

Annual Hunger Bowl returns amid rising food insecurity

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St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry is asking for increased community support as it prepares for the 10th Annual Friday Knights Hunger Bowl on Sept. 11 amid rising demand and ongoing food supply challenges.

The event has raised more than \$160,000 during the past nine years

through contributions from Catholic schools, Knights of Columbus councils, a Fourth Degree Assembly, the Columbiettes auxiliary and community donors, according to a community announcement.

The Hunger Bowl began as a fundraising rivalry tied to the football matchup between Memorial and Mater Dei but has expanded into a broader community effort supporting the food pantry's operations.

According to the announcement, pantry officials say the number of households seeking assistance continues to increase, including many first-time visitors facing food insecurity and higher grocery costs.

Food pantry reports rising demand

Statistics provided by the pantry for its most recent fiscal year show:

- More than 95,000 food boxes distributed.
- More than 338 tons of food distributed through those boxes.
- Regular service days assisting more than 100 families.
- \$154,000 spent on food purchases, up from \$90,000 the previous year.
- Reduced food availability from the Tri-State Food Bank, requiring more

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direct purchases.

Ashley Newell, executive director of St. Vincent de Paul Evansville, said, "We are doing everything we can to meet the growing demand, but we can't do it alone. The Hunger Bowl has always been a lifeline for us, and this year we're asking the community to step up like never before."

Community groups support fundraising effort

The fundraising campaign includes participation from area Catholic schools and several Knights of Columbus organizations serving Evansville and surrounding communities.

Participating groups include Councils 565, 2215, 7544, 8746, 12541, 14659, 14673, 15092 and 16454, along with Assembly 253 and Auxiliary 14673.

Each participating school and Knights of Columbus organization determines its own fundraising activities.

Supporters can contribute by attending the Hunger Bowl, making donations or sharing information about the effort. Donations may be made through the event website at fridayknightshungerbowl.org or mailed to St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry, 809 N. Lafayette Ave., Evansville, IN 47711.

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