

Ohio State's Gene Smith, Ryan Day and Chris Holtmann Contribute \$175,000 To Mid-Ohio Foodbank's COVID-19 Emergency Fund



The families of Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith, head football coach Ryan Day and head men's basketball coach Chris Holtmann are joining to donate \$35,000 per month between April and August to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank's COVID-19 Emergency Fund.

The money will allow the food bank to acquire and distribute food and supplies to families in need while also helping families recently impacted by the health crisis.

The generosity of Smith and his wife, Sheila, Day and his wife, Nina, and Holtmann, and his wife, Lori, comes in response to the growing number of central Ohioans who are facing food insecurity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For every dollar donated, the Mid-Ohio Foodbank will be able to get \$9 worth of groceries. That means the \$175,000 donation from the Smiths, Days and Holtmanns will result in more than \$1.5 million worth of groceries for Ohioans in need.

"So many people in our community are struggling to feed their families right now," Smith said. "Our families wanted to do something to support those who need help. By contributing to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, we know we can make a significant impact."

Matt Habash, who is the president and CEO of the Mid-Ohio Foodbank, said the donation from the Smiths, Days and Holtmanns will make a big difference in helping the food bank meet the surging needs in the community.

"We understand that this is a marathon, not a sprint, and that it will take months for many of our struggling neighbors to recover," Habash said. "We are incredibly grateful for the generosity of these amazing families to be on this journey with us."

The Mid-Ohio Foodbank has distributed 14 percent more food since March 23 than in the same period last year, which is a difference that will rise even higher in the coming weeks, according to Habash.

The food bank provides enough food for 150,000 meals per day across its 20-county service area, but in the wake of COVID-19, that number has increased significantly in just the past three weeks.

“We keep reading about the thousands of central Ohioans who are losing their jobs, and it’s just devastating,” Nina Day said. “Ryan and I hope that our family can help ease the burden a bit for other families in our community. We hope, too, that by our example other members of Buckeye Nation might join us in making donations to feed others.”

All three families actively support numerous philanthropic organizations and causes already, but they wanted to do more for those people specifically affected by COVID-19.

“Our families want to support the thousands of Ohio families who are struggling to make ends meet because of the coronavirus,” Chris Holtmann said. “The last thing they need to worry about is how they’ll put food on the table.”

Anyone interested in joining the Smiths, Days and Holtmanns in their families affected by COVID-19 can make a donation to the Mid-Ohio Foodbank at <http://www.midohiofoodbank.org/buckeyenation>.

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