



### Deeper Roots, MORE BLOSSOMS

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

# TABLE OF Sontents

~	1 - 44	English Alexander	Founders

- 4 Behind the Birdie Bag
- 5 Letter From the Board
- 6 Doubled Our Grant Income
- 7 5 Reasons Why
- 8 In the Community
- 9 Districts We Serve
- 10 How Much We Give
- 11 Anatomy of a Birdie Bag
- 12 Reaching More Students, Right Where We Are
- 13 Events
- 15 Volunteers
- 17 Champions for Our Children
- 18 2023 Financial Statement
- 19 Community Champions
- 21 Our Donors & Tributes

### A LETTER From the Founders

#### **End of Year Reflection**

At the end of every fiscal year, we look back to assess who we served and how well we did it.

Our goal is to be solvent and operationally fit so that every child who receives a Birdie Bag can continue to receive them without interruption for as long as they need.

Many families are continuing to feel the effects of inflation and it shows. We were approached by numerous school districts to see if they could implement our Birdie Bag program in their schools.

Up till now, the answer was "Yes."

This year, however, we made the difficult but correct decision to postpone expansion to new schools in order to remain financially sound and operationally solvent. We didn't say "no." We just said, "not yet."

#### Here's How We Expand

To take on new schools would have been a huge spike in spending to provide the Birdie Bags for those children. We take our commitments to schools very seriously and always want to be able to meet the needs of the district.

There are many factors when we consider expanding into a new school district. Most importantly we look at:

- · How many students will receive Birdie Bags?
- · How frequently will these bags be distributed every weekend? Twice a month? Once a month?
- What is their overall socioeconomic need for the district? If we're involved it's for the long haul and we want to understand what these students and families need.

These answers are critical to our ability to expand responsibly. If we can expand and serve new districts responsibly, we will. If it spreads our resources too thin, we pause – and get proactive.

#### **Increased Leverage with Akron Canton Regional Food Bank**

This past year the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank (ACRFB) provided a vast selection of nonperishable foods for us to choose from. The supply chain issues that we were experiencing in the past were no longer there.

We were able to secure a greater variety of food by shopping daily and striking while the iron was hot – buying more quickly and increasing the value of our spend on food.

Already, we see results: our daily focus on studying what's available and buying it faster resulted in a 60% decrease in the cost of our food.

#### Going Deeper - Serving More Students & Families in Existing Schools

This year's Annual Report theme, "Going Deeper," explains how we have already begun to serve more students and families in the districts where we are established.

We add more Birdie Bags if requested. We seek to understand the individuals and families of those districts whose lives we can help. They may need extra resources because of an emergency or one time situation that has affected them – they may need beds or furniture. We'll offer individual children needed items, not found in Birdie Bags, such as clothing, diapers and hygiene products.

It is (and Isn't) About Numbers

Numbers are important. By being smart stewards, our donors can be reassured that their contributions of talent, treasure and their precious time keeps our organization strong so that we can go deeper – and someday soon, wider – in helping children and their families.

Your support is needed now more than ever and we hope you will continue to join us in our fight to alleviate child food insecurity. One child, one Birdie Bag at a time.

Ben and Eandace Eurtis



## "The roots of all goodness lie in the soil of appreciation for goodness."

-Dalai Lama

We at the Ben Curtis Family Foundation can help more children and their families only with the help of the communities of people who appreciate and share our mission.



# BEHIND THE Birdie Bag :-

Our donors, volunteers, partners and staff all work together to reduce food insecurity in the lives of area school children. This comes primarily from the distribution of nonperishable food in what we call "Birdie Bags."

That part is easy to understand. What's more complicated is the issue itself – food insecurity.

#### WHAT IS FOOD INSECURITY?

The USDA defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food to live an active, healthy life. Parents and guardians worry about whether food will run out before they have the money to buy more. That worry impacts the entire household. Children in food insecure homes experience anxiety, even malnutrition. The ripple effect is that their school attendance and performance suffer – as does their behavior in and out of school. Food insecurity is more than just missing meals. It can be a threat to children's human development – preventing them from becoming champions of their own lives.

#### HOW DID THE BEN CURTIS FAMILY FOUNDATION BEGIN?

For college sweethearts Ben and Candace Curtis, a big adventure in their lives together was in 2003. As a rookie on the PGA Tour, Ben qualified for the 2003 Open. It was his first appearance in a major tournament – and against all the odds, he won, leading to a remarkable career on the PGA Tour.

#### THE DESIRE TO GIVE BACK

Together, Ben and Candace experienced professional fame, marriage and a growing family. Over time, they felt a call to give back to the community in gratitude for their own blessings. They learned about food insecurity – and how this uncertainty of where your next meal comes from can be devastating to children...right here in northeast Ohio. In 2013, they created the Ben Curtis Family Foundation to reduce food insecurity in the lives of local students.

#### THE CHAMPION STORY

Ben knows the feeling of coming from behind – against the odds – to become a champion. It's about more than golf. It's about children having the support and encouragement to overcome the odds to become the **champions they have the potential to be** – in whatever walk of life they pursue.

#### A LETTER FROM THE BOARD

### of the Ben Eurtis Family Foundation

In 2023, our main focus was to be able to meet the growing needs of food insecure children in our area. The board was able to complete an extensive evaluation and significantly improve the depth of our services within the existing 12 school districts we serve while maintaining fiscal responsibility and sustainability.

Notably, we effectively responded to the escalating need of food insecure children, providing them with Birdie Bags while also fulfilling additional crucial needs. Furthermore, we strategically expanded our summer feeding program to encompass summer schools in participating districts to ensure their needs were being met during the summer months. We also included Cuyahoga Falls in our A Very Merry Christmas program to help with the increasing needs of their students.

Our goal in 2024 is to expand our reach supported by a commitment to building lasting relationships within the districts we serve as well as our donors, volunteers and supporters. We place strong emphasis on fiscal accountability, ensuring the careful use of donor funds while carefully planning our expansion to include additional districts.

Anticipating an increase in food insecurity within numerous districts, our proactive vision is focused on preparedness and the ability to provide assistance in a responsible and impactful manner. We would not be able to do this without the support of our community.





#### **OUR GRANT INCOME**



We are proactive about seeking grants. The more grant money we secure, the more our donors' dollars can go deeper to help more children in the districts we serve.

In 2023, our grant income doubled. We're proud that foundations and organizations share our goal and provide the support to carry out our mission to help area children overcome food insecurity.

### Eelebrating our longest partnerships

#### Tuscora Park Health and Wellness Foundation

has given us a lifetime total of more than

\$34,000 in 4 years

#### **Barberton Community Foundation**

has given us a lifetime total of

\$13,500

in grants awarded during our 3-year relationship





#### MEET JULIE GRIFFITHS

Julie Griffiths, our dedicated grant writer, plays a vital role in securing the funding that fuels our mission. Through her research and heart-felt proposals, she secures the sustainability and growth of our programs. Julie's work helps us alleviate food insecurity in Northeast Ohio and we could not be more grateful for her dedication to the Ben Curtis Family Foundation!



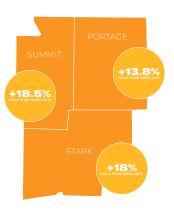
# 5 Reasons Why THE COMMUNITY SUPPORTS US

### 1. FOOD INSECURITY ESPECIALLY HARMS CHILDREN

According to the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank, children in the counties we serve experience an alarming rate of food insecurity (Portage County: 13.8%, Stark County: 18%, Summit County: 18.5%). This harms children's health, focus and behavior. We are helping children live healthier lives.

#### 2. OUR FOCUS IS LOCAL

Donors know that their contribution through funding, volunteering and distributing nonperishable food helps children in local school districts. There's no mystery – everybody's efforts help local children and their families in school districts in Summit, Portage and Stark counties.



### 3. our efforts help teachers teach

The Birdie Bags we give students can alleviate worry and contribute to improved wellness. Teachers make stronger connections with their students when they are able to provide a resource that helps the child they've observed experiencing food insecurity.

#### 4. DONORS APPRECIATE OUR EFFICIENCY

Their time and talent go deeper into helping more children because we continuously improve our methods. Our operations are lean and efficient. Our partnership with the Akron-Canton Regional Food Bank allows us to purchase more food at a discounted price.

#### 5. We're bigger than just a birdie bag

The nonperishable food in that bag today helps give children lives that are less about anxiety and fear – and more about confidence, better health and participation...not to mention the joy in knowing that they are loved. That's a great foundation for their future.



# IN THE Community





#### HALL OF FAME

Ben and Candace Curtis were honored to be welcomed to the Kent City School District Hall of Fame for the Foundation's contributions to the betterment of the district.

### PBS WESTERN CITY CENTRIC SPOTLIGHT



#### SPOTLIGHT: A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS GIFT WRAPPING

PBS Western Reserve featured the Ben Curtis Family Foundation in their City Centric Spotlight.



Scan to Watch Spotlight



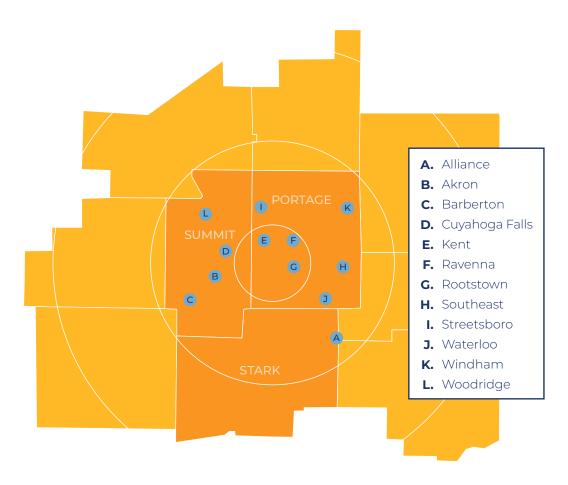
#### SPOTLIGHT: CANDACE CURTIS

In another City Centric Spotlight, PBS Western Reserve featured founder Candace Curtis.



Scan to Watch Spotlight

# Districts WE SERVE



In 2023, we reflected on 10 years of serving children. We have grown from serving one building in one school district to students in 12 school districts.

Additional districts reached out to us last year.

We respect their requests – but we also have to calculate the cost of responsibly expanding our operations and distribution to additional districts. The inflation spikes of 2023 led us to a difficult decision: The best, most responsible

in the districts where our operations were already in place. This meant saying not yet to those inquiring districts - but hopefully real soon.





Our Birdie Bags – freely distributed to children, filled with nonperishable food – represent love and encouragement. If you add up all these bags, you get a vivid big picture of the impact our organization makes.

#### **TOTAL DISTRIBUTION FOR 2023**



TOTAL BIRDIE BAGS **56,195** 



TOTAL MEALS **337,170** 



TOTAL SNACKS **224,780** 

SUMMIT COUNTY

25,210

151,260

**(5)** 100.840

**PORTAGE COUNTY** 

24,485

146,910

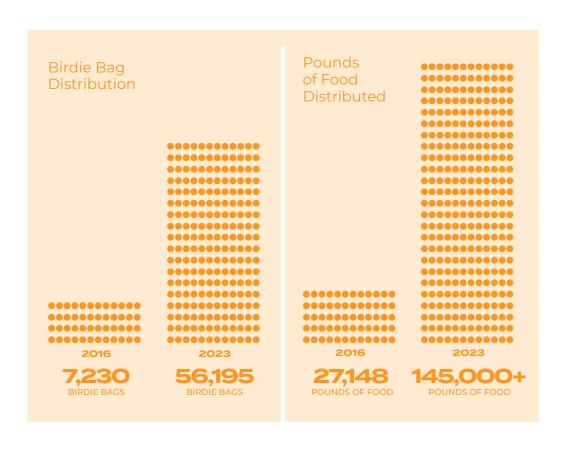
**Ö** 97.940

STARK COUNTY

6,500

39,000

**Ö** 26.000



# ANATOMY OF A Birdie Bag

#### What?

10

nonperishable items per bag. ⊢

6 Meals & 4 Snacks

each month



#### Who?

Sent home with

5,800

children across 12 school districts - no child is turned away



# What This Bag Means

When children receive this Birdie Bag, they are reminded that someone cares about them



#### IMPACT OF INFLATION:

# Reaching More Students, Right Where We Are

The impact of inflation and other rising operational costs led us to this conclusion: Don't expand - not this year - but go deeper in the districts we already serve.

#### HERE'S HOW WE WENT DEEPER.

We increased Birdie Bag distribution in 5 districts. One district experienced a remarkable 47% increase.

Cuyahoga Falls students and families participated in A Very Merry Dinner program.

We supplied feminine hygiene products to several schools - these products typically come out of the schools' budgets. Our help gives that funding back to schools.

**Output** Utilized Summer School in the districts we serve for our summer feeding program. It was a success because the schools already know who needs a Birdie Bag.

To feed more students in our service areas, we purchased more discounted food from the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank. Our reorganized warehouse space was perfect to store the 50+ pallets of nonperishable food, increasing our inventory efficiency.

That's how we go deeper - serving more students where we are.





In addition to our ongoing Birdie Bag assembly and distribution, these events are also part of the Foundation's mission. Our supporters, volunteers and staff work together to raise money and awareness for food insecurity in the lives of northeast Ohio children and their families.

#### ♣ 9TH ANNUAL GOLF CLASSIC

Held at the Country Club of Hudson, this incredible August day raised more than \$140,000 for the Foundation.

#### **₱** MERLOT & MANICURES

Our Merlot and Manicures event in June at Cellar 59 Wine Bar raised more than \$2,000. Special thank you to our host Evelyn Dickerson Hair Design who treated everyone that came out to fresh manicures.

#### **J** A VERY MERRY DINNER

This annual event continues to grow in popularity. Alliance, Kent, Ravenna, Southeast, Windham, and Cuyahoga Falls families received a full holiday dinner as well as gifts that the children asked for on their wish lists. In 2023, we served 533 children across 184 families! This would not have been possible without our volunteers and donors. They made the holidays magical for so many children and families in our community.

Many businesses and organizations in the community host Giving Trees decorated with specific wishlists from participating children as well as toy drives for top requested toys (see page 19). An incredible team of Wrap-a-Thon volunteers give their time to beautifully wrap these holiday gifts.

#### # STUDIO 9 SALON & SPA

Every year, Studio 9 Salon & Spa hosts Serenity Spa helping the Ben Curtis Family Foundation raise money and collect toys for A Very Merry Dinner. It's a great way to spend some time with your friends and kick off the holiday season.

#### **DOUBLE YOUR DONATION**

Our supporters and community advocates, Josh and Erika Schoenberger, generously commit to match up to \$10,000 of donations every year. In 2023, we held a Back to School Donation Dash, raising over \$21,000! Thank you, Josh and Erika!















# Volunteers

For every child who receives a Birdie Bag, there is a team of volunteers who come together to sort, assemble and distribute it to their school. Our volunteers inspire us to keep striving for our mission – to reduce food insecurity in the lives of the students we serve.

We know our volunteers' time is precious. We organize each shift so that the system is efficient, tasks are well defined and our volunteers can get right to work when they arrive.

We have a variety of volunteers from teenagers to grandparents, along with different school, work and civic groups. Many of our volunteers are retired teachers and have seen the need first hand. Most of our volunteers help consistently because they too become passionate and dedicated to the cause.

"Start where you are. Use what you have. Do what you can."

-Arthur Ashe

















### Ways to Volunteer

#### **Birdie Bags:**

Most of our volunteers work in our Kent warehouse to assemble Birdie Bags for distribution to 12 local school districts.

#### Wrap-a-Thon:

Every December, volunteers wrap donated or specially purchased presents for children who participate in A Very Merry Christmas.

#### **Special Events:**

The Foundation hosts a variety of fundraisers



Learn more about volunteer opportunities at **BenCurtisFoundation.org** 

### Shampions FOR OUR CHILDREN

All of our volunteers help our children become champions. Here are a few special thanks to some of our longtime, dedicated volunteers.

Mary Jo Cline When the Foundation began in 2012, we received a grant from the AMETEK Foundation, which included funding and volunteers. One of them was employee Mary Jo Cline, who has volunteered with us ever since. She assembles Birdie Bags and assists with golf outings and A Very Merry Dinner. "It's been nice to see how the organization has grown and evolved since I first started," says Mary Jo. "They serve more schools and improved processes to increase efficiency – always making it better."

Tiffany Jones & Frankie Tiffany Jones began volunteering in the early days. Her favorite activity is A Very Merry Dinner, where she spends long days sorting gifts for distribution. She also buys plenty of presents for many children. Last year, her family got a new Poochon puppy named Frankie. Tiffany didn't want to leave her young pup home alone, so Candace Curtis said, "Bring him!" This makes Frankie our first ever canine volunteer. Thanks, Tiffany and Frankie for all you do.

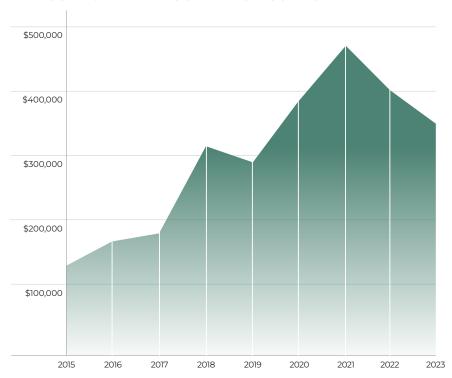
Bev Recznik After 32 years working for Kent City School District food service, Candace's Aunt Bev retired in 2014. But she is still feeding area schoolchildren as a volunteer, helping to assemble Birdie Bags and assisting with A Very Merry Dinner event. "It has grown so much from the beginning – from just one school to so many more," Bev says. "The need to provide these Birdie Bags grows. It's a wonderful organization, and I really do enjoy volunteering." We are lucky you chose us, Aunt Bev!



#### 2023 FINANCIAL STATEMENT

As of and For the Years Ended:	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Revenue	\$539,266	\$356,474	\$505,586	\$391,245	\$304,958
Total Expenses	\$435,259	\$518,628	\$416,262	\$321,658	\$232,194
Revenue Less Expenses	\$104,007	\$-162,154	\$89,324	\$69,587	\$72,764
Contributions and Grants	\$429,622	\$400,084	\$485,908	\$392,305	\$295,075

#### BEN CURTIS FAMILY FOUNDATION SUPPORT



#### **BCFF Community Support**

2023	\$351,815
2022	\$400,084
2021	\$485,908
2020	\$392,305
2019	\$295,075
2018	\$307,653
2017	\$186,261
2016	\$176,096
2015	\$131,676
Total	\$2,726,873

#### **GIVING TREES**

Our Giving Tree hosts helped make A Very Merry Dinner possible for 533 children across 184 families in six area school districts. These families received a take home holiday dinner with all of the trimmings, plus gifts were purchased by community members to complete each child's wishlist.

Businesses and organizations also hosted Toy Drives so that their employees and other members of the community could purchase the season's most popular toys to help fulfill children's wishlists and support the program.

- Kent Area Chamber of Commerce
- · Kent Board of Education
- NEO Eye Surgeons and St. Clare Surgery Center
- Portage Community Bank
- Revolution Fitness & Therapy
- Squirrel City Jewelers

- · Stillpoint Massage
- · Studio 9 Salon & Spa
- · The English Pub
- · The Third Estimate
- University Hospitals
   Portage Medical Center
- · Windmill Lakes Golf Club
- Wright Heating and Cooling
- · Young & Associates

- · Berthiaume Realtors
- · Country Club of Hudson
- Davey Tree
- Evelyn Dickerson Hair Design
- Fringe Hair Salon
- · H20 Ministries
- · Hometown Bank
- I'MPOWER Fitness



# Community CHAMPIONS

Our partners in the business community help us in so many ways. Here are just a few Community Champions who help the kids we serve:



#### TOY DRIVES

These companies hosted Toy Drives, where employees and the public could donate new toys and gift cards to make the holidays magical for children participating in A Very Merry Christmas.

#### 💆 Карсо

Hosted a summer food drive and A Very Merry Christmas gift drive.



Their toy drive resulted in more than \$2,000 in toys and gift cards.

#### Stow Dental Group

Their toy drive brought smiles to children who received gifts!

#### **A** Toyota of Kent

Year after year, these champions have been helping us make the holidays merrier.

#### Studio 9 Salon & Spa

Our supporter for years and host of our Serenity Spa fundraiser in November.





## In Their Own Words

"We don't have a lot of money and my mom sleeps a lot. There are a lot of kids in our house. My older brother can make me macaroni and cheese. I like that. I like that we can have snacks and food that I like."

- Michael, 2nd Grade, Streetsboro Public Schools

"It is comforting to teachers to know their students are going to be taken care of over the weekend. Our staff see students so receptive. They are happy that students now speak up and seek necessary support at home. Students ask when the Birdie Bags are coming and if there are extras they can take home."

- Julie, Principal, Cuyahoga Falls School District



Hole-In-One Champion

Kaulig Giving

Robert & Virginia Hitt

Foundation

The Steitz Family Fund

**Double Eagle Champion** 

Ametek

Andrews Moving and Storage

Co.

Eric Martin

Houser Family Charitable Fund

Josh and Erika Schoenberger

Northern Ohio Golf Charities

Foundation

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Family Foundation

**Eagle Champion** 

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Allen Aircraft Products. Inc.

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In memory of Papa Chet Mosca

In celebration of Tom Eby



Ben Curtis Family Foundation 1675 E. Main St., Suite 260 Kent, OH 44240

BenCurtisFoundation.org (330) 422-8326