

Welcome [Guest](#).

SEARCH STORIES

News | Sports | Business | Opinion | Etc. | Weather | Obituaries | Announcements | Sirens | Saturday Projects | C
Jobs | Real Estate | Truth in Edu. | Tell The Truth | Ads Online | In Our Opinion

[eTruth](#) > Local News

Local News

T↑ T↓ T↕ *New* Truth Story Tools

Lending winter warmth

Published: Sunday, January 08, 2006 -- The Truth, A3
Last updated: 1/7/2006 11:07:52 PM

By [Gary Pethe](#)
Truth Staff

MISHAWAKA -- For a battalion of volunteers toiling outdoors Saturday morning, the warmth they felt helping thousands of hungry area families easily dissipated the cold. A crowd estimated between 1,800 and 2,500 gathered at Granger Community Church, Mishawaka, to distribute food to needy families in St. Joseph and Elkhart counties.

Partnering with international hunger relief organization Feed The Children, church members of all ages teamed to personally deliver up to 250 tons - six semi truckloads - of food and personal care items to residents of housing projects in South Bend, Mishawaka and Elkhart. People served by 11 area relief agencies benefited from the food drop.

Church staffers, led by senior pastor Mark Beeson, and local dignitaries including congressman Chris Chocola, Mishawaka mayor Jeff Rea, and Elkhart mayor David Miller, joined in distribution activities.

"This is an wonderful event," Miller said. "And I want all the citizens of Elkhart to know how needy families in our city are benefiting from the caring and commitment of these volunteers and Feed The Children." Miller accompanied teams of people distributing food packages to residents of Washington Gardens and Rosedale apartments in Elkhart.



Enlarge Save Buy Print

Volunteers unload boxes of food and personal items for delivery to residents of Washington Gardens and Rosedale Apartments in Elkhart.

Photo: [Gary Pethe](#) / The Truth

Today's News

- » [Hanging on to...](#)
- » [Keep on truck...](#)
- » [Local Digest](#)
- » [Oh, brother, i...](#)
[reading for the...](#)

Week's Most

- » [Woman tries...](#)
[on a motor sco...](#)
- » [Fire closes M...](#)
[temporarily](#)
- » [Shipshewan...](#)
- » [Shopping list](#)
- » [Postage goes...](#)

Larry Jones, co-founder and president of Feed The Children, had high praise for Elkhart residents and city officials who "brought us here and continue to be extremely helpful and supportive of our efforts."

This is our fourth year Granger Community Church has done a January food drop with Feed The Children. The event has gotten bigger every year, according to Dan Blacketor, director of local food missions at the church. "Several local trucking companies donated drivers and trucks to help deliver the food to local pantries and to the neighborhoods we went into," Blacketor said.

He noted that food pantries in the South Bend, Mishawaka and Elkhart areas received 30 percent of the donations, while 70 percent were handed out door-to-door to low-income families.

For weeks, GCC volunteers have gathered at Feed The Children's Elkhart distribution center to package nearly 5,000 boxes of items used in Saturday's event. The Elkhart distribution center, formerly Bayer Corporation's Elkhart office, factory and warehouse, is one of five U.S. facilities operated by Feed The Children. The relief organization provides millions of pounds of food, medicine, clothing and other necessities to children and their families in all 50 states, and in 115 countries internationally.

"This event is such a great way to kick off 2006," Jones said. "After the holiday season, it slips our minds that there are still people who need our help. We hope this donation will help needy people here in Northern Indiana start off the new year knowing that someone is looking out for them and making sure they have what they need."

And that someone - in the form of thousands of like-minded volunteers - thinks nothing of braving a cold January morning to help community neighbors have hope for a better 2006.

Send a [message](#) to Gary Pethe
Check out my [Bio or Blog](#)

Recent stories by Gary Pethe

- » [Lending winter warmth](#)
- » [No-smoking law tweaked](#)
- » [Just Kids: Gizmos get his attention](#)

Additional Information:

"Can you spare a nickel?"

That question from a small, thin boy in Port Au Prince, Haiti, prompted Larry Jones and his wife, Frances, to found Feed The Children in 1979. The boy had approached Jones for the nickel so he could buy a roll, since he hadn't eaten all day. When Jones reached into his pocket for the nickel, the boy asked, "Do you have three pennies? For three pennies they'll cut the roll in half and put butter on both sides." Jones gave the boy the money and asked him, "You'll need something to wash it down with. How much is a Coke?" The boy replied that the drink was another 12 cents. So a total of 20 cents bought everything the boy could eat for a day. "Not a nutritious meal, but a meal nevertheless," Jones said.

Returning to his home in Oklahoma, Jones began to tell the boy's story on television, asking the simple question: "Why should children be starving to death while we have surplus wheat in America? Thus began Feed The Children. The organization is now the third largest international charity in the U.S., based on private, non-government support.