Eddie Currier	Melody Pierson
Eileen Deal	Jose Reyes
Adam Debacker	Deborah Rumpf
Gary DeHaven	Tom Ryan
Kelton Deulan	Drayton Shealy
Kris Dreesen	Ruthann Storms
Arlene Eichler	Isabelle Strack
Wil Hardiman	Mike Swearingin
Brenda Havens	Parker Thellman
Kirk Hawkins	Logan Steinhour
Fabio Heredia	Lona Wait
Patti Hudgins	Peggy Walker
David Kasper	Georgeann Warren
Harvey Kaylor	Ryan Warren
Freeman Kleier	Larry Woolf
Michael Lampson	Robert Wullner
Donald Landon	Jerry Yoakum

Jan. 1- Feb. 28, 2018

### GROUPS 20+ HOURS

Campbell UMC-Faith for Life  
 Central Bank of the Ozarks  
 Cherokee Middle School NHS  
 CoxHealth Care  
 Datema House  
 Dodson Family  
 Drury Cross Country & Track  
 Evangel Service Team  
 Forsyth R-III FCCLA  
 Greater Springfield Board of Realtors  
 Hope Church  
 Humana  
 Ignite Youth  
 King's Way UMC  
 Logan-Rogersville FFA  
 Marisol International  
 Mercy Mission Team  
 MSU Base Program  
 MSU Bears L.E.A.D.  
 MSU Gamma Gamma Sigma  
 Peritoneal Dialysis Packers-CoxHealth  
 Rotary Club of Springfield North  
 Safelite AutoGlass  
 Scranton Family  
 Wesley UMC  
 Willard High School NHS

Jan. 1- Feb. 28, 2018

# LEARN ABOUT CREATIVE WAYS TO BE A HUNGER HERO

Are you looking for creative ways to help those in need? There are plenty of ways to get involved.

Giving back can be as simple as choosing to shop local at philanthropic stores like 5 Pound Apparel. For every name brand item you buy, five pounds of food are provided to our hungry neighbors.

Or, get creative like Willow Springs High School Senior Landon Rogers. Read more about how he provided 13,192 meals through his senior

project on page five.

Are you low on time but still want to be a Hunger Hero?

Sign up for our Harvest Circle monthly giving program.

You can choose any amount to be automatically withdrawn from your bank account, debit card or credit card each month.

Contact Jennifer Sickinger at [jsickinger@ozarksfoodharvest.org](mailto:jsickinger@ozarksfoodharvest.org) to sign up.

Together, we can help our neighbors in need. ■





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Springfield, MO 65801-5746

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Hunger into  
Hope™

