Indiana National Guard Deployed to Foodbank

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On March 16, 2020, Governor Holcomb ordered the deployment of Indiana National Guard (INNG) to the 10 food banks located throughout our state. This order provided some much-needed help and ensured that Hoosier Families would continue receiving food during the COVID-19 pandemic. We never wish for an event like this, or the ripple of disruption that it brings to our daily lives. But, through this experience, there is good to be found. It can be seen locally, and throughout the world, in the people who step up to help and serve.

Since April 9, 2020 (Holy Thursday), the Foodbank has been hosting the INNG to help move the increased amount of food into our communities resulting from unemployment or inability to work, school closures, and other disruptions to our “normal” lifestyle. The appointment of the Guard has provided us with a great opportunity to work closely with men and women who are focused on achieving mission success with honor and respect. Their ability to demonstrate what it means to be part of a team is both vital to their success and inspiring to those around them.

Travis Rodgers, PV2 Diesel & Wheel Mechanic, has been deployed at our Foodbank since the start. He remarked on how helping others receive food items has impacted him, “It really makes me feel good to know we have an opportunity to help others who are struggling. As a soldier and a Christian, I know this helps me fulfill my goals in life... (continued on page 3)
A Word from the Agency Director

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the events of the last three months are racing through my mind. The challenges brought about by a pandemic saw Catholic Charities rise to new heights and make changes to the way we operate our programs. Several food distributions also included hygiene products for students now unable to get them from school, housing families at Bethany House required strict safety guidelines, and online educational programming was put in place for the Ryves youth as we were forced to close the Center.

Both as the Agency Director as our team faced challenges and as a parent whose own children struggled with questions, it felt like too often my response was, “I don’t know yet.” As we watch the demand fluctuate from all-time highs to below average numbers from week to week, I again answer with, “I don’t know” when asked, why is this happening? Friends, one thing I do know, without any uncertainty, is that through the ups and downs of this pandemic, Catholic Charities was there no matter the level of need.

Inside this newsletter you will read about how we’re responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, our service area ranked highest in Indiana for food insecurity. It is projected to COVID-19, our service area ranked highest generated by Feeding America show that, Results of the 2020 Map the Meal Gap Study is increasing and we share the results of the banks working to provide help to those struggling with questions, it felt like too often my challenges and as a parent whose own children struggled with questions, it felt like too often my response was, “I don’t know yet.” As we watch the demand fluctuate from all-time highs to below average numbers from week to week, I again answer with, “I don’t know” when asked, why is this happening? Friends, one thing I do know, without any uncertainty, is that through the ups and downs of this pandemic, Catholic Charities was there no matter the level of need. Inside this newsletter you will read about how we’re responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, our service area ranked highest in Indiana for food insecurity. It is projected to COVID-19, our service area ranked highest generated by Feeding America show that, Results of the 2020 Map the Meal Gap Study is increasing and we share the results of the banks working to provide help to those struggling with questions, it felt like too often my challenges and as a parent whose own children struggled with questions, it felt like too often my response was, “I don’t know yet.” As we watch the demand fluctuate from all-time highs to below average numbers from week to week, I again answer with, “I don’t know” when asked, why is this happening? Friends, one thing I do know, without any uncertainty, is that through the ups and downs of this pandemic, Catholic Charities was there no matter the level of need.

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Results of the 2020 Map the Meal Gap Study generated by Feeding America show that, prior to COVID-19, our service area ranked highest in Indiana for food insecurity. It is projected that we will not only maintain this ranking in 2020, but that the gap will increase by as much as 10%. These numbers are unacceptable to us and we know they are to you as well. Adults and children, our very own neighbors, are going hungry.

There is so much uncertainty in our country today, unrest and fear resounding from struggles with race, cultural norms, and a pandemic unlike anything that we have seen. So much of what we know and believe has been shaken, turned upside-down, and questioned. We turn on the news and see examples of our society at its worst when what we need to see is everyone standing together and helping one another.

Every generation has the responsibility of making our society better for the next generation. We hope that our children can achieve more in their lives than we are able. It is a noble desire. We should all aspire to bring others along with us by engaging, encouraging, and making certain they have the basic needs in life to reach their potential. Only together can we solve these situations and make our communities better for all.

Yours in Christ,

John C. Etling
Agency Director

Foodbank Turns 40!

As we continue to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the Foodbank, we reflect on how the events of this year have brought new challenges and allowed us to rise and meet the expanding needs of the communities we serve. The COVID-19 pandemic may have brought about changes in the way that we distribute food and other safety precautions, but one thing has not changed — our commitment to provide help and create hope during uncertain times ahead.

Do you have a story or memory involving the Foodbank? We would love to hear from you! Please contact Jessica Murphy at jmurphy@ccthin.org or 812-232-1447 x7101

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For most of the Guard deployed at the Foodbank this is the first time to visit and learn what we do and why. “It means a lot to me, coming back to my hometown and being part of something like this, helping others get enough food to feed their families. I grew up in a family that sometimes had those types of struggles. I always knew people were struggling in good economic times but this is far and away more than anyone imagined. Families are struggling to make ends meet but I never knew it was so many, especially children. That really breaks my heart.” Cara Fugate, Specialist E4, INNG.

Guard members come from all walks of life and enter career fields in areas such as Infantry, Indirect Fire Infantry, Horizontal Construction Engineer, Cannon Crew Member, Fire Support Specialist, Military Police, Health Care Specialist, Motor Transport Operator, Petroleum Supply Specialist, Motor Transport Operator, and Culinary Specialist. Each brings with them a unique set of tools and skills that have made their time at the Foodbank very productive.

The National Guard started in 1636, when citizen-soldiers formed militias to defend community and country. For 377 years, the Guard has stayed true to its roots. Enlisting in the National Guard means more time at home. Training typically requires one weekend each month, with a two-week training period once each year. You can get a degree with money for school, learn job skills that translate to the civilian world, make bonds that last a lifetime, and earn pride for life. When you become a Guard Soldier, your family will thank you, your country with thank you, and your future will owe you.

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Map the Meal Gap 2020

Map the Meal Gap, a study conducted by Feeding America, is the only study that provides local-level estimates of food insecurity across the United States.

Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization with a network of 200 member food banks, including Terre Haute Catholic Charities Foodbank, has released the report for ten consecutive years to offer insights on how food insecurity and food costs vary at the local level. Food insecurity is a measure defined by the USDA as lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members.

Key findings of the 2020 study:

› The percentage of the population estimated to be food insecure in 2018 ranges from a low of 3.6% up to 30.4%. The average for our service area is 15%, the highest for any food bank in the state.

› At the state level, the percentage of children estimated to live in a food-insecure household ranges from 9.6% to 24.6%. For our service area, the average is 20.9%, the second highest in the state.

We know that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will have a devastating impact on people facing hunger across our service area. Research by Feeding America is a first to explore how food insecurity rates at the local level may increase in 2020 due to COVID-19.

› It is expected that the number of food insecure individuals in our area will increase from 38,570 (15%) to 52,330 (20.4%) by the end of the year as a result of the pandemic.

› For children experiencing food insecurity, the number is expected to jump from 11,420 (20.9%) to 16,440 (30.4%) as families struggle to recover from the economic impacts of COVID-19.

While we expect these challenging times will not be over anytime soon, we know that the stability and security that our Foodbank provides will remain. From March 17 to June 20, we distributed 1,340,031 pounds of food to hungry individuals, many seeking help for the first time.

Thanks to the generous support of donors like you, we are able to continue to serve our communities’ increased needs.

If you need help finding food or know someone who does, visit our website at ccthin.org or call the National Hunger Hotline at 1-866-3-HUNGRY (1-866-348-6479).

The Hunger Hotline is available Monday – Friday from 9am – 6pm. All calls are free and confidential.

Help someone you know receive the nutrition they need to remain healthy and productive.