

NOURISHING NEWS

FROM THE GREATER BERKS FOOD BANK

FALL 2014
VOLUME 24
ISSUE 3

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Open House

We were overwhelmed (and overjoyed) by the amount of support we received on Thursday, December 4, when more than 400 of our community friends showed up for the Open House and Ribbon Cutting of our new facility!

The event was a wonderful opportunity for the Greater Berks Food Bank to showcase the community's new distribution center for hunger relief. All of those in attendance took a tour of the building and were informed by staff at various stops exactly what the larger space offers us (photo). They learned that our new facility (as compared to our former facility) has tripled our frozen storage; doubled our refrigerator capacity; added a special storage space for 70 pallets of produce; doubled our non-perishable food storage area; and vastly expanded our ability to host volunteer groups. This all adds up to more food for our neighbors who need it – and a more effective space for us to best serve the hungry.

GBFB Executive Director, Peg Bianca; GBFB Board President, Eric White; and Board Member and Capital Campaign Co-Chair, Pete Molinaro, each addressed the gathering as well. While they each took time to praise the new facility and thank those who have made the move possible to date, they also reminded the crowd that the work is still ongoing. To this point, the GBFB's Bringing More to the Table Capital Campaign was publicly introduced to the audience. This is a \$3 million campaign to pay off the debt the GBFB incurred to purchase and renovate the new facility. While \$2 million has already been raised from major gifts in the campaign's "silent phase," the public is now being asked to help raise the final \$1 million so the goal can be reached. See From the Executive Director article on page 2 for more information about this campaign. You can also view our capital campaign video on our website's (berksfoodbank.org) special Capital Campaign page.

Thank you to all who attended our special night! If you were unable to attend, but would like to visit us, please call us to schedule a tour for yourself or your group. We would love to show you the facility that you, our supporters, have made possible!



Happy Holidays from the Greater Berk Food Bank!



Please help the Greater Berks Food Bank reach our capital campaign goal!

Donations can be made via mail or on our website, berksfoodbank.org. Please notate "Capital Campaign" on any check gifts. If you would like to receive our capital campaign packet, please call the GBFB at **610-926-5802 ext. 212**



\$3 MILLION
Our Goal

OVER \$2 MILLION
Already Raised

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If you have any comments or questions, please contact the editor.

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A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Greater Berks Food Bank may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

CROP Walk

The 33rd annual Reading CROP Walk, coordinated by the West Berks Mission District and CROP committee members, took place on Sunday, October 12 at Gring's Mill. On a warm, sunny fall afternoon, nearly 400 walkers, from 40 area places of worship, hit the trails to raise funds to fight hunger at home and abroad. Almost \$25,000 was raised, with twenty-five percent of the proceeds going to the GBFB and the remainder going to international hunger relief efforts led by Church World Services. The Walk has raised nearly \$1 million during its 33 years of existence!

West Lawn United Methodist Church won the "Golden Shoe Award" for having the most walkers participating. Church members posed (photo) with their award before hitting the trails!

Thank you to all who walked and continue to make this a successful event!



From the Executive Director

Needless to say, it's been quite an exciting and transformational year for the Greater Berks Food Bank!

It was only a little over a year ago that I first toured the facility, that would become our new home, when it was for sale. Right away, after looking at countless other properties, I knew this was the facility the Food Bank needed to grow and best serve our hungry neighbors. At the end of April the property officially became ours and after a summer of renovations we moved in the end of September. It was a whirlwind, but we are here and extremely grateful.

Our new home is already helping us achieve what we planned from the larger space. We have been able to accept, without hesitation, large donations of fresh and frozen foods. Just within the past few weeks, we have brought in, stored, and distributed trailer loads of frozen meats and meals; a full trailer of potatoes and another of blueberries; and large loads of apples, squash, and plums, to name just a few examples.

The total cost for this project was \$5 million. Of that, \$1 million was provided by Board designated funds. About another \$1 million will be provided by the sale of our former facility. The remaining \$3 million is debt acquired by the GBFB to make this necessary move possible. To alleviate the burden of this debt we have turned to our generous community.

Up until now, quietly, we have been raising money through major gifts from community members, companies, and foundations. Our Bringing More to the Table Capital Campaign has been very successful to date – raising \$2 million of the \$3 million goal during the "silent" phase.

To reach our goal and successfully conclude our campaign – we are now asking you, our community supporters in Berks and Schuylkill Counties, to help us. \$1 million is a lot to still raise, but I am confident through your support we can make this happen.

Please, consider making a thoughtful donation to our capital campaign today. Donations can be mailed to the GBFB or made through our website (berksfoodbank.org). I thank you in advance and wish all of you a happy holiday season!

Scouting for Food

Part of the Boy Scout Oath is "to help other people at all times." For the 28th consecutive year, the Hawk Mountain Council of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) did just that through their "Scouting for Food" drive.

On Saturday, November 8, Scouts collected food from households across Berks County for transport to the GBFB's warehouse. More than 50,000 pounds of food were collected. This food is critical to the GBFB's efforts to keep food on the plates of our neighbors in need during the holiday season and the difficult winter months. Thank you to all who donated food!

Special additional thanks go to the PA National Guard and Birdsboro Beverage Co. for providing trucks and staff for food transportation from the sites to the GBFB (Guardsmen pictured handing food to Brian Beddow, Field Director, BSA). Thanks also go out to Beacon Container Corp. for donating the 3,000 cardboard boxes in which the food was packed.



BSA & The National Guard working together at the GBFB



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Agency Feature - Servants to All Homeless Shelter

Typically, this space is reserved to feature a GBFB agency that has served thousands of our hungry neighbors for many years. However, the GBFB is so excited to be associated with this new agency that we wanted to share their story!

Servants to All Homeless Shelter, serving Pottsville and Schuylkill County, was only recently founded in January 2014, a result of the incredibly harsh winter we all endured. Previously, the homeless of Schuylkill County had no shelters to which to turn. Troubled by this fact, and thinking of those living on the streets bearing winter storm after winter storm, a group of concerned community members came together to form what became Servants to All. Quickly, the group pulled together three Pottsville area churches that provided, on a rotating basis, emergency shelter. As many as 25 people a night sought the warmth and safety of the temporary shelters. However, once the danger of the winter passed, a permanent home was needed to be found.



Successfully seeking private donations, the group pulled together the funding to purchase a property.

The first week of December, Servants to All became owners of their first home in downtown Pottsville.

Plans call for the new center, to be called "My Father's House," to at first provide day services including breakfast and lunch (with food provided by the GBFB), and life resources, such as counseling, job training and job searches. Until they are able to provide overnight shelter (hopefully by winter 2015), they will also aid their clients in finding other temporary shelter or at the least provide winter coats, sleeping bags and blankets.

The GBFB recently chose to partner with Servants to All in Walmart's "Fight Hunger Spark Change" online grant competition. Together, we received more than 4,000 votes from our supporters and Servants To All received \$15,000 to help purchase kitchen equipment and supplies for their new home.

The GBFB looks forward to assisting Servants to All in their mission to help the homeless of Schuylkill County for years to come.

World Food Day Breakfast

More than 225 friends of the Greater Berks Food Bank joined us on Friday, October 17, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, for what proved to be one of our most special World Food Day Breakfasts. We certainly had a lot to commemorate, celebrate, and honor. Of course, the recent move into our new facility was highlighted by GBFB Executive Director, Peg Bianca, in her address to the audience. While she thanked all of you, our supporters, for making the move to our larger facility a reality, she reminded the crowd that the work to make this move possible is still ongoing. After her presentation, Peg gave those in attendance an advance preview of our Bringing More to the Table Capital Campaign video. Although the campaign was not officially made public until our December 4 Open House, Peg wanted to remind the audience that their continued support will be needed, to not only continue the daily operations of our mission, but to help pay the borrowed debt the GBFB acquired to make this necessary move possible.

World Food Day Breakfast also serves annually as an opportunity for the GBFB to honor an individual whose volunteer spirit and actions have made a major impact on our organization. This year, we were pleased to present the 19th Annual Jim and Anna Connors Volunteerism Award to current GBFB Board President, Eric White (photo with Peg Bianca). In addition to serving on the GBFB Board and our Capital Campaign Cabinet, Eric has been instrumental as a major food and financial donor through his professional affiliation with Redner's Warehouse Markets. As Board President, Eric has been an almost daily presence at the GBFB, offering his valued assistance and guidance in many functions. Finally, the Breakfast afforded the GBFB Board of Directors a chance to commemorate a very important

milestone at the GBFB. In October, Peg Bianca celebrated her 25th year at the GBFB. For nearly that entire stretch, Peg has been leading the community's fight against hunger as the Executive Director of the organization. On behalf of the Board, President Eric White presented Peg with flowers and a gift, but most importantly, through his words, let Peg know the significant impact she has made for a multitude of our struggling neighbors through the years.



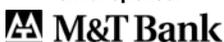
GBFB Board President, Eric White was presented the 19th Annual Jim & Anna Connors Volunteerism Award

The GBFB would like to thank our two major event sponsors

Gold Sponsor

Mrs. Rosalind Hyman

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We thank the following businesses, organizations and places of worship that recently hosted food and fund drives*:

- 100 Park Apartments at Wyomissing Square
- 13th & Union Elementary School, Reading
- Akzo Nobel Paints LLC
- Barrer & White Orthodontists
- Bausman Memorial U.C.C.
- Berks County Bicycle Club
- Boscov's Department Stores
- Brentwood Industries
- Christ Church U.C.C., Reading
- Elevation Burger
- Encompass Insurance
- First Commonwealth F.C.U.
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- Good Shepherd U.C.C.
- Karate for Kids
- National Penn
- Northeast Middle School
- PA State Grange Deaf & Community Services Dept.
- Reading Eagle Company
- Reading Public Library
- Reading Royals Hockey
- Reading United A.C. Soccer
- Reform Congregation Oheb Shalom
- Rep. Mark Rozzi's District Office
- Santander Bank
- Schneider Electric
- Senior Berners
- Spring Township Fire Dept.
- St. Joseph Medical Center
- St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
- St. Mark's U.C.C.
- Sts. Constantine & Helen Church (Vacation Bible School)
- Tulpehocken Trojans Athletic Assoc.
- Van Reed Athletic Association
- Village of Maiden Creek Condo Assoc.
- Wilson School District Child Care
- YMCA of Reading & Berks County

* Food drives of at least 100 lbs. and fund drives of at least \$100 from 7/14/14 to 11/21/14

Greater Berks Food Bank
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Reading, PA 19608

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Fax: (610) 926-7638

Email: pbianca@feedingamerica.org

www.berksfoodbank.org

About Our Organization . . .
The Greater Berks Food Bank, established in 1983, collects, purchases, stores, and distributes over seven million pounds of food annually to the more than 300 programs which feed the hungry in Berks & Schuylkill counties.



Ways you can help...

Save the Date! There is going to be a Feeding Frenzy in Berks County on March 13, 2015 when Lynx Computer Technologies, Inc. hosts their 2015 Concerts for Charity* to benefit the Greater Berks Food Bank.

Feeding Frenzy! Dinner, music, and dancing with the well-known Jimmy Buffett tribute band, Parrotbeach. Fun, food, and live music will be the order of the night at the Reading Country Club. The goal is for everyone to have fun while raising money and awareness for a problem that affects so many in Berks and Schuylkill Counties – hunger. Serious fun for a serious cause!

Lynx Computer Technologies is seeking like-minded companies and organizations to help sponsor this event. Sponsorship levels range from \$500 to \$2,000 and offer an array of benefits including pre-event advertising, night of the event promotion, and all access passes to the event. If your company or organization would like to learn more about becoming a sponsor, contact Betsy Johnston at Lynx at 610-678-8131 or at betsy@lynxnet.com.

Individual tickets will go on sale by February. Please keep checking our Facebook page facebook.com/GreaterBerksFoodBank for updates!

The last Concert for Charity raised more than \$14,000 for another area non-profit, please help make this event another success for the GBFB!

*Concerts for Charity is a registered 501(c)(3) established by Lynx to benefit area non-profits.



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