

Grant Funds Help put Good Food to Good Use

Grant funding through the Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan's Koncavich Memorial Grant helps Hidden Harvest to distribute 2.5 million pounds of food to neighbors in need throughout the region.

Hidden Harvest is a community agency that has been responsible for collecting and distributing over 50 million pounds of healthy and nutritious food to agencies, organizations, and individuals in need for over two decades. Samantha McKenzie, President and CEO of Hidden Harvest, describes this mission as, “serving our neighbors in need by putting good food to good use that would otherwise be wasted.”

This mission is fairly simple: Hidden Harvest rescues food from grocery stores, bakeries, and other donors throughout the region that, while still usable, is no longer sellable. Rather than letting this food go to waste while rates of food insecurity and scarcity increase, Hidden Harvest delivers this food to individuals in need throughout the region.

Hidden Harvest has been funded by the Catholic Community Foundation for several years, and Samantha states that this stable support has been critical to ensuring food is put to use where it's most needed. “It's wonderful to have those dollars available to keep our trucks moving across the region.”



“Hidden Harvest is based on the premise that we're supposed to take care of our neighbors...we're making sure the gleanings of our community are used to serve the poor.”

*Samantha McKenzie
President & CEO*

While headquartered in Saginaw, MI, Hidden Harvest provides food donations to 195 non-profits in 13 different counties throughout the region, including pantries, food banks, shelters, and human service agencies. “We don't charge anything for the services we provide,” says Samantha. However, collecting and distributing 2.5 million pounds of food every year across over a dozen counties involves many hours of processing donations, allocating bulk donations to smaller, more usable portions, and driving donations to partner organizations. Grant funding from the Catholic Community Foundation helps to support these services and ensure that individuals in need are able to access food and produce despite any financial barriers.

According to Samantha, the need for food assistance in the Great Lakes Bay Region is great, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Rising costs of groceries, lessened or eliminated government assistance, and high medical bills have all contributed to a 2-3 times higher number of individuals facing food insecurity.

“We’re very thankful to be part of the safety net in our community,” Samantha says, highlighting the ripple effect that Hidden Harvest is able to provide by giving this food to partnering agencies. Being able to provide physical sustenance opens the door to promoting self-sufficiency, independence, better mental health, and overall stability to individuals and families.



The Koncavich Memorial Grant, through which Hidden Harvest received funding to support their mission of providing food to those in need, was created as the legacy of three sisters: Stella Koncavich, Helen Crevia, and Mary Koncavich. These sisters’ goal was to support ministries in the Diocese of Saginaw committed to serving the most needy and vulnerable.

The Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan houses numerous funds alongside the Koncavich Memorial Grant that help to support the poor and needy across the region, as well as agencies and organizations centered on providing support and basic needs assistance to neighbors in crisis. However, these endowments can take many shapes and forms.

For example, the Catholic Community of St. Hubert Endowment Fund was created specifically as a means of funding the Wyllo Rogowski Memorial Shared Blessings Food Pantry at St. Hubert’s parish in Bad Axe, Michigan. Since the initial fund of \$12,000 was created in 2015, this balance has more than doubled in the last eight years, and continuously supports the Shared Blessings Food Pantry by creating a consistent source of food and supplies to individuals in need throughout Huron County.

Creating an endowment through the Catholic Community Foundation of Mid-Michigan helps to form a legacy of generosity and selfless giving. The need for resources, services, and support throughout Mid-Michigan is ever-growing, and endowments help to provide consistent funding to ensure that this community is able to receive the funds it needs to serve the most vulnerable and in need. **To learn more about endowment opportunities and how you can empower others to engage in the joy of giving, contact Executive Director, Kristin Smith, at 989.303.9200 or via email at kristin.smith@ccfmm.org.**

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