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## **Michigan Sugar partners with United Way, donates 15,000 pounds of sugar to local food banks**

*Annual ‘Sugar Food Pantry’ donation will help 40  
food banks in five Michigan counties assist families  
in need*

BAY CITY – **Michigan Sugar Company** today hosted its annual “Sugar Food Pantry,” a joint project with the **United Way of Bay County** enabling regional food banks to pick up four-pound bags of sugar for use by local families. The donation, totaling approximately 15,000 pounds of sugar, assists food banks across the Michigan Sugar growing region in five Michigan counties.

“Giving back to local communities across our growing region is a core value for Michigan Sugar Company, and our donation to local food banks every fall helps them adequately prepare for the holiday season,” said **Ray VanDriessche**, community and government relations director for **Michigan Sugar**. “Every Michigan Sugar farm family and employee is proud of the work we do, and it’s important to all of us that we give back to the communities across our growing region.”

“Michigan Sugar Company is an excellent community partner, and today’s food donation event is just one example of how Michigan Sugar has worked hand in hand with United Way to make lives better throughout Michigan’s Thumb and Saginaw Valley,” said **Jeff Mayes**, board president of **United Way of Bay County**. “We truly appreciate Michigan Sugar’s generosity, and we’re glad to know thousands of Michigan families will benefit from this donation.”

Every year, **Michigan Sugar** donates sugar to approximately 40 food pantries across Bay, Saginaw, Arenac, Midland and Tuscola Counties, coordinating the opportunity with **United Way**. In 2016, Michigan Sugar is providing 90, four-pound bags of sugar to each partnering food bank, which will then be provided by the food banks directly to local families that depend on food banks to help put food on their table.

“Our pantry is always grateful to receive the sugar to help our families,” said **Cookie Bumgarner** of the **Pinconning Area Emergency Food Pantry**. “The sugar is also a great addition to the food baskets that we pass out through the year.”

"As the food pantries and agencies in Bay County try to alleviate the hunger and need of so many, it seems to get a bit harder each and every year. It's extremely generous gifts like this from Michigan Sugar that make our job much easier," said **Mark Morand** from the **Our Lady of Peace SVdP Pantry** said. "We can only say 'Thank You' for all of those that will enjoy a better holiday because of this gift to the community."

**VanDriessche** said the annual donation is timed to provide extra sugar for food banks ahead of the holiday season, when sugar use for baking and celebrations peaks.

"The opportunity to help those in need celebrate a joyful holiday season, with their family and friends, makes our annual Sugar Food Pantry extra special for Michigan Sugar," he said.

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*PHOTO: Michigan Sugar Company staff assist with sugar pickup during the annual 'Sugar Food Pantry' event in Bay City, MI on October 4, 2016. The event provided approximately 15,000 pounds of sugar to 40 food banks across the region.*