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## Library Colleagues Spend Day in Service to Help Solve Hunger

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# Library Colleagues Spend Day in Service to Help Solve Hunger

By Maureen Schlangen

On May 23, volunteers from the University Libraries spent the day in service to organizations devoted to eliminating hunger in the Miami Valley.

One group spent the morning weeding, cultivating, planting, mowing and watering in the gardens and on the grounds of the Mission of Mary Cooperative in East Dayton.

“It was a beautiful morning, and the staff at Mission of Mary were patient,” said Scott West, who helped organize the project along with the Libraries’ professional development team. “We got pretty sweaty and dirty but felt pretty good about what we achieved.”

The [Mission of Mary Cooperative](#), an urban farm started in 2010 by a group of young-adult lay Marianists, converted formerly vacant neighborhood properties to productive use and now operates a 24-week community-supported agriculture (CSA) program with regular and subsidized memberships.

The second group spent the afternoon at the [Dayton Foodbank](#), which collects food from many sources and distributes it to more than 100 member food pantries, community kitchens and shelters. Volunteers sorted and packed food for two programs — the Good-to-Go weekend backpack program, which provides kid-friendly, easy-open, easy-to-prepare foods for more than 1,500 children in the region every Friday during the school year, and a supplemental food program for low-income residents age 60 or older. Working with another group of UD volunteers, the library contingent packed several hundred mixed bags and shelf-stable milk products, juices, cereals, peanut butter, dried beans, rice, grains,

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sauces, canned vegetables and fruits, and other items and prepared them for delivery. Backpack bags even contained encouraging handwritten notes such as, “Study hard!” “You are terrific!” and “Have a nice weekend.”

Both groups learned firsthand about the prevalence of hunger in the Dayton community. Sean Mitchell, the Foodbank’s marketing and volunteer coordinator, said many areas of the city are considered “food deserts,” which the U.S. Department of Agriculture describes as vapid of fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, largely due to a lack of grocery stores, farmers’ markets, and healthy food providers. The national nonprofit hunger relief organization Feeding America, of which the Foodbank is a member, revealed in its [“Map the Meal Gap” annual report](#) that Montgomery, Greene and Preble counties have a 16.8 percent food insecurity rate compared to the national average of 12.7 percent.

Both organizations welcome donations and volunteer support from the community. For information, see the organizations' websites:

- [Get involved: Mission of Mary Cooperative](#)
- [Take action: Foodbank Dayton](#)

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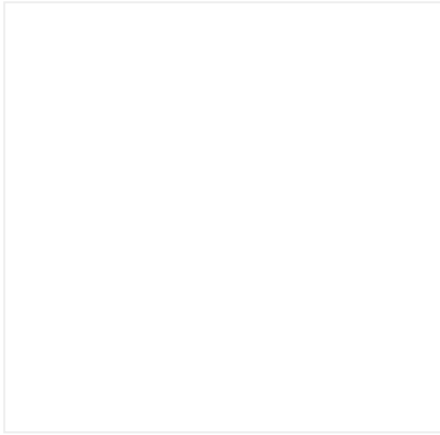
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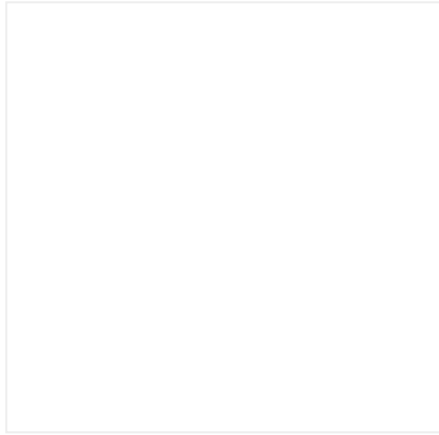
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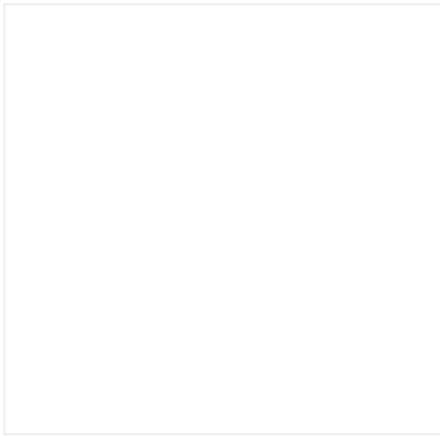
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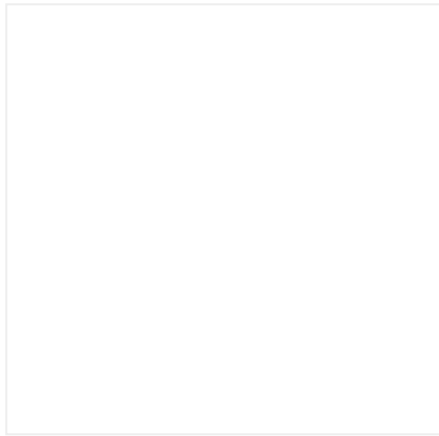
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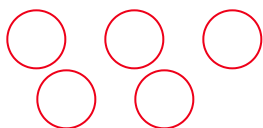
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