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Ohio Pig Farmers' Donation to Help Fill Toledo Area Protein Gap

Donated pork will provide nutrient-rich protein for months of meals.

NEW ALBANY, OHIO – When it comes to providing no- or low-cost meals to those in need in northwest Ohio, sourcing high-quality protein is an ongoing struggle as people there are facing food insecurity rates close to 16% -- far above the national 13.5% rate. However, thanks to Ohio's pig farmers annual Pork Power program, hundreds of patrons at Toledo's [SAME Café](#) and the [Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank](#) will have nutrient-dense, sustainably raised pork available to them.

On behalf of the state's pork producers, the Ohio Pork Council (OPC) is once again partnering with Toledo's SAME Café and the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank, community-based nonprofits, to bring high-quality protein to those in need. For 2024, this means OPC has provided \$3,000 worth of fresh pork or equivalent funds to each venue.

"A meat donation like this is beyond words," said Courtney Schmidtke, Head Chef of SAME Café. "It is vital for our guests to have high-quality meat to give them the protein, iron, and vitamin B vitamins that they need to stay healthy and happy. Since many of guests lack fulltime shelter, they need a protein like pork to give their bodies the energy they need to survive whatever environment they are in the most."

Giving back to the state's rural and urban communities has been a regular part of what Ohio's pig farmers have done for years as part of OPC's Pork Power initiative, which has been even more of a lifeline in these tough economic times.

"We are very appreciative of this donation and for the ongoing relationship we have with the Ohio Pork Council," said James Caldwell, president, and CEO of Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank. "In being part of this organization for 30 years, I can tell you that working with our state's farmers for donations like this makes a difference in our ability to serve those in need in our eight-county area."

Whether it's Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank that is celebrating 40 years of serving this part of the state or SAME Café, which has only been in the city since 2022, both serve a critical role in offering access to food and much more to those suffering from food insecurity.

"For us as farmers, giving back to our state's various communities is engrained in our DNA," said Nick Seger, president of the Ohio Pork Council and a producer from Minster, Ohio. "Especially in times like this when the need is even greater, we're honored to partner with unique organizations such as SAME Café that provide life-saving meals and crucial training to those in need and to our long-time partners

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like the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank that offer broad nutritional support to many food pantries over a large area.”

As part of living out the pork industry’s We Care ethical principles, Ohio pig farmers continue to focus on producing nutritious, high-quality protein for consumers every day in a way that protects the state’s environment in a sustainable way. These core values are highlighted and explained more at www.ohpork.org.

About SAME Café

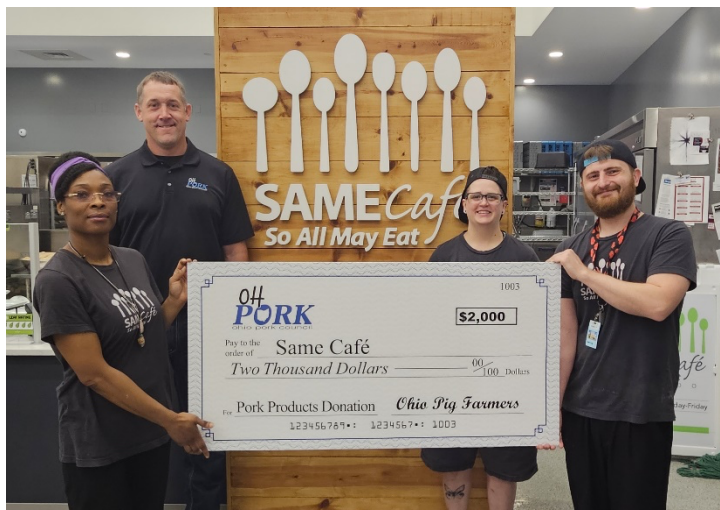
So All May Eat (SAME) Café opened its first location in Denver, Colorado, in 2006, as a donation-based, fair exchange restaurant that serves healthy food to everyone, regardless of ability to pay. All guests are invited to participate in the mission by volunteering time, giving produce, or donating money in exchange for their meal. The nation’s second SAME Café opened in Toledo, Ohio, in 2022, with the same mission of creating community through healthy food access and dignity for everyone. www.soallmayeat.org

About Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank

The Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank is a non-profit organization affiliated with Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization. The Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank serves numerous non-profit agencies in an eight-county area that includes Defiance, Fulton, Henry, Lucas, Ottawa, Sandusky, Williams, and Wood. Our mission is to feed, educate, and empower communities to end hunger in Northwestern Ohio. Over the past 40 years, the Food Bank has proudly distributed over 100 million pounds of food and grocery products to our member agencies. For information, please visit www.toledofoodbank.org.

About the Ohio Pork Council

The Ohio Pork Council was established in 1968, beginning with nearly 800 pig farmers dedicated to the task of promoting their own product. Currently, OPC has approximately 2,500 members. Their mission is to serve and benefit all Ohio pork producers. To learn more about the Ohio Pork Council, visit www.OhioPork.org or call 614-882-5887.



Nick Seger (back center left), president of the Ohio Pork Council, presented a check that represented the amount of pork that was delivered to the Toledo, Ohio, non-profit to serve to its hundreds of food-challenged guests every week. Shown here is Courtney Schmidtke, head chef of SAME Café (back right), along with Tiffine Carrington, café coordinator (front left), and Alex Zappone, café sous chef.

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Nick Seger (left), president of the Ohio Pork Council, presented a check for \$3,000 of pork for the Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank to purchase pork to distribute to pantries throughout its eight-county area. Accepting the donation was James Cardwell, president, and CEO of the 40-year-old non-profit that helps ease food insecurity as part of the national Feeding America network.

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