

Feeding the need: Local organizations urge food donations for seniors

By Christie Netherton Messenger-Inquirer

Apr 16, 2022

The Green River Area Development District is partnering with Independence Bank, Comfort Keepers, and Specialty Foods Group to collect and distribute food to seniors in Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, and Webster counties.

This year will mark the 11th year for the annual food drive, dubbed, “Feed Seniors Now.”

Feeding America estimates that in 2019, 5.2 million seniors ages 60 and older faced hunger in America, representing 1 in 14 seniors or just more than 7% of all seniors.

“We know that a portion of the population — not just across the country, but also in our own communities — face challenges that come with food insecurity,” said Nick Oller, Independence Bank Daviess County president.

The drive typically feeds about 400-500 seniors.

However, Amber Phelps, GRADD in-home services manager, said she expects the need to increase this year as many seniors lose additional assistance that has been provided to supplement vulnerable populations throughout the pandemic.

“A lot of our seniors are isolated; a lot of times they don’t have that familial support, so they have a hard time getting out and getting groceries. They utilize free services when they can, but some of them are just living off their social security checks and sometimes, those aren’t very much money,” she said. “A lot of our seniors have to choose, basically, between buying their prescription medicines or having the food that they need; so we just want to just really help out with that food insecurity.”

United Way of the Ohio Valley and TTMA will also donate proceeds from the “Housing and Hunger Drive” to Feed Seniors Now to help vulnerable seniors in the region.

The drive raised more than 600 food items and more than \$7,000, which will be given to GRADD, according to Blaine Mathew, UWOFV manager for digital communications.

Donations of shelf-stable food items — such as canned goods, peanut butter, pasta and cereal — can be dropped off at the GRADD office and Independence Bank locations in Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, or Webster Counties. Checks or cash donations are accepted at Independence Bank locations, as well. Checks should be made payable to The Independence Foundation, Inc., P.O. Box 988, Owensboro, KY 42302, Attention: Feed Seniors Now.

One hundred percent of proceeds benefit the food drive.

Those making monetary donations are asked to designate the county in which they would like the donation to benefit. Donations will be accepted through April 29.

Then, on May 4, volunteers will deliver groceries to low-income seniors in the five participating counties.

It's estimated nearly 4,000 food deliveries have been made throughout the duration of this program.

"Looking back at the past couple of years, COVID has made such a huge impact on so many of us and unfortunately has made a big impact with our senior citizens in our communities; so to be able to help them, give back and help ease the pain that maybe they're feeling, it's just important," Oller said. "We believe nobody should have to suffer or worry about how they're going to pay for their food."

Christie Netherton, cnetherton@messenger-inquirer.com, 270-691-7360