

TOGETHER WE CAN SOLVE HUNGER

Food for THOUGHT



You're Invited to Hampton Roads' Largest Food Drive

Join us in one of Hampton Roads' most cherished traditions — the 28th Annual FM99 and 106.9 The Fox Mayflower Marathon. This beloved event kicks off on Friday, November 22, and runs non-stop through Sunday, November 24. For 57 hours, we'll come together to make a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors facing hunger.

Mayflower Marathon began in 1997 when 106.9 The Fox initiated the event, naming it after the original sponsor, the Mayflower® moving company, to support local food banks during the holiday season. In 2008, FM99 joined, amplifying its impact.

We're thrilled to offer two convenient donation locations for you to drive through and drop off contributions. Over 700 volunteers will be on hand — unloading donations, cheering on donors, and ensuring the process is seamless. We encourage donations of dry goods, holiday staples, and frozen turkeys to help families prepare festive meals.

Adding to the excitement, we're proud to announce a special \$35,000 matching gift from Kroger, doubling the impact of every dollar donated. For those unable to visit in person, online donations provide a powerful way to contribute from anywhere.

But the work doesn't stop when the marathon ends. All food collected is swiftly distributed to our partner agencies, ensuring that families receive the



Volunteers load food donations into trailer ahead of a holiday distribution.

nourishment they need just in time for Thanksgiving. This is accomplished through an efficient drive-thru model at the Foodbank, where food is allocated according to the size of each agency. It's truly remarkable to witness the vehicles line up to collect the food generously donated by neighbors for neighbors.

Mayflower Marathon is not just about donations — it's about coming together to ensure that everyone has a seat at the table this holiday season. Last year, you helped us provide more than 756,000 meals. This year, we're hoping to surpass that milestone, and with your help, we believe we can.



A volunteer unloads holiday donations as the Beachcombers Corvette Club drives through Mayflower Marathon.

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.

Learn more or
donate on the webpage:
FoodbankOnline.org/
[Mayflower-Marathon.](http://Mayflower-Marathon)

Dear Foodbank Friend,

As we begin to experience the warmth of the holiday season, I find myself reflecting deeply on the year behind us, a year filled with remarkable achievements and heartfelt generosity. Together, we have woven a tapestry of hope, breaking our own record by distributing a staggering 24,715,806 pounds of nutritious food last fiscal year. This triumph is not ours alone; it is shared with our dedicated community partners, our tireless volunteers, and our generous donors. You are the threads that make this tapestry strong.

Our record-breaking distribution is a testament to our collective determination, but the true beauty lies in the quality of the nourishment we provide. Healthy food options have become the very essence of our mission, with over 70% of the food we distribute now brimming with nutritious choices. We are devoted to supporting our neighbors in accessing balanced meals and guiding them toward better health and self-sufficiency. In this pursuit, our commitment to providing nutritious options was further underscored by a remarkable 42% surge in our distribution of fresh produce within a single year.

We are not only reaching more people but are doing so more efficiently than ever before. Our food distribution network is interlaced and responsive, ensuring freshness and timely delivery of essential items. This year, we increased our inventory turnover rate by 155%, meaning that food products are moving from the warehouse to the hands of those in need quicker than ever. It is a testament to our amazing staff who I have the pleasure of working alongside.

Yet, even as we celebrate these accomplishments, we are keenly aware of the growing need stitched throughout our community. Food insecurity within our service area has increased, touching the lives of 1



in 10 of our neighbors. This reality calls us to weave even more strands of support into our community, to do more, to give more, to be more.

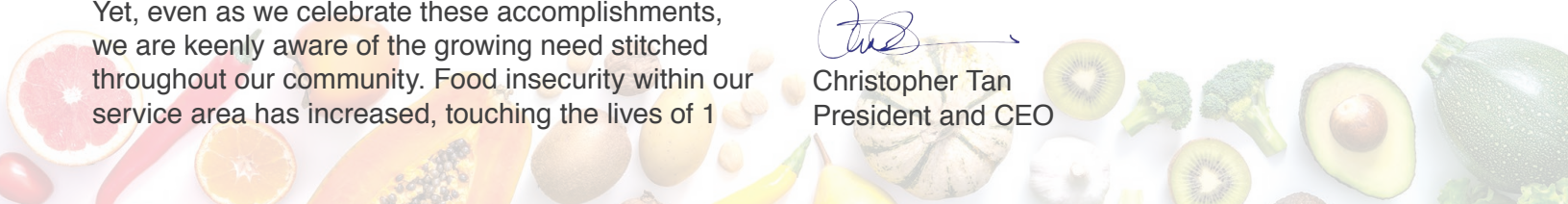
As the festive season illuminates our lives, I ask you to remember that hunger knows no season. The holidays may heighten our awareness of the struggles our neighbors face, but their need for sustenance is year-round. In this season of giving, I invite you to make a New Year's resolution to continue to stand with us in our journey. Whether through participating in the upcoming Mayflower Marathon, becoming a recurring donor through our Feed 365 program, or making an annual contribution, your generosity is the blanket that wraps us in warmth during the darkest nights.

May your holidays be filled with joy and abundant blessings. Thank you for being the heart of our community.

With deepest gratitude and warmest holiday wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Chris Tan', with a flourish extending to the right.

Christopher Tan
President and CEO



Holiday Closure Announcement

The Foodbank, including branches and program sites, will be closed beginning Wednesday, December 25, 2024, and will reopen on Thursday, January 2, 2025. Supporters can conveniently donate online at FoodbankOnline.org/Donate-Today. Additionally, we will honor any gifts postmarked on or before December 31 as 2024 contributions.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

Pungoteague Community Church

Where the Spirit of Community Thrives

Since its inception in 2007, Pungoteague Community Church's food pantry has embodied the spirit of community under the leadership of Pastor Bobby Carroll Huether. Despite the small size of the town and congregation, their impact has been profound, rooted in a rich history of compassion and service.

Pastor Bob's connection to the church stretches back to the 1830s, possibly even longer. This deep legacy is evident in his unwavering commitment to the community. Alongside his wife, Christine, he dedicates himself to their neighbors.

Pungoteague is a small but mighty town with about 100 houses. With only a dozen regular attendees on Sundays, the church thrives through the efforts of a close-knit community, both church-goers and non-goers alike. This dedication is seen in the way neighbors come together — whether translating for migrant workers, new families packing boxes for distribution, or high school students completing volunteer hours.

The food distribution model has evolved over time. Initially, people came inside, allowing for fellowship and personal connections. During COVID-19, they transitioned to a drive-thru model, keeping communication through car windows. This adaptation allowed them to handle the increased demand efficiently, recently serving an astonishing 450 people over the course of just two days.

The establishment of a Self-Help Center has expanded their mission, offering household donations to those in need. A grant from Feeding America has also enhanced their capabilities, providing refrigeration for their participation in the Retail Rescue program, which reduces food waste by securing surplus food from local retailers. Along with the USDA's The Emergency Food Assistance Program, they are well-prepared to feed more neighbors.

Pastor Bob's dedication is deeply influenced by his grandfather, another proud Eastern Shore native, who had a heart for helping people in any condition. This legacy of compassion and service continues to inspire the community, demonstrating that even a small bunch can make a mighty impact.



Pastor Bob smiling as he serves neighbors during one of the bi-weekly food distributions.

The Community Garden Flourishes Once Again

The Community Garden at Sentara Princess Anne Hospital has experienced a vibrant revival this year after a hiatus during the pandemic. The garden, which has been an element of healthy food access in our community for many years, picked up momentum after a neighbor inquired about the old program.

The garden is now in full swing, thanks to the support from Sentara, who generously donates the land. They not only helped relaunch the program but also connected the garden with partnerships that donated essential resources like soil.

It is a sight to behold, with numerous beds full of produce and others dedicated to pollination, including a special bee area. A handful of regular volunteers maintain the garden, often gathering on Saturdays or stopping by whenever they have free time. There are dedicated beds where all produce grown is donated directly to the Foodbank.

The gardeners love hearing compliments from passers-by on Dam Neck Road, and soon, they hope to expand the garden, recruit new volunteers, and restore it to its original low-maintenance beauty. This group effort truly puts the "community" in Community Garden.



Produce and pollination beds during the summer at The Community Garden.

Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program is Delivering Food and Promising Futures



Two loyal volunteers prepare for their regular drive-thru distribution.

For over 30 years, the Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program, a Foodbank partner agency, has been a source of strength for our Western Tidewater community, a rural area that poses significant challenges in food access. Their food distribution program is at the heart of this effort, offering nutritious food to those who need it most, three days a week. Each distribution includes shelf-stable products, fresh produce, protein, and a bakery bag comprised of food rescued from local retailers, tailored to the size of each household.

Recognizing that several community members face mobility challenges, the program also provides home deliveries to around 100 homebound individuals each month. These deliveries ensure that even those who cannot visit the distribution sites receive the sustenance they need. This service is meticulously planned and executed during the first week of each month.

This year marked a significant milestone for the program with the introduction of the USDA's The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), which supplies free food commodities. The support from TEFAP has been transformative, allowing the program to convert over 98% of their eligible clients and stay within their financial limits. Last year, they faced a daunting food budget, but thanks to TEFAP, a partnership facilitated by the Foodbank, they have been able to continue their vital work and reach more people.

In recent years, the demand for their services has surged from 200 to nearly 600 families. While the food provided might not last an entire month, it significantly supplements their grocery needs, allowing families to allocate their finances to other essentials.

At the Foodbank, we understand that addressing food insecurity requires more than just providing food. It involves tackling the root causes of hunger and helping people achieve self-sufficiency. The Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program embodies this philosophy through its extensive range of services that go beyond food.

Their literacy program, for example, distributes thousands of books annually, restocks neighborhood libraries, and works with schools to promote literacy, nourishing both the body and the mind. Their diaper distribution program serves up to 125 families every month, providing both children and adult diapers. Additionally, they offer a furniture distribution program, dental services, linen provision, utilities assistance, and a home repair program addressing electrical, plumbing, and accessibility issues.

Each of these programs is powered by a dedicated team of about 100 monthly volunteers and supported by generous community donors and various grants. The Isle of Wight Christian Outreach Program illustrates the profound impact of community solidarity and compassion. Through their comprehensive approach, they not only feed those in need but also pave the way for lasting change.



Main Office

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Eastern Shore Branch

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Tasley, VA 23441
Phone: (757) 787-2557
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Mailing Address:

PO Box 518
Tasley, VA 23441

Western Tidewater Branch

618 South Street
Franklin, VA 23851
Phone: (757) 544-9027

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

