

Area food banks are struggling to keep their shelves stocked with Thanksgiving around the corner and demand climbing.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana

1102 E. 16th St.

• **To donate online:**

www.gleaners.org/donations.shtml

• **To donate by phone:** (317)
925-0191

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

(317) 687-0169

Client Choice Food Pantry

2111 E. Spann Ave.

Pratt-Quigley Food Center

3001 E. 30th St.

• **To donate online:**

www.svdpindy.org

• **To donate by mail:** Send check
to

Society of St. Vincent de Paul

P.O. Box 19133

Indianapolis, IN 46219

**Lutheran Child & Family
Services**

Sharing Place East

7049 E. 10th St.

(317) 359-6566

Sharing Place West

3976 Georgetown Road

(317) 298-3180

• **To donate online:**

www.lutheranfamily.org

"Really, around Thanksgiving, that's when people are more giving, (but) it goes out as quickly as it comes in," said Sue Wodarz, manager of The Sharing Place on the Northwestside.

Demand at The Sharing Place doubles around the holidays, Wodarz said. Workers at other local food banks agreed, saying they always see more needy people as pressure builds to prepare big family meals.

"People want to be like everybody else," said Kay Metzler, a volunteer at the Society of St. Vincent de Paul's food pantry on the Eastside. "It's a time for family and food."

On Friday, children at St. Richard's School on the Near Northside did their part to help, taking part in a food drive with a twist.

Their assignment: Build something out of cans and boxes of food, in a benefit for the Mid-North Food Pantry a few blocks from the school.

Among the various creations, the third-grade class made a model of Indianapolis, complete with a Monument Circle consisting of canned soup and an [Indianapolis Motor Speedway](#) made of tuna fish cans.

The benefit is welcome because while donations to local food banks tend to increase toward the end of the year, they often don't meet holiday demand, many groups said.

Mid-North Food Pantry sees a 50 percent increase in demand from November to late February, a demand it struggles to meet, said board President Sarah Blandina.

"We cope with it as best we can," she said. "We get many more donations, but not nearly enough. The word is 'overwhelming.'"

Poverty in [Indiana](#) has increased in recent years, with 37,500 more people falling below the poverty line in 2006, according to U.S. Census Bureau statistics. About 10 percent of Hoosiers live below the poverty line.

At the [Martin Luther King](#) Multi-Service Center, program manager Heidi Kelly said the food pantry's supplies are getting low as more calls for help pour in.

"I'm not sure people think of donating food first (during the holidays)," she said. "I think toys, maybe. . . . But to be honest,

I've been pushing for food drives just because of what our food pantry looks like."

If supplies get much lower, the food bank may have to cut back on donations to individual families or limit the days it is open, she said.

In addition to food offerings, the center holds a Thanksgiving Day dinner and provides holiday aid. Demand for all of the center's services goes up as out-of-town relatives come to visit, Kelly said.

"All of a sudden (people) have got three or four more mouths to feed, and that's a big issue," she said.

Pamela Altmeyer, president of Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana, which distributes food to more than 400 area charities, said the holidays can be tough on the pantries.

"There is the panic factor of people who don't have enough in the way of resources, when they're expected by their families to somehow create holiday meals when they have their same old year-round budget," Altmeyer said.

Gleaners will get some extra support next week from the Indiana Blood Center. On Tuesday and Wednesday, the center will give Gleaners \$5 for every person who donates blood. Indianapolis-based Emmis Communications will match the \$5 donation for the first 300 people.

Call Star reporter Meagan Ingerson at (317) 444-6304.