2020: To quote Forest Gump, “that's all I have to say about that!” As I grew up, whenever I failed at something or lost a game I remember being told “forget about it,” “shake it off,” “don’t let it get you down,” “you’ll get them next time.” But the advice that stuck with me the most was “learn from your mistake and go forward much wiser.”

2020 wasn’t a mistake, we miraculously distributed over 19 million meals, but there was much to learn. I learned that our constituents are passionate about what we do and because of this they stepped up and financially supported us during a challenging year. I learned that being able to adapt to a situation and think outside the box is imperative in keeping the supply of food moving to the children we feed.

Our new bulk packaging process is a prime example that allowed us to make over 7 million meals with only 1500 volunteers over a 3-week period. I learned patience and perseverance. To be patient as we were unable to go at full speed packaging meals and to persevere through a pandemic and a year of unprecedented turmoil. Romans 5:3-5 says “…but we also glory in our suffering, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not disappoint us”.

We are moving into 2021 with hope...hope that our constituents continue to support us and bless us financially as well as volunteering alongside us with servant hearts. With hope that we are able to get back to full speed doing what we do best – empowering people to save starving children.

Thank you for your support in 2020 and God bless,

Greg DeHaai

Executive Director
Meals from the Heartland

The photo above at left shows Greg serving children at a feeding center in South Africa recently.
19,068,480

total meals distributed in 2020

1,674,864
meals distributed in Iowa

65
the number of Iowa counties we have packaged in

2,280,960
meals distributed nationally

15,112,656
meals distributed internationally*

*some meals pending in-country distribution

37
the number of countries our meals have been distributed to around the world

7,128,000
meals packed over a 3-week period Aug. – Sept.

20¢
the cost of one meal

57,941
total volunteer hours

94¢
of every dollar goes directly toward feeding program expenses

540
average number of meals packed per volunteer in a 2 hour shift

30,440
volunteers
The 13th Annual Hunger Fight looked a little different this year due to the COVID-19 crisis, but our caring community came together to package a record number of meals.

over 1,500 volunteers & packaged over 7,128,000 meals over the 3-week event

Our new bulk packaging procedure allowed us to package more meals faster than ever before to be sent to these countries who were in desperate need of our meals.
2020 was a challenging year to say the least. While many mobile hunger fights were postponed or canceled, those that were held were modified to ensure the health and safety of all staff and volunteers.

The 3rd Annual Cedar Rapids Hunger Fight was held over a 3-day period in November; rescheduled from the original June date. Over 201,000 Taco Mac meals were packaged for distribution to food pantries in 21 states around the U.S.
As a student at Jordan Creek Elementary in West Des Moines, Ashwin Sinha began packaging meals at Meals from the Heartland as part of a school service project. “In fourth grade, I participated in the Annual Hunger Fight at Hy-Vee Hall downtown. I’ll always remember what a fun, interactive, high energy experience that was – all while packaging food for starving children.”

Ashwin continued to volunteer with Meals from the Heartland throughout his high school days at Valley High School.

Now, a junior at Drake University, and a member of the Phi Chi Theta fraternity, he’s focused on educating other students on the many service opportunities within our community, such as packaging food for those in need with Meals from the Heartland.

“Recently, I was elected President of Drake’s Interfraternity Council or IFC (the governing body of all Social Fraternities) and plan to incorporate more ways in 2021 to provide in-person and virtual opportunities for all Fraternity and Sorority students at Drake, which make up 1/3 of Drake’s total enrollment.”

In his ‘spare time’, Ashwin works with a non-profit organization in India with a focus on improving water quality in impoverished areas.

“There are no limits to what our generation can do in the way of the power to give back to their local and global community and make a difference in a huge way.”

149 million children under five years of age were chronically under nourished in 2019
un.org, 2019

11.1 million U.S. children struggle with hunger
Feeding America, 2019

1 in 7 Iowa children faces food insecurity
Feeding America, 2019
2021 goals

- package 18,500,000 meals
- host 90 mobile hunger fight events
- package 4,000,000 meals during the 14th Annual Hunger Fight in Des Moines
- empower 50,000 volunteers
- assist in feeding over 380,000 kids a week in children’s food initiatives (in schools and orphanages)

DON’T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING, INSTEAD PRAY ABOUT EVERYTHING. PHILIPPIANS 4:6

Learn more about ways to feed starving children on the Planned Giving page on our website.
“From small children, youth groups, college students, small groups to adults, this is a way we can all gather together to serve others,” says Dan Pattengill, Ministry Development Pastor at Crosspoint Church in Waverly, Iowa.

Crosspoint also partners with Convoy of Hope, who distributes our meals across the country and around the world. “Seeing boxes of Meals from the Heartland food being distributed is very gratifying.”

“We look forward to 2021 when we can gather again as a group to accomplish our annual goal of packaging 40,000 meals.”
OUR LEADERSHIP

Greg DeHaai, Executive Director

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