



# Food Bank of WNY

Serving Cattaraugus, Chautauqua,  
Erie and Niagara Counties

## **CONTACT:**

Catherine Shick  
Public and Community Relations Manager  
91 Holt St.  
Buffalo, NY 14206  
Office - (716) 935-6692  
Cell - (716) 982-3529  
[csnick@foodbankwny.org](mailto:csnick@foodbankwny.org)

## **Check Out Hunger will help Food Bank of WNY provide more than 4.5 million meals; latest agency numbers reveal increase in number of individuals, children in need**

**BUFFALO** (March 17, 2017) — The Western New York community will help provide more than 4.5 million meals as a result of the Food Bank of WNY's annual Check Out Hunger campaign. Customers of seven local retailers donated more than \$757,000 to help feed local children, families and seniors in need.

Dash's Market, The Market in the Square, Tops Friendly Markets and Wegmans Food Markets ran their Check Out Hunger campaigns during January and February. Premier Gourmet, Premier Wine & Spirits and Price Rite completed their campaigns in November and December. Local shoppers will have another chance to participate in Check Out Hunger when Lexington Cooperative Market, in Buffalo, and Premium Wine & Spirits, in Williamsville, hold their campaigns in the spring.

"We know that every dollar counts in the fight against hunger. We're extremely grateful to our customers and our employees who share a commitment to helping people in our communities every year through Check Out Hunger," said Mike Keating, Senior Vice President, Wegmans Food Markets Buffalo Division.

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> consecutive year that Wegmans Food Markets and Tops Friendly Markets held Check Out Hunger campaigns to benefit the Food Bank of WNY. Check Out Hunger is the Food Bank of WNY's largest annual fundraiser and is critical to the organization as it continues its mission of providing nutritious food and support to those in need throughout Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties.

"As a locally owned and operated company, we pledge our support to the Food Bank of WNY as it truly fits within our philanthropic mission," said Frank Curci, Tops Markets Chairman and CEO. "Check Out Hunger provides nutritional food to thousands in our local community, and as we are all neighbors helping neighbors, we are happy to join together to build a brighter, stronger future for Western New York."

Proceeds from Check Out Hunger come at a crucial time, as the Food Bank of WNY's latest agency statistics show that the nonprofit is serving more hungry individuals than ever before. The number of individuals receiving food and support from the Food Bank of WNY in any given month has grown to 134,955 – a 4 percent increase from last year. Part of the increase can be attributed to the rising number of people who rely on the organization's Mobile Food Pantry Program, which provides fresh, nutritious foods such as fruits, vegetables and low-fat dairy products directly to community members in need.

Additionally, the number of youths served monthly by the Food Bank of WNY has grown to 55,140 – a 12 percent increase from last year. More children are relying on the organization's BackPack Program, which provides nutritious, easy-to-prepare food in take-home bags each Friday throughout the school year.

"With the number of hungry Western New Yorkers continuing to grow, the support the Food Bank of WNY receives through Check Out Hunger is as important as ever. We are incredibly grateful to our retail partners and their dedicated store managers, generous customers and tireless cashiers for coming together to help feed hungry local families," said Marylou Borowiak, President & CEO of the Food Bank of WNY. "We are especially thankful for our dear friends at Tops Friendly Markets and Wegmans Food Markets for their amazing support through Check Out Hunger for the past 25 years. It is because of the Food Bank of WNY's strong community partnerships that we are able to continue to fight hunger one day at a time."

***(The Food Bank of WNY is the primary hunger-relief organization in Western New York, obtaining and distributing food to 341 member agencies including food pantries, shelters, soup kitchens, youth programs, and senior centers in Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Niagara counties. Through these agencies, the Food Bank of WNY serves as many as 134,955 individuals in any given month, including more than 44,000 families, 55,000 children and infants, and nearly 16,500 seniors. For more information, visit [www.foodbankwny.org](http://www.foodbankwny.org).)***