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NourishMKE
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Nourishing News



Winter 2024 / The Season of Gratitude



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Hungry for more?

Check out our [Community Voices blog](#)



Erika's Year of Service



As Max (founder of Mitchell & Streetlife Communities) has told me from the very beginning of my term "it's not a coincidence that you are here." I couldn't agree more. Call it what you may, divine intervention or the planets aligning, either way, Nourish MKE and Streetlife were exactly what I needed at this point in my life."

Erika Scmitt
Former Americorps Member

How can you help?

Volunteer

Volunteers are the heart of our organization. They keep our shelves stocked, our guests cared for, and our hearts full of gratitude. Sign up for shifts at nourishmke.org or email volunteer@nourishmke.org more information.

Donate

Generous donations allow us to continue to nourish local communities. A donation of just \$40 is enough to feed 8 families for 5 days through our food centers. We take donations through our website, or via a mailed check.

Host a food drive

Food drives are a great way to support the food centers while connecting to your own community. Visit our website for a list of food drive guidelines and instructions on how to start one.


Hello there! We might look a little different from the last time you saw us. Friedens Community Ministries is now NourishMKE. However, we're still the same folks doing the important work of distributing food to hundreds of families each week.

So what's with the makeover? In 1978, the Friedens United Church of Christ created a food pantry as a part of their social activism programs. "Friedens" means peace in German, the language of the church's parishioners at the time. Eventually, the pantry became its own entity beyond the church, becoming the largest network of food pantries in Milwaukee. We remained as Friedens until June 2024.

Changing our name to NourishMKE gets at the core of what our mission is without any German translations or history lessons. We honor Friedens legacy by sharing our history while giving volunteer orientations and writing to donors. However, as our city has evolved since 1978, we want our message to be clear to all who come to our centers.

Peace is our end goal, and nourishment is how we get there. We see food as a connector that brings communities together. We're not just trying to provide fuel for the body, but true nourishment for the whole person.

Beyond mission statements, what does nourishment look like at our centers? We prioritize procuring fresh produce through our food recovery program with grocery retailers, our relationships with farmers, and our own community gardens. We focus on the health of the whole person, by not just prioritizing nutrient rich foods, but also through community events. Our block parties, made by and for the community around our Mitchell location (Despensa de la Paz), showcase how health includes sharing joy with one another.

Most of all, we find nourishment in each other. Our community of guests, staff, volunteers, and supporters all work to meet each other where they're at and fill our collective cup. For that, we are grateful. We're excited to start on this new journey as NourishMKE with you! 

A letter from the Executive Director

The sun is setting before 5 and our windows are closed for the season. It has been an exciting and sometimes challenging year at NourishMKE. The early part of our year brought a flood of change, both literally and figuratively. The actual flood took with it 21,000 pounds of food but it couldn't dampen our community's spirit. We've worked hard to rebuild and our community is thriving through the reconstruction. We are so grateful to everyone who has lent a hand in this time.

In April, our former Executive Director Sophia made the tough decision to pursue another path. Her leadership and vision will still be felt in the years to come. No one person's spirit ever fully leaves this place. We truly are a greater community due to the thousands of lives who come and go over time. We remember as a whole. And that's the magic, isn't it?

I stepped into this community months before I was ever hired. Standing in the Gathering Room my first time at Mitchell, listening to Max's orientation, I felt something shift in my gravity even if I didn't understand it yet. Reflecting back on that moment in 2021 it now seems so obvious.

I've been a volunteer, an AmeriCorps Member, a Program Manager, and now I find myself stepping into leadership shoes (although they're still my old Chuck Taylors). I am grateful to be a part of this place and working hard to continue the legacies of those who knew the power of building community through nourishment.

While it has been a year of great change in many ways, one thing that remains constant is the need for community in our lives. Having neighbors, friends, and even familiar faces to lean on is a powerful force in face of the division and discord that plagues our daily lives now. I keep hearing people say that they are feeling helpless and unsure of what to do and I tell them, they've come to the right place! **Here at NourishMKE we offer small, actionable ways for people to get involved and make a difference.** Everyone has a talent to share and there is room for YOU at our table, a table where everyone can fill their cup.

You may not even know that your talent is needed, but as a small nonprofit, there are so many ways to get involved beyond traditional volunteering.



Perhaps you're a musician, a lawyer, or a spreadsheet wiz: there's a place for you at our table. Maybe you're passionate about the planet, did you know we're pushing towards a zero waste initiative? We could use your help!

Still unsure of how to put your talents or passion to good use? Let's grab coffee and chat! Email me at valerie@nourishmke.org and we will make it happen. We all can be the change we want to see in the world, and at NourishMKE we can create that change together. This is what community looks like, we show up for each other.

I am so grateful you are here.

NourishMKE Executive Director

Harvest hope with NourishMKE

At NourishMKE, we believe that the holiday season should be a time filled with hope, joy, and good food. For those experiencing food insecurity, celebrating over a table of food is not always possible. That's why this season, we're turning the holiday spirit into a harvest for our community.

This holiday season, you can make a direct and meaningful impact. Your generous donations can provide our neighbors with culturally relevant food and thoughtful gifts. Our four centers are as diverse as our city, and the holidays are a time to celebrate culture and traditions. With your contributions, we can offer guests the ingredients they need to prepare traditional holiday dishes—whether it's a Thanksgiving turkey or Christmas pozole, your support will help families create meals that hold special significance for them.

Our holiday gift drives also ensure that the children in our community have a memorable holiday season. For families facing food insecurity, gifts aren't always in the budget. We provide each child who visits our centers during our holiday events with a gift, made possible only through the support of our community.

Join us in spreading hope and sharing resources. Together, we can ensure that every family has the nourishment and joy they need to celebrate this season.

Thank you for your generosity! 🌿



Harvest of Hope: a Holiday Fundraiser



Scan the QR code or go to www.nourishmke.org/donate to make your contribution this holiday season.