

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



*Volunteers supporting the Klondike Mobile Pantry. Photo by Alli Chaney.*

## HAROLD AND JUDY'S IMPACT

**"YOU NEED TO HELP PEOPLE ONCE IN A WHILE."**

Judy Doremire spent several years managing accounts for the free and reduced lunch program at Klondike Elementary School in West Lafayette. Harold Doremire, Judy's husband of 41 years, explained how deeply this affected Judy, making her "very much aware" that school lunch was the only meal some children received. According to Harold, when students came to school hungry, without money for lunch, Judy "would see to it that they had something to eat."

The food insecurity Judy observed while working at Klondike Elementary represented a snapshot of the number of children facing food insecurity across the state of Indiana. Throughout Food Finders' 16-county service area in north-central Indiana, approximately 15,770 children, 1 in 8, are food insecure. Considering food insecurity and hunger's effect on children, Harold states, "If you've been hungry or you are hungry, and you're

trying to work on your lessons, you're still hungry. That has an impact." Harold is correct; according to Feeding America, the short and long-term impact of food insecurity places children at a severe disadvantage, increasing the likelihood of developmental impairments in language and motor skills and social and behavioral problems. These risks only increase during the summer when families cannot access free and reduced lunch programs at school.

When Judy passed away in 2011, Harold's long-time friend, Steve Qualkinbush, approached him with a project to busy his mind. Recounting his introduction to Food Finders, Harold states, "[Steve] came to me one day, and he said, 'I've got just the thing for you, Harold.'" With the help of family and friends, Harold has since sponsored eight mobile pantries at Klondike Elementary in Judy's memory.

# HAROLD'S STORY

*Continued from cover*

Around 20 people, including teachers and administrators at Klondike, as well as Steve and a few of Judy's former colleagues and friends, came out to support this year's mobile pantry. Harold emphasizes that the mission of mobile pantries is "to provide a helping hand to whoever needs it ... If you need help, you show up."



*Harold Doremire holding a photograph of his late wife, Judy.*

Steve, who began volunteering with us in 2010, said it "gave him a lot of pleasure to introduce Harold to Food Finders." With the support of the dedicated volunteers and Harold's sponsorship, 80 local households were served at the Klondike mobile pantry in April.

Harold explains the ongoing need for programs like the mobile pantry, "I've often thought that most of us are pretty close to being [food] insecure. I mean, we have a job, but if you lose your job or can't find one, it doesn't take very long before you're looking for avenues to help raise your family." When we spoke with Steve about his friend Harold's commitment to alleviating food insecurity, Steve said, "Harold is a real dedicated person. When he gets behind something, he gets behind it 200%." In addition to the annual Klondike pantry, Harold volunteers for United Way's Read to Succeed Program at Klondike Elementary.

If you're interested in learning more about how to sponsor a mobile pantry in our 16-county service area, please reach out to Food Finders Food Bank. A video of Harold speaking about this mobile pantry is located on our website.



**TO WATCH HAROLD'S STORY SCAN THE  
CODE WITH YOUR PHONE!**

## THE WORKING HUNGRY DOCUMENTARY

Robert Miles represents one of three families featured in a new documentary on food insecurity in Indiana. The film's opening scenes show Miles reflecting on the economic barriers his family has faced: "It's worse now than it's ever been. But keep going forward - don't give up." This August, Food Finders Food Bank and Lafayette Urban Ministry (LUM) are partnering to present a screening of *The Working Hungry*, a 30-minute documentary examining the root causes of food insecurity, followed by a panel discussion with local leaders.



Through this collaboration with LUM, we seek to highlight the complexity of food insecurity and dispel harmful myths that maintain the stigma of poverty. Summarizing his experience watching the documentary, LUM's Executive Director, Wes Tillett, states, "For me, one of the powerful effects of *The Working Hungry* is that it gives local human faces and voices to hunger. It moves 'hungry people' from an abstract concept in my mind to the concrete reality of my Hoosier neighbors who are gainfully employed and yet are still struggling to be nutritionally secure. Hunger isn't just 'over there' somewhere. It's right here." Hunger is right here; over 700,000 Hoosiers are food insecure, with 65,000 people experiencing food insecurity in our 16-county service area.

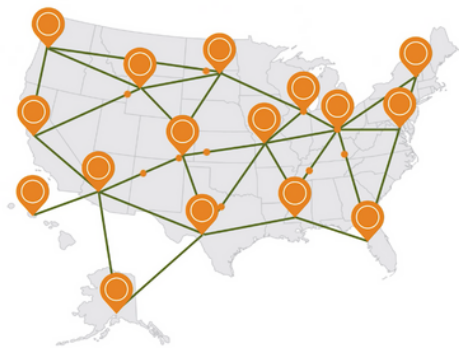
This August, we hope that you will join Food Finders and LUM to educate, advocate, and address food insecurity in our communities. Food Finders will send an update when the location and precise date of this screening are confirmed.

# SERVICE INSIGHTS INITIATIVE

In collaboration with Feeding America, Food Finders is rolling out a new initiative this summer to target and distribute food resources more efficiently. Through a standardized intake process, neighbors will have the option to provide information to help us better understand their unique needs.

Service Insights allows us to collect data securely and view it in real time, reflecting a significant shift in our previous reporting capabilities.

While we plan to use this with agency partners, we will start rolling it out through our mobile pantry program. According to Katy Travis, Agency Relations and Programs Director: "Through this new process for checking neighbors into our mobile pantry distributions, we can tell a more accurate story about who our neighbors are and how the mobile pantry program is beneficial to them."



By better targeting the needs of our neighbors, this system will also allow us to advocate on behalf of our neighbors and target locations where food insecurity is highest in our 16-county service area. Amanda Porter, Feeding America's Service Insights manager, reminds us:

*"Neighbors are experts on what they need, and Service Insights is our way to hear their voices so we can meet that need in ways that we have not before. By allowing neighbors to tell us more clearly what they need and leveraging those responses through innovative data visualizations, we can work together toward ending hunger."*

Through a Feeding America grant, Food Finders will provide tablets, software, and training to agency partners who wish to participate. This initiative allows us to streamline the intake process, allowing for a quicker, more efficient, and more accurate representation of community needs.

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT/CEO



Dear Friends:

Almost six months into my new position, a personal challenge has been moving away from the former role as "implementer" (putting out fires). My new role allows for room to thoughtfully and strategically consider who we are and where we are headed in this post-pandemic world. A question posed at recent food banking conferences has been: "What are we uniquely good at?"

In the last year, Food Finders has provided more than 10 million meals to people seeking assistance. However, equally as important to us are the stories behind those numbers, such as the family who ordinarily doesn't use our services but lost everything in a house fire; the person unable to seek help in their battle against depression; and a senior we met through our home delivery program, unable to access benefits due to several institutional and technological barriers – all having nowhere else to turn. I am most proud of our team, who work in a thousand big and sometimes small ways to help stabilize the lives of those seeking our assistance; this often extends beyond access to food, working to keep our neighbors from falling further into poverty.

Released this spring, Feeding America's 2021 Map the Meal Gap numbers showed improvements in food security across our service area. These statistics provide a snapshot of a year in which government, public and charitable sectors were working in tandem, throwing all available resources at hunger relief to mitigate the fallout from COVID-19.

It worked. We saw the needle move from 12.4% of our neighbors facing food insecurity to 11.1%! Unfortunately, those numbers no longer reflect our reality. The additional support and COVID-19 aid have ended, and adding insult to injury, are mounting concerns about proposed cuts to our nation's federal nutrition and safety-net programs through the upcoming reauthorization of the Farm Bill. With Feeding America, we are advocating for lawmakers to pass a bipartisan 2023 Farm Bill that supports food banks and the people we serve.

I share this to make you aware of the very real challenges we face in the upcoming year and to highlight and celebrate the immense impact our country and our local communities can have when we work together to tackle hunger and its root causes.

As I consider Food Finders' unique strengths, I always come back to the fact that we truly see our neighbors in need for who they are, human beings with unique challenges. While our journey started by solely addressing food insecurity, we now provide wrap-around services, meeting our neighbors at the intersection of food insecurity and social support. By centering dignity and compassion, we will continue to connect people to the resources necessary to address the root causes of food insecurity.

With gratitude,

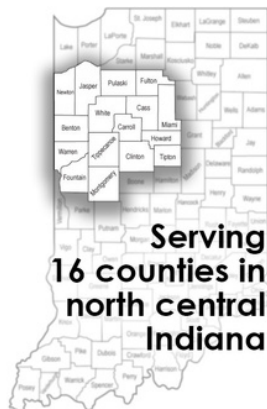
Handwritten signature of Kier Crites Muller.

Kier Crites Muller  
President/CEO





1204 Greenbush Street  
Lafayette, IN 47904



**Summer 2023**

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR 2023 Events at a Glance

August TBA	<i>The Working Hungry</i> Screening
August 27	Beers Across the Wabash
September	Hunger Action Month
September 17	Hunger Hike
November 22	Feed the Need Day

For complete event details, visit  
our website at  
[www.food-finders.org](http://www.food-finders.org).

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## NEEDS YOU

**TO VOLUNTEER TO FIGHT HUNGER  
THIS SUMMER!**



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