



Eastern Illinois  
**FOODBANK**

**MEDIA ALERT/  
PHOTO OPPORTUNITY**

10/12/2023

**For Immediate Release**

Contact: Sophie Becker  
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**FIGHTING ILLINI TEAMS UP WITH ST. MATTHEW SCHOOL TO HELP EASTERN ILLINOIS  
FOODBANK TACKLE HUNGER**

**Urbana, Ill.** – This October, 15 University of Illinois football players are leading efforts to alleviate food insecurity through Help Tackle Hunger, a competitive, school-wide food and funds drive at St. Matthew Catholic School in Champaign to benefit Eastern Illinois Foodbank (EIF). On October 16, participating Fighting Illini football players, along with St. Matthew students, will help load food donations onto EIF trucks.

At a pep rally earlier this month, each football player was assigned as captain of a class at St. Matthew Catholic School to kick off the competitive food drive. Students were encouraged to bring in non-perishable items or monetary donations through EIF's virtual food drive website, [eifooddrive.org](http://eifooddrive.org). The class that collects the most items will join the football players for a pizza party at the team's Smith Football Performance Center.

Help Tackle Hunger was created through the partnership of the ICON Collective and Bonnie and John Dauer. As longtime Illini supporters and University of Illinois alumni, the Dauers are passionate about their work with the Name, Image and Likeness program to alleviate hunger. This is the second year the Fighting Illini have teamed up with St. Matthew to raise food and funds for EIF, with last year's drive raising more than 10,000 items for those facing food insecurity. As the foodbank continues to see an increased need, this food drive has a great impact in providing meals to the 100,000 neighbors facing hunger in eastern Illinois.

**WHAT:** *Photo opportunity of Illini football players and St. Matthew students collecting food donations and announcing winning class.*

**WHEN:** **MONDAY, OCTOBER 16 2023 FROM 10-11 AM**

**WHERE:** **ST. MATTHEW SCHOOL**  
1307 Lincolnshire Dr.  
Champaign, IL 61821

**WHO:** *Media interviews available from EIF representatives. Potential for brief interviews with select players; questions must be related to the food drive, their experience working with the students, their inspiration for helping fight against food insecurity in the community, etc. No personal, academic, or athletic questions.*

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*Eastern Illinois Foodbank (EIF) works to alleviate hunger in eastern Illinois as the primary food source to a network of 170 food pantries, agencies, and other programs throughout our 18-county service area. Through these agencies, the Foodbank provides meals to more than 1.5 million people each year. Since 1983, EIF has led the fight against hunger and strengthened communities by providing food access, emergency relief,*



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*education, and advocacy to families in east-central Illinois. EIF is a member of Feeding America, Feeding Illinois, the United Way of Coles County, and the United Way of Champaign County. For more information, visit [eifoodbank.org](http://eifoodbank.org).*