



Sturgeon Bay Farm Market Supports Local Families in Need

Challenge

In June 2025, FoodWise launched a gleaning project at the Sturgeon Bay Farmers Market to increase access to fresh, local produce for families with limited income. Inspired by a successful model in Manitowoc, the project aims to reduce food waste, improve produce availability at food pantries, and strengthen community partnerships.

Food pantries often struggle to source fresh fruits and vegetables. Grocery store donations may arrive close to expiration, limiting shelf life and nutrition. When donations are not enough, pantries must purchase produce, which can be costly. Meanwhile, farmers market vendors often have leftover produce at the end of the day, much of which is discarded or composted.

According to the USDA, more than one-third of food in the U.S. goes uneaten. This project helps redirect surplus produce to where it's needed most, supporting both nutrition security and sustainability.

Approach

The project began through conversations between Andrea Buboltz, Sturgeon Bay's Market Director, and Kendra Dantoin, a UW-Green Bay dietetic intern. Buboltz had already been considering food recovery and connected Dantoin with Sandi Soik at the Lakeshore CAP Food Pantry, who was eager to help with distribution.

After confirming support from both the market and pantry, Dantoin reached out to each produce vendor. Many expressed interest in donating. She developed a simple process: after the market closes, she collects, weighs, and delivers leftover produce to the pantry. The system takes less than an hour and ensures produce stays fresh for pantry clients.

Key partners included the market director, pantry staff, committed vendors, and the UWGB Dietetic Internship Program, whose involvement made the project possible.

Results

In just the first four weeks, 74 pounds of fresh produce, including kale, lettuce, herbs, microgreens, and more, were donated to Lakeshore CAP. Pantry manager Sandi Soik shared that the produce is popular and goes quickly once available.

Vendors also embraced the effort. Matt Peter from Grow Door County said, "It's important to us to give back to the community that supports us." As the season continues, both the amount and variety of produce donations are expected to grow—bringing healthy food to more families and strengthening community connections.

To support long-term success, United Way and the market manager are collaborating to establish a sustainable system for collecting and transporting donations.



Pantry user at Lakeshore CAP taking home two heads of fresh, local lettuce



74 lbs of fresh, local produce has been collected and donated to the food pantry, feeding lots of families and individuals in the Sturgeon Bay community.



Healthy food should be accessible to everyone, so we're super excited to be able to lend to that, even just in a small way.

- ANDRIA HAILS, WILD EASTONS VENDOR (LOCAL GROWER OF MICROGREENS, GREENS, MUSHROOMS AND SPICES)

