

Today's Presentation

Program: Who We Are

Speaker: John Whitaker, Executive Director, Indianapolis Midwest Food Bank

Introduced by: Jim Farley

Attendance: 97

Guests: Spencer Waldman, Patricia Keener

Scribe: Gonz Chua

Editor: Carl Warner

In the State of Indiana, over 15 % of the population lives in poverty. 15.3% are food insecure and that figure for children is over 21.8%. Those who are in greatest need are the working poor, newly unemployed, single parents, the homeless, victims of abuse, children and the elderly. These people are also likely to experience physical and emotional abuse, do poorly in school and have a reduced ability to learn.

The Midwest Food Bank was established to help collect and distribute food to the needy. It hopes to distribute \$30 million worth of food and relief this year within the State. They hope to feed 60,000 - 90,000 individuals each month through food distribution to over 329 agencies in Indiana. For every \$1 of donation, it delivers \$40.00 worth of food and services.

The Indianapolis division has only 6 employees but over 3,000 individual volunteers. Currently, it delivers two semi loads of food a day. Over 53% of the foods distributed are fresh fruits and vegetables, organic whole grain products, and dairy and meat products. Foods are contributed by major food corporations and national benevolent organizations. It will also distribute nearly 50,000 pounds of animal protein donated by local hog farmers. MFB-Indianapolis also has its own one-acre vegetable garden. Weekly, they distribute produce harvested from this Garden of Hope; a garden primarily tended by the Burmese refugees who live in the township.

MFB-Indianapolis partners with the Indiana Motor Truck Association for donation of transportation. It has its own fleet of semi-tractor trailers, two refrigerated box trucks, and a 16 foot box truck –all driven by volunteers. Their main facility covers 14,000 square feet with storage for 30 semi-trailers of food. (more information at: <https://indianapolis.midwestfoodbank.org/news-and-media/news-and-updates/article/2017/03/indyfooddroporg-launch>)

Midwest Food Bank has a 4-star rating with Charity Navigator. It partners with the Salvation Army in many disaster relief efforts and is a first responder in pandemic outbreaks.



John Whitaker, MFB-Indianapolis Executive Director