

Food for THOUGHT

Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore

SPRING 2024

Nourishing Every Corner of the Eastern Shore

We are delighted to share the recent expansion of mobile pantries on the Eastern Shore, made possible through the support of two impactful grants. The TEFAP Reach and Resiliency Grant Initiative and the Eastern Shore Mobile Food Distribution Project from Elaine Luria, part of Congress' Community Project Funding, have significantly enhanced our ability to reach underserved communities across the rural isthmus.

These grants have facilitated the extension of mobile distributions into new locations, ensuring that both USDA and purchased products are made available to communities in need. In total, five new sites are serving an impressive 570 additional households per month, thanks to the strategic placement of our mobile pantries. Our decision to expand into these specific areas was guided by a careful assessment of service gaps throughout our footprint on the Eastern Shore. We identified regions that were considerably distant from us or our partner agencies, coupled with a high






percentage of poverty and Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households. This prioritization has allowed us to bring vital resources to those who need them most.

Looking ahead, our goal is to establish three more sites, continuing our mission to extend a helping hand to every corner of the Eastern Shore. We are grateful for the ongoing support that enables us to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those facing food insecurity in our community.



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Dear Foodbank Friend



After having the honor of leading this organization for the past two years, I am so proud of the incredible journey we have embarked upon together. Last year was particularly noteworthy, as we achieved a significant milestone by distributing a record-breaking 21 million pounds of food.

While this accomplishment underscores our collective determination, it also serves as a stark reminder of the pressing need in our community. The realization that the demand for our work far outpaces our achievements fuels our commitment to do more.

As we begin to wrap up another fiscal year, our focus has been clear — to deliver more food, more efficiently, ensuring that it is not only abundant but also nourishing. Healthy food options have become a priority, constituting more than 70% of the food we distribute. We are dedicated to promoting well-being, helping our neighbors access nutritious meals, and guiding them toward self-sufficiency.

You'll read more about these efforts and particularly about the recent opening of two new program sites: The Free Market at TCC and The Community Feed at Berkley. Both sites follow a client choice model, providing our neighbors with the dignity of selecting food items that suit their preferences and dietary needs. This not only fosters a sense of empowerment but also ensures that healthier food options are accessible to all.

Your commitment to our mission has been the driving force behind these accomplishments, and I am honored to be part of this compassionate community. I have one more request, though.

Summer, a season of joy and relaxation for many, brings challenges for those facing food insecurity. With school closures and increased child care needs, the absence of meal programs leaves many families struggling to put food on the table. During this same time, our donations of food and funds decline dramatically. Your continued support during these warmer months will be crucial. It will allow us to provide sustenance when school closures disrupt access to essential meals for many.

Your kindness echoes through every nutritious meal provided and every life positively impacted. As we navigate the challenges of the upcoming summer months, I am confident that your continued support will be a source of comfort for those facing food insecurity.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Foodbank family.

With tremendous gratitude,

Christopher Tan, President & CEO



Driving Impact

In a generous gesture of community support, Bonnie Gordon-Rabinowitz and Marc Rabinowitz have donated a freight truck to the Foodbank, dedicated to supporting the operations of Izzie's Field. Inspired by their volunteering experience during the inaugural harvest, Bonnie and Marc sought to make an impactful contribution beyond their initial involvement. This freight truck donation stands as a testament to their commitment to sustaining and enhancing the vital work undertaken at Izzie's Field.



Point your smartphone camera here to learn more about this farm to Foodbank program!



A User-Friendly Experience for a Stronger Community Connection

The Foodbank is excited to announce the much-anticipated relaunch of our website, www.foodbankonline.org! We've listened to your valuable feedback and are proud to present a fresh and improved online platform designed to better serve our community's needs.

Key Features Include:

- Enhanced Calls-to-Action
- Mobile-Friendly & Responsive
- Security, Speed, and Search Engine Optimization
- Simple and Easy to Update



Safety in the Air

Excitement fills the air as we unveil the installation of a cutting-edge air curtain situated between our main warehouse and the refrigeration area. An air curtain is a device that emits a controlled stream of air vertically across an opening, creating an invisible barrier. This innovative addition serves a crucial safety purpose — enhancing visibility for our forklift drivers. By allowing a clear line of sight through this designated area, the air curtain ensures optimal safety protocols, contributing to the smooth and secure operations of our warehouse.



A New Chapter in Addressing College Student Food Insecurity



THE FREE MARKET
at TCC

In June 2020, in partnership with Tidewater Community College and supported by a multiyear grant of \$50,000 per year from TowneBank, the Foodbank launched The Community Feed at Norfolk’s MacArthur Center. This vibrant space provided students with access to healthy foods and resources to address root causes of food insecurity. For more than three years, it was a valuable resource for the community. Although its absence will be felt, it recently underwent transformation into The Free Market at TCC, with a renewed focus on serving Tidewater Community College students.

As part of the grand unveiling, a ribbon-cutting ceremony held on February 26 symbolized the official launch of The Free Market at TCC, located at 300 Granby Street in Norfolk. This partnership brings together the expertise and resources of the Foodbank with the localized understanding and proximity of the TCC community. It creates a more efficient and targeted approach to address the unique challenges of college students struggling with food insecurity, allowing them to achieve their educational and professional goals.

**Please note that The Free Market is exclusively for TCC students.*

If you need food assistance, visit our website at foodbankonline.org to find resources near you.



Growing to Serve More

We're thrilled to highlight the remarkable progress of the Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program, a Foodbank partner agency, in their dedication to expanding services and supporting the community. Over the past year, this USDA agency has rapidly grown, initially utilizing the program for home delivery, and now extending it to all eligible clients. Forecasting that more than 80% of their recipients will qualify for this program, they expect that more than 300 families will benefit from the program.

As they navigate this expansion, the program is

expected to realize tangible benefits, resulting in savings and increased food inventory. However, the challenge of limited freezer and refrigerated space persists. The Foodbank hopes to collaborate and support their efforts to build capacity, allowing them to serve even more individuals in need.

The Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program's dedication to maximizing resources and efficiency is truly commendable. We appreciate their hard work and look forward to witnessing the positive impact they will continue to make within the community.

New Gift Processing Address Provides More Meals to Those in Need

Our return address for gift processing has officially changed! The savings from this transition to using our partner TowneBank's automated service provides over 123,000 additional meals to our neighbors experiencing food insecurity! We are committed to maximizing the impact of your generous contributions.



A Decade of Dedication to the Foodbank



There's a familiar face that has been lighting up our space for a remarkable 10 years. Meet Abe Forman, a man whose journey from the South Bronx to the Foodbank has been nothing short of extraordinary.

Born and raised in New York, Abe's life took an adventurous turn when he left the city at the age of 18. His summers were spent working in the mountains, and soon after, he joined the Air Force, embarking on a journey that would take him to Texas, Illinois, upstate New York, and Puerto Rico. Little did he know that life had more surprises in store for him.

In 1965, Abe married his wife, Natalie, someone he had known since high school. Their love story, ignited on the subway years after graduation, paints a vivid picture of fate's timing. Reflecting on the chance subway encounter, Abe humorously contemplates the alternate paths his life could have taken if he had been just 30 seconds earlier or later.

The couple spent 25 years in Syracuse, New York, raising two children. In 1995, their children migrated to Virginia, and the Formans followed suit in 2000 after Abe's retirement from a distinguished career as the Director of Logistics for Carrier Corporation.

Abe's retirement didn't mark the end of his adventures. His passion for boating led him to the picturesque Chesapeake Bay, where weekends were spent cruising the waters and enjoying all-you-can-eat blue crab at his favorite spots in Crisfield, Maryland. Alongside boating, his love for travel has taken him on 31 cruises, showcasing his love for new cultures and destinations.

With six grandchildren and one great-grandchild, Abe's life is rich with joy, and his weekly routine is a testament to his energetic spirit. Gym sessions, volunteering at the Foodbank, shooting with friends, and quality family time on weekends keep him on the move. In the kitchen, he plays sous chef to his wife, Natalie, the culinary maestro, as they whip up delicious meals and desserts together.

In 2014, Abe felt the call to give back, and he found his way to the Foodbank. Starting in the Neighborhood Marketplace, he transitioned to the Sorting Room before



settling into data entry. His dedication to helping the community shines through, particularly in his involvement with MealConnect — an online platform connecting surplus food to those in need.

Abe's favorite aspect of volunteering is the camaraderie. For him, it's about connecting with fellow volunteers, staff, and, most importantly, contributing to a cause that benefits his neighbors. With a twinkle in his eye, Abe emphasizes that volunteering keeps his brain sharp and fulfills him in ways words can't capture.

Every Tuesday, you can find Abe grabbing lunch with Jeff, the Foodbank's Product Sourcing Manager. Their shared love for subs, fried chicken, burgers, and cheesesteaks has become a delightful tradition, adding another layer of friendship to Abe's Foodbank journey.

As we celebrate Abe's 10th anniversary in June, we extend our deepest gratitude for his nearly 2,000 volunteer hours and the immeasurable impact he's had on the Foodbank community. His personable nature and infectious sense of humor make him a beloved figure among those fortunate enough to know him, and the Foodbank is equally enriched by his dedicated presence.

A Collaborative Effort for Health and Well-Being

The Foodbank is thrilled to introduce our newest food hub, The Community Feed at Berkley, a site that embodies the spirit of community collaboration and holistic health support. Recognizing the profound impact of dietary patterns on health outcomes, Sentara Health has joined forces with the Foodbank to address the challenge of food access in underserved communities.

The Community Feed is strategically located adjacent to Sentara's Care Clinic, providing a unified space where individuals can access medical, behavioral health, and social support services alongside fresh and nutritious foods. It is designed to resemble a small grocery store where individuals can choose the items that best suit their dietary needs,

offering a dignified experience for our neighbors.

Community members and patients can shop once a week, providing them with regular access to fresh and nutritious foods at no cost. In addition, the food hub aims to address nutritional needs through educational programming. This holistic approach recognizes the connection between food access, dietary patterns, and overall health.

This collaborative effort signifies a step forward in creating an inclusive and supportive environment where health and nutrition go hand in hand. We express our gratitude to Sentara Health for their vision and partnership, and we look forward to witnessing the positive impact of The Community Feed at Berkley on the health and vitality of the community it serves.



You're Invited!

Join us for an upcoming Behind-the-Scenes Breakfast to get an exclusive glimpse into our operations and learn more about our mission. For more information, email donorservices@foodbankonline.org or call 757-314-4575.





JULY 15-29

HOW TO COMPETE:
Fundraise
Coordinate a Food Drive
Volunteer Participation
Justice League Sponsorship
Referral Bonus
And More!

The Foodbank presents Hunger Heroes, an annual food and fundraising competition that challenges our neighbors to join us in this noble mission to be the heroes our community needs! We invite corporate companies, local businesses, organizations, social groups, and passionate individuals to be a part of this annual campaign.



For more information on how to become a Hunger Hero, visit our website at foodbankonline.org/hunger-heroes or call 757-644-4432.

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



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The Foodbank is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

MY GIFT TO HELP FIGHT SUMMER HUNGER



Yes, I want to help neighbors facing summer hunger in our community! *Enclosed is my gift of:*

- \$35 to help provide 70 meals
- \$50 to help provide 100 meals
- \$100 to help provide 200 meals
- \$_____ to help 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.

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