Meijer Property in Bad Axe Makes a Global Impact

In 2020, we opened a new supercenter in Bad Axe, Mich. While the store and parking lot took up 18 acres, what remained was a 16-acre section of tillable land around the store, and an opportunity to partner with a community organization to impact hunger relief. A group of local farmers from the Thumb Area Hunger Relief Project inquired about the possibility of farming the land, in order to expand their impact around the world.

Our team agreed to the partnership, and the farmers from the Thumb Area Hunger Relief Project continue to farm the land today. The Thumb Area Hunger Relief Project is one of the largest of 130 growing projects spread across the U.S. that partner with Growing Hope Globally, a nonprofit organization that supports agricultural development programs around the world, helping small farmers to grow lasting solutions to hunger. The Thumb Area Hunger Relief Project brings together a dozen farmers to farm approximately 250 acres of land across Michigan's "Thumb," including the Meijer land in Bad Axe.

"Meijer invests in the communities we serve, and this is a unique way we're able to partner locally to provide food in a different way than from our distribution centers or store shelves," said Matt Levitt, Meijer Real Estate Manager. "The opportunity to be part of a farming project isn't something you'd normally get to experience working in retail, but the partnership puts our extra land to good use for a great cause – to combat hunger across the globe."

Much of the land, including ours, is contributed rent-free by individuals, businesses, churches and schools, and cash donations help to cover the rest. Local agribusinesses contribute seed, fertilizer and other inputs so when the harvest is sold, nearly all of the proceeds can be used to support agricultural development programs around the world.

"The farmers here in the Thumb, and others across the U.S., have made an incredible difference. Thanks to their efforts, families around the world who used to struggle with hunger now have enough to eat," said Rachel Conley, Regional Director at Growing Hope Globally. "We're so thankful for community partners like Meijer joining these efforts so together, we can make a global impact."

In 2022, the Thumb Area Hunger Relief Project celebrated 20 years and more than $2 million raised to support farming communities around the world. The local project has supported more than 39,000 people with lasting solutions to hunger. To put things in perspective, the population of Huron County, where the Bad Axe supercenter is located, is less than 33,000 people.

Growing Hope Globally has helped more than 2.2 million people find lasting solutions to hunger. The organization currently supports 46 agricultural development programs in 30 countries, working with member organizations and their trusted local partners to provide the right tools and training to help families know the dignity and hope of providing for themselves.

Additional assets available online: Photos (1)

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