

TOGETHER WE CAN SOLVE HUNGER™

Food for THOUGHT

Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore

Fall 2023

Visionary Project Cultivates Connection

On August 1, the Foodbank celebrated the dedication and inaugural harvest of Izzie's Field, an initiative aimed at increasing the availability of fresh produce to our community while also supporting the hardworking and generous spirit of a local grower.

We paid tribute to the late Izzie Brown, our former Grants Manager, whose passionate grant-writing efforts made this initiative a reality. As we embarked on this venture, it demanded a level of creativity and initiative that went beyond the traditional scope of grant writing. With her unique vision and resourcefulness, she navigated uncharted territory, crafting a successful grant proposal to Kroger that captured the essence of our mission and the significance of this project. It is with great pride that we dedicate this farm to her memory, ensuring her legacy lives on through our work to combat hunger in our community.

The growth of this 20-acre farm is a testament to the power of compassion, hope, and connection. Our dedicated farmer, Elisha Barnes of Pop Son Farm, works hand in hand with us, nurturing the crops and fostering a bond that inspires our team every day. Elisha has and will continue to nurture this farm, dedicating 10 acres to crops of his choice, while caring for the crops selected by the Foodbank on the remaining half.

The impact of Izzie's Field extends far beyond its acres. It brings us closer to the community we serve, as hundreds of volunteers harvested and packaged corn from the first harvest for immediate distribution. Over 27,000 pounds of corn found their way to the tables of families



through our vast network of partner agencies, branches, and food hubs. Moreover, this project forged lasting connections with stakeholders, elected officials, and sponsors, reaffirming the importance of collective action in making a difference.

"Izzie's Field has become a symbol of how food, through its profound ability to connect, can create lasting change," says Foodbank President and CEO Christopher Tan. "As we reflect on our journey, we are in awe of how far we have come — doubling food distribution to the Franklin community, establishing a thriving farm, and forging meaningful partnerships."

This farm to Foodbank program underscores the significance of partnership to eliminate hunger and foster self-sufficiency within our community. As we embark on this next chapter, we look forward to future harvests and more connections and are filled with gratitude for the meaningful impact of Izzie's Field.

Look inside for these stories:



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**73¢ HELPS
PROVIDE
1 MEAL**

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Dear Friend of the Foodbank



The memories of last year's holiday season still linger with me. I recall witnessing an extraordinary act of kindness when an employee gave the coat off their back to a man who had endured his previous nights in the cold. Another colleague, recognizing the depth of his need, bought him a train ticket to his home in northern Virginia where he could find solace and warmth. Such gestures of generosity, freely given without hesitation, exemplify the essence of the organization I am blessed to be a part of. To witness this depth of care and concern is an experience that surpasses all measures of worth.

These reflections have occupied my thoughts lately, intertwining with contemplation about how our Foodbank family — comprising dedicated staff, partner agencies, donors, and volunteers — unites to meet the needs of those standing in line for sustenance. In all honesty, I find myself humbled by the sobering reality that these lines of people seeking nourishment stretch even longer than they did at this time last year. **Yet, amidst this challenge, I can think of no greater team to face it with than you.**

While the holiday season brings a heightened awareness of the challenges faced by our food insecure neighbors, it is essential to remember that hunger does not cease after the holiday season. The need for support is constant, and our community relies on us all year-round. **Together, let us reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that no one goes without access to nutritious food,** not just during the holidays, but every day.

As we prepare for the year ahead, we will continue to need you to stand alongside us to help achieve the kind of impact detailed in this edition of *Food for Thought*. We must allow food to do what it has done for centuries — providing connection and fostering the bond of shared nourishment, kindness, and togetherness. The season of giving is a wonderful reminder that we all seek this connection at our family and friends' Thanksgiving tables. Let it also be a reminder that those facing food insecurity every day also seek that need for connection.

I am grateful for your commitment to our mission that fuels our work and inspires us, not only to continue to lead the effort to eliminate hunger in our community but also to nourish the vital connections that lead our neighbors to more healthy, self-sufficient lives.

With tremendous gratitude,

Christopher Tan, President & CEO

Hard Work is Second Nature

Born and raised on a farm in the Holland area of Suffolk, Virginia, Annette Copeland has always understood the value of hard work. “When I was growing up, we all pitched in,” she says. “I was always cleaning, taking care of the animals, and picking kale. There was always something to do!”

After working for the United States Postal Service, she joined the Foodbank as a driver in September 2023. Annette will tell you that’s she’s enjoyed just about every job she’s ever had. Whether it was working at McDonald’s as a young person, serving as a custodian, or driving a commercial truck, she always finds the “good” in whatever she does. However, she will tell you that the Foodbank ranks highest among them all.

“First off, I really like being on the road,” Annette says. “At the Foodbank, it’s an especially good feeling knowing that I’m on the way to help people who need it, knowing that I’m going to make a difference in someone else’s life.”

Annette’s amazing outlook has certainly not gone unnoticed. “She takes such pride in everything she does to serve our neighbors and we are so thankful to have her on our team,” says Foodbank Transportation Manager Sarah Mathews. She has kept our Western Tidewater deliveries afloat through multiple transitions, staff changes, and program expansion. She has gone above and beyond in helping the team continue to serve our neighbors without a single interruption.



“Annette also ensures that our warehouse is organized and clean, along with our vehicles. She is not afraid to get her hands dirty and will help with whatever needs to be done. On any given day, you might find her outside doing yardwork, mowing, and beautifying our Western Tidewater Branch. She is a woman on the move, doesn’t like to stand around, and is always trying to accomplish things that need to be done. She doesn’t wait for anyone to come ask her; she takes the initiative. She has very high standards and truly cares for those we serve. If there is something we can improve on for the good of our neighbors, she will make it happen. Simply put, Annette is our Foodbank superwoman!”

The Growing Need for Feed365

We are grateful for the positive stories we share in our newsletters, celebrating the impact of our collective efforts in the fight against hunger. Yet, it is equally crucial to recognize the uphill battle we face and the increasing demands on our resources.

Over the past years, the Foodbank has experienced a significant surge in food costs, rising from \$1 million spent in FY2019 to a projected \$5 million in FY2024. The distribution of free produce to our partners remains paramount to us, as we prioritize the nourishment of our community. However, this comes with a considerable expense, being the costliest item among the things we purchase.

How Can You Help?

Become a Feed365 member and join the nearly 1,000 monthly givers enhancing our impact and bringing hope to even more individuals facing hunger. Together, we can overcome these challenges and build a stronger, more resilient community.



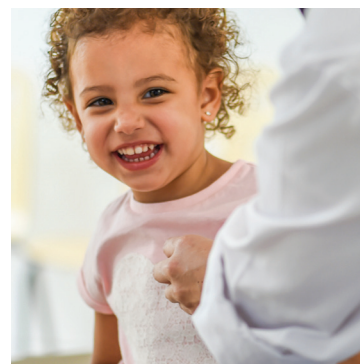
Joining Forces to Connect Communities

Thanks to a generous \$50,000 Connecting Communities grant from Rite Aid Healthy Futures, Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters (CHKD) and the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore will collaborate to provide essential support to low- and moderate-income patient families, ensuring access to healthy, shelf-stable food and vital assistance with referrals for various needs.

Launched in 2021, the Connecting Communities program finds innovative ways to link major institutions and their communities to nurture and promote health equity for children, especially those who may already be receiving medical care or living with a serious illness such as heart disease, diabetes, and obesity, among others. The grant will be used for a family nutrition program based at General Academic Pediatrics in CHKD's new Children's Pavilion that identifies patients and families who would benefit from a pantry bag of shelf-stable food as well as assistance with referrals for food and other critical needs.

The Foodbank will leverage its industry relationships to purchase high-quality, nutritious products that will directly benefit the families served through this program. Additionally, we are proud to extend our support to the CHKD volunteers, offering them a welcoming space at our facility to assemble the food bags with care.

"Food insecurity is a significant issue that can have a negative effect on the overall well-being of our patients and families. We are excited to partner with Rite Aid Healthy Futures and the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore to further the reach of our Family Nutrition Program," says Kate Ryan, Philanthropy Officer at CHKD.



Christopher Tan, President and CEO of the Foodbank, emphasizes the importance of this collaboration, stating, "By targeting food insecurity in our youngest population, we prevent long-term health disparities, empowering children to grow, learn, and thrive without the burden of hunger. We have the power to ensure every child has a chance to flourish and reach their full potential."

With a shared vision of building healthier, more equitable neighborhoods, these organizations' innovative, community-rooted initiatives are addressing hunger and food insecurity, particularly for vulnerable children, and creating healthier communities for generations to come.

Driving Hunger Away

At its annual meeting of shareholders, TowneBank reviewed its performance and provided updates for the coming year. In keeping with its tradition to serve others and enrich lives, the company filled one of its famous "beetle bugs" with food items to donate to the Foodbank in honor of the annual event. Additionally, the company contributed to organizations helping to end food security in 11 markets in Virginia and North Carolina.



A Young Volunteer's Heartfelt Gesture



In a heartwarming act of appreciation, seventh grader Zach Stamm generously donated \$100 of his own money to the Foodbank, honoring the hard work of his teachers. Inspired by the impact these educators made in his life, Zach hopes his contribution will bring positive change to someone else.

Fueled by his commitment to ending hunger and food insecurity in our community, Zach has volunteered dozens of hours of his time since his first shift in April 2022. Not only does he selflessly donate his time, but he has also shared his Foodbank experiences with his classmates for a school empathy project, exemplifying the spirit of kindness that shines bright in our youngest volunteers.

106.9 The Fox and FM99 to Host Hampton Roads' Largest Food and Fund Drive

In 1997, 106.9 The Fox initiated the Mayflower Marathon to support local food banks and address the pressing needs of our neighbors during the holiday season. The event's impact grew even stronger in 2008 when The Fox's sister station, FM99, joined forces to make the marathon even more substantial. The stations boast an incredibly generous and community-minded listening audience, and by promoting the event on both platforms, they knew they could significantly increase the number of donations and illuminate the holidays with hope.

Fast forward to today, we are preparing for the 27th annual Mayflower Marathon and are thrilled to invite you to be a part of this round-the-clock food and fund drive **beginning Friday, November 17, and concluding Sunday, November 19.** With 57 hours to participate, giving has never been easier. Simply drive through one of our two locations where volunteers will be on hand to accept your donations.



For those unable to visit the sites in person, we also offer an online donation option, allowing you to make a powerful impact from wherever you are and encourage others to do the same.

Last year's event was nothing short of remarkable, as we collectively gathered enough food and monetary donations to provide more than 730,000 meals.

"It's difficult to choose a favorite memory from the Mayflower Marathon, but one that remains etched in my heart is when I was broadcasting live from the event a few years ago," says Sonja Morrell, WAFX and WNOR Marketing Director. "During that moment on the air, a little girl approached, clutching her piggy bank tightly and emptied its contents into the donation bin. Her mom shared that she heard about the event on the radio and insisted they stop by on their way to school to make a contribution. Witnessing such pure compassion and the impact of our collective efforts is a testament to the profound difference we can make together."

Every year, this extraordinary effort ensures that more neighbors can share holiday meals with their loved ones, creating memories that resonate with the true spirit of the season.

New Location!

**Lynnhaven Mall
(Near AMC Theatre)
701 Lynnhaven Parkway
Virginia Beach, VA 23452**

Continuous service from
Friday at 5:30 a.m. to Sunday at 3 p.m.

**Kroger Marketplace
1017 University Blvd.
Suffolk, VA 23435**

Friday: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Saturday: 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Sunday: 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Empowering Virginia's Eastern Shore

Dos Santos Food Pantry and Community Services is driven by the belief that providing sustenance to neighbors is not just a moral obligation, but a matter of justice. With a focus on serving the immigrant and farm worker communities in Accomack and Northampton counties on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, Dos Santos strives to make a meaningful impact in the lives of individuals and families. Since its inception in 2014, the food pantry has undergone remarkable growth, expanding from aiding an average of 35 families per month to over 300 during the summer months.

The origin of the food pantry can be traced back to the compassion of the children participating in Dos Santos' after-school tutoring program. These young individuals noticed their peers struggling with hunger and expressed a desire to share their surplus snacks with them. Recognizing the urgent need within these families, the leaders of Dos Santos embarked on a mission to alleviate hunger in the community. With generous contributions from two local churches, the support of the diocese, and affordable meat from the Foodbank, a monthly food pantry was established at St. George's Episcopal Church in Pungoteague.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic shed light on the hardships endured by local families, with some traveling long distances of over 40 miles round trip to access food assistance. Responding to this challenge, Dos Santos implemented a mobile pantry solution. Three Sundays a month, dedicated volunteers set up tables laden with food along the roadside in three locations: Pungoteague, Parksley, and Eastville. While the food offerings are thoughtfully curated to meet the cultural preferences of the Hispanic community, they firmly believe in inclusivity and never turn away anyone in need.

The families they serve are resilient and self-sufficient. However, many of them toil in physically demanding hourly rate jobs that are susceptible to the vagaries of weather and financial downturns. Consequently, they often face days without pay through no fault of their own. Recognizing the parallels in food insecurity faced by migrant agricultural workers, Dos Santos has joined forces with the Legal Aid Justice Center to ensure that these



individuals have access to nourishment during their time on the shore.

In addition to regular monthly distributions, Dos Santos is always ready to lend a helping hand during times of crisis. Whether it's responding to devastating house fires, medical emergencies, or the heart-wrenching loss of loved ones, their doors remain open, providing not only food but also a support system.

In October, Dos Santos reached another milestone with the establishment of a new home for the pantry in the Heritage Center in Onley. This development has paved the way for the opening of a thrift store. By selling donated items, they generate funds that directly contribute to the cost of providing food to those in need.

Dos Santos Food Pantry and Community Services is not merely an organization; it is a beacon of hope, compassion, and empowerment for the Eastern Shore community. Together, they strive to ensure that no individual or family goes hungry, uplifting lives and fostering a brighter future for all.

Nourishing Hearts and Minds, One Distribution at a Time

In the heart of the Portsmouth community, St. Mark's Deliverance Center is making a significant impact in the lives of families in need. Tenita Rodgers is the driving force behind the success of this Foodbank partner agency. Supported by a dedicated group of volunteers, Tenita ensures that every distribution runs smoothly. Despite facing limited storage space for perishable goods, Tenita and her team find innovative solutions to make it work, ensuring that no resources go to waste.

Collaboration is at the heart of St. Mark's Deliverance Center's mission. In times of excess or when additional support is needed, Tenita connects with several other churches in the community. By working together, they can make a broader impact, extending their reach and supporting more individuals and families in need.

The dedication of St. Mark's Deliverance Center goes beyond providing essential food. They also recognize the importance of nourishing young minds. In addition to the 170 bags of essentials they distribute to families, they go the extra mile by assembling snack bags specifically designed for children. This thoughtful gesture ensures that kids receive the nourishment they need while bringing smiles to their faces.

St. Mark's Deliverance Center is a shining example of the transformative power of community engagement and collaboration. Through their commitment to empowering families and their tireless efforts to ensure no one goes hungry, they are making a lasting difference.



Deloris Shambley's Dedication Fuels a Legacy of Compassion

Bethlehem Missionary Baptist, under the guidance of Deloris Shambley, has been a beacon of hope and support for decades. With a team of devoted individuals, they have built a legacy of compassion through their impactful food pantries.

Deloris Shambley is an extraordinary individual who has dedicated her life to serving others. At 81 years old, Ms. Shambley's passion for assisting with food pantries has spanned an impressive timeline, stretching back to 1996, if memory serves it correctly. Her extensive experience and commitment have made her an invaluable asset to the community.

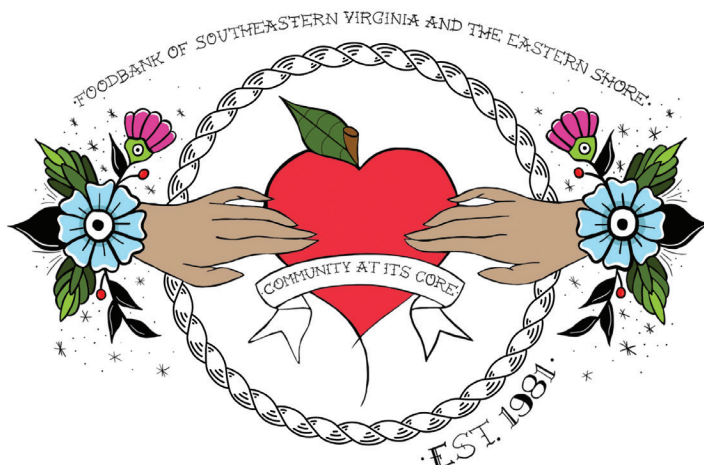
Supported by a small yet incredibly dedicated crew, Bethlehem Missionary Baptist's pantry operates seamlessly. This passionate team shares a genuine love for their work, finding joy in running the pantry and making a positive impact in the lives of those they serve. Their genuine care for the community has earned them the respect and admiration of all who encounter their services.

This Foodbank partner agency has become synonymous with compassion and support. Their commitment to providing essential food resources has not only nourished individuals and families in need but has also created a nurturing environment where community members feel valued and cared for. The team at Bethlehem Missionary stands as an inspiration to us all, reminding us of the power of kindness and the lasting impact it can have on our community.



Community at its Core: Introducing Our First T-shirt

The first official Foodbank T-shirt was designed by Graceanne Gershner, our Donor Relations Coordinator. Her design draws inspiration from American traditional tattoo styles, which Graceanne deeply admires. Given the significant Navy presence in Hampton Roads, this tattoo style is prominent throughout our community, creating a meaningful connection. This design symbolizes the Foodbank's profound reach, as we all come together and anchor ourselves at the core of the community, offering our vital services to those in need. This collectible T-shirt will be updated every year.



**To purchase this T-shirt,
visit foodbankonline.org**

Coming Soon!

Our return address is changing!

We are partnering with a gift processing vendor that will help us reduce costs and make your generous donation go even further to provide more food to our community.

The Foodbank of
Southeastern Virginia
and the Eastern Shore
is a proud member of:



Main Office
800 Tidewater Drive
Norfolk, VA 23504
Phone: 757-627-6599

Eastern Shore Branch
24530 Coastal Blvd.
Tasley, VA 23441
Phone: 757-787-2557

Western Tidewater Branch
618 South St.
Franklin, VA 23851
Phone: 757-544-9027

In accordance with Federal law and internal policy, the Foodbank is prohibited to discriminate in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisal, or because all or a part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the Foodbank's Director of Finance at 757-314-4547.

The Foodbank is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

MY GIFT TO HELP IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER



☒ **Yes, I want to help my neighbors who are facing hunger this holiday season! Enclosed is my gift of:**

- ☐ \$35 to provide 47 meals
☐ \$100 to provide 136 meals

- ☐ \$50 to provide 68 meals
☐ \$_____ to provide as many meals as possible

☐ My check payable to the **Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore** is enclosed.

FROM: NAME: _____
STREET: _____
CITY/STATE/ZIP: _____
EMAIL: _____

☐ Please charge my credit card.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Amount \$ _____
Phone Number: _____-_____
Credit Card Number: _____
Exp. Date: ____/____ Security Code: ____
Signature: _____

☐ I would like to donate \$_____ automatically each month using my credit card.