

NOURISHING NEWS

FROM THE GREATER BERKS FOOD BANK

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a member of
FEEDING AMERICA

Feeding Frenzy A Hit!

Nearly 350 fun-loving people (many wearing Hawaiian shirts, leis and flip flops!) came out on the evening of Friday, March 13, and helped LYNX Computer Technologies, Inc. raise \$24,700 to support the Greater Berks Food Bank!

Held at the Reading Country Club, those attending were transported from a chilly Pennsylvania March evening to a warm tropical island. Parrotbeach, a well-known Jimmy Buffett tribute band, filled the dance floor (there was even a conga line!) with songs about beaches, boats and faraway islands. The delicious Caribbean-themed buffet dinner, tropical decorations and frozen island drinks helped complete the transformation to a much warmer place!

The event – playfully dubbed “Feeding Frenzy” not only as a reference to a popular Jimmy Buffett song but also to the fact that it will help feed many of our hungry neighbors - was the 2015 edition of LYNX Computer’s annual Concert for Charity. The company considers the concert their

opportunity to give back to our community. Past concerts have benefitted other worthy area charities. As the GBFB has been a long-time customer of LYNX (they just set-up the computer network for our new facility) they were pleased to make us this year’s beneficiary. The donation will be designated to the GBFB’s Bringing More to the Table Capital Campaign. This campaign is helping the GBFB underwrite the purchase and renovation expenses for our new facility. To date, the campaign has raised \$2.2 million towards the \$3 million goal.

In the photo, presenting the ceremonial check to GBFB Executive Director, Peg Bianca (center), is Betsy Johnston, LYNX marketing director; Mark Diefenderfer, LYNX president; and Mike Widel and Peter Mullenberg, LYNX vice presidents. Thank you to LYNX and to all of our friends who joined us for an amazing night!



Lending a Helping Hand

There were numerous important reasons the GBFB needed to move to our new home to be able to best serve the hungry of our area for years to come. One of those reasons was the ability to better host the volunteers so crucial to our daily operations. Volunteers perform such necessary tasks as repacking food, assisting with warehouse duties, and aiding in office clerical duties. Because of the extreme lack of space in our former facility, hosting these volunteers was severely difficult and it created a lot of obstacles.

We are over-joyed (and quite simply amazed) at just how quickly our new facility has paid dividends and allowed us to expand the number of wonderful people giving their time to help the GBFB in the fight against hunger.

From October 1, 2014 (when we first began operations at our new home) through March 31, 2015, a total of 536 (unduplicated) individuals have volunteered at the GBFB. These people gave 3,854 hours of their time. This represents a 45% increase from the same time frame the previous year!

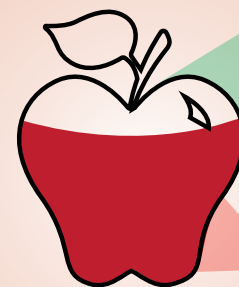
Our new building has also provided us with training space in our office to initiate a volunteer orientation program. So far, 197 individuals and groups have completed the one hour program in which they learn about the GBFB, the volunteer process and warehouse safety procedures.

We always need more volunteers! If you want to help individually, or have a group that wants to help (pictured are members of the Reading Royals who recently volunteered), please visit the Volunteer page on our website, berksfoodbank.org, to learn more and register.



Please help the GBFB reach our “Bringing More to the Table” Capital Campaign goal!

Donation can be made via mail or on our website. Please note **“capital campaign”** on your check gifts or when making an online donation.



\$3 MILLION
Our Goal

\$2.2 MILLION
Already Raised

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Rob Wertman, Warehouse Supervisor

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.

From the Executive Director



It's unbelievable that a year has passed since we purchased our new property located at 117 Morgan Drive in Sinking Spring. After the building was rehabbed with the infrastructure needed to feed the hungry: a freezer, refrigerator and lots of racking, we moved in last October. We were serious about increasing our distribution of fresh, perishable foods and center of the plate items resulting in a total distribution of 1,681,650 lbs. of healthy perishable foods since our move. When compared to last year this is an increase of 252,690 or 126 tons of delicious center of the plate foods which are the most nutrient dense, "Bringing More to the Table" for the 112,000 people that rely on our help to eat.

And we have started planning for more expansion of our programs and services. Top on our list is a mobile pantry. This would be similar to a book mobile but filled with foods that will bring much needed nutrition to all corners of our service area. But before we embark on this we must first complete our current challenge which is successfully raising the funds to complete our \$3 million Capital Campaign.

To date we have raised \$2.2 million thanks to so many members in our community. But we are still short of our goal by \$800,000. 112,000 residents of Berks and Schuylkill counties depend on the Greater Berks Food Bank to supply nourishing foods for their diets. I must ask if I can count on you to thoughtfully consider a gift to help us reach our \$3 million goal, ultimately "Bringing More to the Table" for so many people that need food assistance. Thank you.

Reading Health System - "Pound Per Person Challenge"

The Reading Health System staff did a fantastic job in their fourth annual "Pound Per Person Challenge" to benefit the GBFB. They set a goal of collecting a pound of food for every one of their employees – more than 6,000 staff members. On a cold and snowy February morning, GBFB trucks picked up a total of 7,674 pounds of donated food!

The concept for the food drive was originally conceived by the Reading Health System Nurse Champions – a group that understands the important role proper nutrition plays in maintaining good health. The food drive comes at a particularly good time for the GBFB as end of winter is a time when community food drives are scarce.

Thank you to all of the Reading Health System staff members for the incredible effort!



All modes of hospital transportation helped deliver the food!

Met Ed "Harvests" Funds for the Hungry

For 14 years, the employees of Met Ed, a First Energy Company, have enthusiastically, and generously, supported the Greater Berks Food Bank through their month-long Harvest for Hunger fundraising campaign.

This year's campaign was once again an amazing success – raising more than \$25,000 to help the GBFB feed the hungry of our community! This year's contribution brings the 14 year total amount raised for the GBFB to nearly \$300,000.



Met Ed's campaign is part of a corporate-wide campaign held by all First Energy companies throughout their six state service area. Annually, the campaign raises more than \$300,000 across all of the companies.

A taco lunch, car wash, cornhole tournament, beach house vacation rental raffle, and Easter candy sale were just some of the many fun ways the employees of Met Ed raised money throughout March. This year's campaign also marked the return of the popular Met Ed Idol Competition. This year's winner was Nicholas Freer who sang John Legend's "All of Me" as his encore (featured in photo).

If your company is interested in initiating a similar fundraising campaign please contact Doug Long at the GBFB at 610-926-5802 ext. 212.

Agency Feature - New Journey Community Outreach, Inc.

More than 35 years ago, a knock on a church secretary's door from a hungry neighbor hoping for a meal was the simple beginnings of what became Reading's largest soup kitchen.

Today, on average 150 neighbors in need, many of them homeless, receive lunch each weekday (excluding Wednesdays). On Wednesdays, a food pantry serves up to 80 families and individuals. A free clothing distribution further assists those who visit.

The social ministry saw a major change last year when the church that established and hosted the soup kitchen and pantry, New Journey United Methodist Church (formerly Central Park U.M.C.), merged with West Lawn U.M.C. and ceased serving as a church after 130 years. As part of the merger, the two churches formed an affiliated non-profit entity, New Journey Community Outreach, Inc., to carry on the much needed work in the city.



With a paid staff of only three, and a whole lot of volunteer help, New Journey Community Outreach has indeed continued providing meals, groceries and clothing (along with a welcome helping of kindness and respect) to the often desperate individuals who walk through their doors. In fact, the organization's newly formed Board is looking into expanding services, perhaps adding GED courses, health screenings and other resources to improve the lives of those they serve.

The Greater Berks Food Bank is proud that New Journey's food ministries were one of our original 12 member agencies when we were founded in 1983. While meals for the soup kitchen are primarily prepared and served by volunteers from area churches and schools; a majority of the food for the food pantry is supplied by the GBFB. In 2014, we supplied 98,000 pounds of food, valued at \$112,000, to the food pantry.

We look forward to helping New Journey Community Outreach continue their vital mission for at least another 35 years!

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

- 1847 Financial
- Adecco
- Albright College
- The Arthritis & Joint Replacement Center of Reading
- Baker Tilly
- Berks Co. Assistance Office
- Bosco's Department Stores
- Brownie Troop #1696
- CE Cole Intermediate School
- Chicks for Charity
- Cornwall Terrace Elementary School
- First U.C.C.
- Fleetwood Middle School
- Good Life Financial Group
- I-LEAD Charter School
- Kutztown University Honors Program
- Madison Reed Farm
- Met Ed/First Energy
- Millmont Elementary School
- Mohnton League of Golden Agers
- Mt. Penn Elementary School
- Muhlenberg Middle School
- New Apostolic Church
- Orthopaedic Associates of Reading
- PA Junior Holstein Assoc.
- Penn National Gaming Inc.
- Penn State Berks Athletics
- Reading Eagle Co./Berks Jazz Fest
- Reading Health Systems
- Reading High School Jr. ROTC
- Reading Lodge No. 549 F&AM
- Reading Public Library
- Santander Bank
- Service Tire Truck Centers
- Standard Offset Printing
- Tutor Time
- Twin Valley Middle School
- Union Lodge No. 479 F&AM
- Wilson High School NHS
- Wyomissing Area Jr./Sr. High School
- Wyomissing Hills Elementary
- Wyomissing U.C.C

* Food drives of at least 100 lbs. and fund drives of at least \$100 from 11/22/14 to 4/15/15

Scrapple Scramble

For the second consecutive year, we are honored LaunchDM, a Wyomissing-based creative digital marketing studio, has chosen the GBFB to be the beneficiary of their annual Scrapple Scramble Golf Outing. This is not only one of the most fun golf scramble you will play in, it is also an excellent way to support the work of one of your favorite local charities, the GBFB! Visit LaunchDM's website (listed to right) to register to play or to have your company be a sponsor.

PLAY GOLF FEED THE HUNGRY

TO BENEFIT THE GREATER BERKS FOOD BANK

FRIDAY JUNE 5TH, 2015 - WILLOW HOLLOW GOLF COURSE



A REGIONAL DELICACY & GOLF OUTING

LAUNCHDM.COM/GOLF



Greater Berks Food Bank

117 Morgan Drive
Reading, PA 19608

Phone: (610) 926-5802

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...

Berks County Parrot Head Club presents
Summer Parrot Daze
at Willow Glen Park, Sinking Spring
Saturday, July 11

- Doors Open 2pm
- Live auction at 6:30pm
- Band plays 4-6pm & 8-10pm
- Silent & Chinese Auctions

All proceeds benefit the Greater Berks Food Bank!

Three ways you can support this FUN event:

- 🔥 **Attend!** Tickets are \$20 in advance and can be purchased at the GBFB's front desk or online at www.BerksCountyPHC.org
- 🔥 **Donate auction items!** The Silent & Chinese Auctions raise a lot of money and are an easy way for your business to get involved and gain some recognition! Gift cards to area restaurants or hair/nail salons are always popular. So are gift items such as: golf supplies; fashion accessories; wine or food baskets; home or kitchen wares; and more! Call Doug at the GBFB (610-926-5802 ext. 212) if you would like to donate an item(s).
- 🔥 **Be a sponsor!** Another way your business can get involved is by being an event sponsor. Sponsorships begin at just \$250 and provide great exposure for your business. Contact Dave Bednez with the Parrot Head Club at jbednez@indigo-pmg.com for more info.



Help us meet the match!

For the fifth year, a generous local couple (who wish to remain anonymous) has offered a donation match to support our important work. This year they will again match \$1 for every \$4 we receive from new donors – up to \$100,000 in new donations. This means they will personally donate \$25,000 to the GBFB if we raise \$100,000 from new donors! If you have never donated, please consider doing so today. Your gift will multiply because of the match! If you are a loyal supporter, please encourage your friends and family to donate for the first time to help us meet the match!

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