

Gleaners Chronology

1974

- Gene Gonya, a Jesuit Brother, wants to contribute surplus from his family's farm. Area feeding agencies have no means of storing and handling large donations, which are sorely needed in the wake of the riots and urban unrest. Gonya, already donating food to the Sisters of Charity, sells the last of his worldly possessions to purchase a herd of cattle so the Capuchins could have fresh meat for hungry families.

1976

- Gene Gonya, along with Al and Midge Feliska, the Food Industry Council of the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, the Capuchin Soup Kitchen, Father John McGrail - Provincial of the Jesuit Community, and the Archdiocese of Detroit, all meet to conceptualize on how best to feed the hungry.



The community food bank concept solves the dilemma. The vision of Gleaners Community Food Bank begins to crystallize.

- Through the work of this dedicated group of people and organizations, the groundwork for the nonprofit corporation is laid. It would be called Gleaners Community Food Bank. The name stems from a biblical reference in the Book of Ruth of gleaning - gathering the grain left in the field by the reapers. It would be the symbol for turning the problem of food waste into a solution for hunger.

1977

- The Archdiocese of Detroit Lenten Program provides seed money to start the food bank: \$25,000 granted over three years.
- Gleaners Community Food Bank receives 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation.
- Approximately 25 agencies and churches use Gleaners Community Food Bank.
- The search for a warehouse begins. In June of 1977, Gleaners Community Food Bank leased 9,000 sq. ft. of the first floor of the present Detroit warehouse and holds its first open house and annual meeting.
- 537,462 pounds of food are distributed.

1978

- The year is marked by tight financial times. Gleaners needs more financial support. There are late paychecks and money was borrowed from the Board of Directors to make ends meet.
- 1,564,403 pounds of food are distributed.



1979

- Gleaners Community Food Bank turns the financial corner, with the sale of a donated building in Hamtramck that nets \$400,000. The additional funds allow for the purchase of trucks, freezers and more warehouse space to handle the increased food distribution.
- 2,289,912 pounds of food are distributed.

1980

- Gleaners helps start the national association of food banks called Second Harvest (now called Feeding America) and Gleaners becomes the network's first certified member. Gleaners' service area now comprises six states. The founding members begin a push for each community to have its own food bank.
- 2,673,477 pounds of food are distributed.

1981

- Gleaners Community Food Bank celebrates its 5th anniversary.
- 2,780,794 pounds of food are distributed.



1982

- Gleaners experiences its first national economic recession. The auto industry is particularly hard hit and unemployment reaches an astonishing 20%. Food distribution goes from 3.5 million pounds to 10.5 million pounds by 1985.
- 3,689,126 pounds of food are distributed.

1983

- Gleaners joins with the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce and the United Way to build emergency food boxes with funding from the United Auto Workers and General Motors. General Motors, under the leadership of Roger Smith and the United Auto Workers, calls upon employees to continue their generosity. General Motors commits to matching, can-for-can, every canned food donation to feed the hungry. The GM/UAW “Care and Share Program” brings in a whopping 3 million pounds of canned food. This large supply of a variety of food leads to the development of “Pantry Pacs” which provide enough food for 50 meals. They help thousands of families during difficult times. Today they are a vital part of food distribution to the community.
- Gleaners helps establish the Food Bank Council of Michigan out of a need to coordinate processes and procedures for other food banks. Although there are only a few community food banks in the entire state in 1983, it would not be long before a sizeable network of food banks would start up.
- 10,767,982 pounds of food are distributed.



1984

- The Detroit Chamber of Commerce raises \$650,000 over two years for the “Fighting Hunger Together” Program. The funds were used for purchasing and soliciting major donations, most of which went through Gleaners. The Chamber hires Jack Griffo, former president of Superior Potato Chips, to head up the corporate fundraising program.
- 8,623,205 pounds of food are distributed.

1985

- Gleaners helps establish the Food Bank of Oakland County.
- 7,016,605 pounds of food are distributed.

1986

- Jack Griffo joins Gleaners Community Food Bank to head up the food donation efforts. His experience as a great marketer and his knowledge of the food industry proves invaluable.
- 8,125,250 pounds of food are distributed.

1987

- Gleaners celebrates its 10th anniversary with an “All Michigan Meal” fundraising dinner sponsored by the Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce, Michigan Restaurant Association, and Michigan Chef de Cuisine. \$10,000 raised from this event was used to fund the Food Bank Council of Michigan.
- 7,197,561 pounds of food are distributed.



1990

- Gleaners receives the first ever “Best-Managed Non-Profit” designation from *Crain’s Detroit Business*.
- 9,321,784 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).



1991

- Relieving cramped quarters is a priority. Gleaners looks to acquire proper space right next door.
- 10,095,539 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

1992

- Planning begins for the first Capital Campaign. It’s a \$3 million fund-raising effort to buy a replacement warehouse.
- 12,257,283 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

1993

- Capital Campaign is launched with Bob O’Connell, Chief Financial Officer of General Motors, as Campaign Chairman.
- 12,681,160 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

1994

- Gleaners Community Food Bank hosts first Women's Power Breakfast, a fundraiser attended by Metro Detroit's most influential businesswomen.
- Gleaners builds expansion to the original 55,000 square foot warehouse, providing an additional 7,500 square feet of freezer/cooler storage and adding 25,000 square feet of dry storage.
- Food Bank of Oakland County hosts the first Food Fight on Big Beaver & Beyond.
- 10,405,636 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).



1995

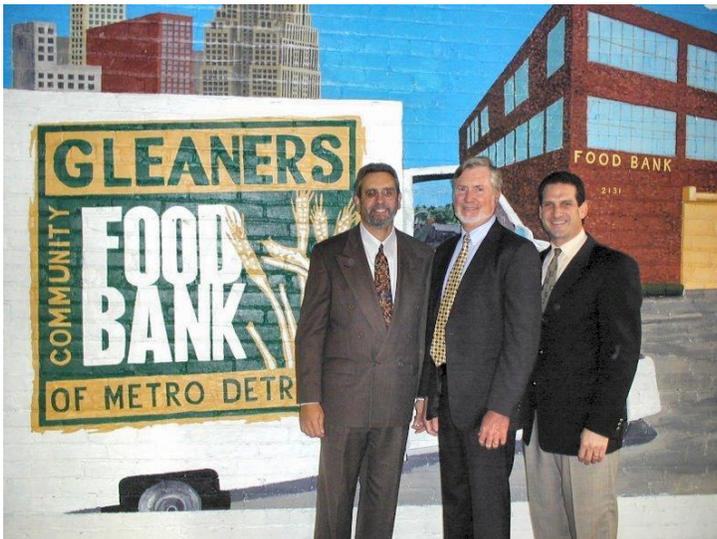
- Gleaners hosts first Fall Benefit, a family fundraising event at the Detroit warehouse. This annual event is hosted by Chrysler.
- Gene Gonya announces planned retirement in 1999 as part of a 5-year strategic plan and a natural evolution of Gleaners.
- 12,254,067 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

1996

- Gleaners begins phase one construction of the new 20,000 square foot freezer and cooler unit. Corporate Volunteer Program is launched to expose more working people to hunger awareness. Among the companies participating: Ford, GM, Comerica, Compuware, AAA, Johnson Controls, Covisint, AT&T, SBC Ameritech, Leadership Detroit, numerous universities, public schools, religious groups and service agencies.
- Food Bank of Oakland County starts the Jim Macy Golf Outing – which was renamed the Bernie Smilovitz Celebrity Golf Classic in 2004.
- Gleaners introduces a modern barcode system of inventory control, the first food bank in the country employing this technology.
- 13,677,013 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

1997

- November marks the 20th Anniversary of Gleaners Community Food Bank. The landmark is accompanied by the first comprehensive study on hunger, initiated by Second Harvest. Their Hunger Study establishes that the number of hungry people, including the working poor, children and seniors, is increasing, even in a booming economy.
- The Gleaners Garden is established on land across from the warehouse. Clients glean fresh vegetables from the garden.
- 13,827,118 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).



1998

- The Gleaners Board of Directors completes its search for a new president to replace the retiring Gene Gonya, selecting Richard A. Loewenstein. President Gonya and the new president-elect work side-by-side during a year of transition.
- Gleaners obtains a major grant from the McGregor Fund to establish distribution centers in Taylor and Warren. The purpose of the additional centers will make more food easily available to agencies in the expanded

Gleaners' network. It is the single largest McGregor Fund Grant awarded.

- Food Bank of Oakland County opens first Kids Café.
- The first Gleaners Harvest Dinner is held at the Stroh River Place in Detroit. It brings in \$100,000 to help Gleaners feed hungry people.
- 14,643,764 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

1999

- Touch the Future, a matching grant program with the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan, names Gleaners as one of 13 grantees. The program plans to give \$775,000 to Gleaners once it reaches its goals. Touch the Future is one component of building an endowment goal of \$20 million.
- Taylor Distribution Center opens in November.

- 19,182,069 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2000

- The Kids Helping Kids® Program is revitalized with \$50,000 in grants from Ronald McDonald House Charities, Visteon and SBC Ameritech. Kids Helping Kids® is a hunger awareness program, established in 1984, that teaches children the impact of hunger on their peers and shows them ways they can help.



- Gleaners unveils a new logo.
- Food Bank of Oakland County helps launch the Variety Produce Rescue Program at Detroit Produce Terminal.
- 20,739,214 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2001

- The Gleaners Community Food Bank - Joan and Wayne Webber Distribution Center is opened in Warren thanks to a generous \$1 million gift from the Joan and Wayne Webber Foundation.
- Thompson McCulley Foundation donates \$300,000 to revitalize an aging truck fleet.
- Matilda Wilson Fund gives \$300,000 to Gleaners to upgrade and improve its infrastructure. This includes lighting, communications, floors, and providing two additional distribution bays for agency food order pickups.
- Strategic Plan is developed to create a clear vision and focus for Gleaners Community Food Bank through the year 2005. Focus groups are consulted across the region.
- CANSTRUCTION® is held at Comerica Park. This hunger awareness project featured works of sculptural art created entirely from canned food.
- 2001 Hunger Study reveals the numbers of hungry children and seniors has increased from 49% to 59%.
- Gleaners participates in America's Thanksgiving Day Parade using a CANSTRUCTION® sculpture as its float.



- EarthWorks Garden is planted. DTE Energy designs a solar-powered energy source to operate the greenhouse pumps.
- Food Bank of Oakland County is named Crain's Best Managed Non Profit.
- 22,916,192 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2002

- Planning begins for Gleaners 25th Anniversary celebration. The new logo and branding to commemorate the anniversary are unveiled: Gleaners Community Food Bank - 25 Years of Nourishing Communities by Feeding Hungry People.
- Long-established Livingston Community Food Bank merges with Gleaners Community Food Bank. In one month, food distribution increases from 8,000 pounds to 28,000 pounds in Livingston County.
- The John S. and James L. Knight Foundation awards Gleaners a \$75,000 post-September 11th Relief Fund grant.
- Agostinho "Augie" Fernandes, Jr. is named the third President of Gleaners Community Food Bank.
- 23,922,000 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2003

- The Joan and Wayne Webber Distribution Center moves into a new facility with the Salvation Army in Warren.
- 20,835,436 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2004



- Livingston Distribution Center moves to a new location on Sterling Drive in Howell.
- Gleaners opens its first Kids Café site at the Tree of Life Church located in southwest Detroit.
- 19,890,183 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2005

- Kraft Foods awards Gleaners with a generous grant that enabled the purchase of a special walk-in cooler for our agency “free aisle” at the Detroit warehouse and distribution center.
- A Roof-Top Honeybee Apiary is created at Gleaners with a partnership with Brother Rick Samyn to help educate youth and promote the work of Gleaners and the Capuchin Soup Kitchen.
- Food Bank of Oakland County merges with Gleaners, resulting in 780,000 more meals distributed in Oakland County in the first year.
- 20,169,000 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).



2006

- Gleaners declares 2006 “The Year of the Pantry,” including instituting valuable resources such as pantrynet.org and Glinkos for use by our partner agencies.
- Gleaners board adopts a strategic plan to build the agency’s leadership role for feeding hungry people through the year 2010.
- 24,982,101 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

CURE HUNGER HERE

2007

- Gleaners celebrates its 30th Anniversary with a campaign to “Cure Hunger Here.”
- Gleaners’ new mobile pantry truck (a converted beverage trailer) allows the food bank to team with a partner agency for a one-day, large-scale distribution. Several distributions take place the first year to help feed our hungry neighbors.
- 24,838,286 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2008

- W. DeWayne Wells becomes the fourth president of Gleaners Community Food Bank.

- Gleaners teams with Downriver Fish & Loaves, a consortium of local churches, to open a client choice pantry in Taylor.
- Gleaners Shared Harvest Pantry in Livingston County distributed more than 1 million pounds of food in the calendar year for the first time.
- 26,166,947 pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2009

- 33,800 children are fed and educated through dedicated children's programs.
- Gleaners continues its emphasis on client choice pantries. From 2007-2009 the number of client choice pantries in Gleaners network doubles from 11 to 22.
- 4.1 million pounds of fresh produce are distributed.



2010

- Gleaners is rated one of the Top 100 Workplaces in Michigan by the Detroit Free Press.
- Food Drives provide 2.1 million pounds of food, an increase of 34 percent from the previous year.
- A 16.7 percent increase in donor contributions is received.
- 40 million pounds of food are distributed (*fiscal year*).

2011

- Gleaners received a donated building in Southfield, which housed the former headquarters of New York Carpet Work.
- Gleaners engages 36,368 donors in the mission of feeding hungry neighbors.
- 94,997 children are fed and educated through programs including BackPacks, Smart Bites, Cooking Matters, Summer Lunches, school-based Mobile Pantries and Kids Helping Kids.
- 30,992 volunteers support Gleaners' work to cure hunger in southeast Michigan.
- Cooking Matters graduates 1,183 men, women and children from the six-week course.
- More than 40.4 million pounds of food are distributed, 7.9 million pounds of which is fresh produce (*fiscal year*).

2012

- Gleaners Shared Harvest Pantry provides food and support services for 1,300 families each month.

- Gleaners receives a “superior” rating from AIB International, an organization that inspects food handlers and producers. Gleaners is the first food bank in Michigan, and only one of nine in the country, that have received this highest rating.
- Blackbuad recognizes Gleaners amongst 40,000 nonprofit organizations with a top award for excellence in marketing communications.
- Gleaners becomes the largest franchisee of Share Our Strength’s Cooking Matters, graduating 2,195 people from the program.
- Gleaners collects 46 million pounds of food to serve hungry neighbors.

2013

- 48,000 volunteers are engaged in Gleaners mission of “feeding hungry people and nourishing our communities.”
- 4,000 people graduate from Gleaners’ Cooking Matters course, nearly doubling last year’s total.
- Women’s Power Breakfast celebrates its 20th anniversary. The event becomes the capstone to a month-long “Million Meal Match” campaign.
- 2,704 families get produce through Gleaners’ Fresh Food Share, a program that increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables in high-need neighborhoods.
- Gleaners distributes 41.6 million pounds of food to hungry men, women and children – 13.5 million pounds of which are fresh produce.



Dulice Rosenfeld, Women’s Power Breakfast event founder

2014

- Gerald F. Brisson is appointed President of Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan in January of 2014.



Founding member of:

