

How Meijer Simply Give Supports Families in Partnership with Associated Churches of Fort Wayne

The Meijer hunger relief program, Simply Give, has helped local food pantries across the Midwest keep their shelves stocked since 2008. Instead of determining what food to donate to food pantry partners, Simply Give provides pantries the flexibility to choose the items best suited for the families they serve. Critically, this includes baby food, formula, diapers and wipes.

[Associated Churches of Fort Wayne and Allen County](#) has partnered with several Meijer stores over the years to supply their 21 pantries in the area. The organization offers a number of programs for young mothers and babies, including A Baby's Closet, which provides essential baby items to help families safely and adequately care for their children.

"Nutrition is an issue in our area's underserved communities, one of which experiences some of the highest infant mortality rates in the state of Indiana," said Reverend Roger Reece, Executive Director of Associated Churches. "But because baby formula is part of the Meijer Simply Give programming, we are able to directly impact this horrible statistic by surrounding mothers with care, as well as providing the right nutrition to their children. Meijer Simply Give makes it possible to get the formula these babies need."

Another Associated Churches program is Journey Beside Mothers, a support program for highly vulnerable and marginalized young mothers who otherwise receive little support.

"We try to bring support through a mentor and other programming to build a community around these moms," said Reece. "One Saturday, a Journey Beside Mothers mentor called me about a mom who didn't have any food in the house. We had just restocked all the food pantries from Meijer, so I was able to go to my nearest pantry and get a large load of groceries for the mom because of the Simply Give gift cards."

He continued, "I brought the groceries to that mother... I've been to a lot of homes, but when I opened that fridge and there wasn't anything in there, I hadn't seen anything like that in a long time. She couldn't stop crying, and I was beyond thankful that we had the food to provide. It's those little things that make a huge difference."

Associated Churches currently partners with the Meijer store on Illinois Road in Fort Wayne for three to four Simply Give campaigns per year. Each raises \$10-12,000, totaling approximately \$45,000 in donations over the course of the year. In 2024, with the support of these campaigns and Simply Give gift cards, Associated Churches distributed more than 2 million pounds of food. That's almost \$4 million in current grocery costs.

"We really couldn't do it without partners like Meijer," said Reece.

Through this partnership, Reverend Reece can reach out to all 130 churches in the organization and share the Simply Give program, the impact of funding, and what parishioners can do to help ensure the program goes even further.

"These are going to be very difficult times ahead, especially for the under-resourced. We have to be particularly diligent in focusing on that kind of care, providing resources," Reece said. "Partners like Meijer really make a difference."

Learn more about Associated Churches of Fort Wayne's food pantry efforts at <https://www.associatedchurches.org/local-food-pantries>.

Additional assets available online:  [Photos](#) ⁽¹⁾

<https://meijercommunity.com/2025-05-05-How-Meijer-Simply-Give-Supports-Families-in-Partnership-with-Associated-Churches-of-Fort-Wayne>