

hungermatters

SUMMER 2021

New Strategies for Serving

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Food Bank has collaborated with our partner agencies more than ever before to make sure everyone in our community has access to healthy and nutritious food. One of those agencies is Episcopal Farmworker Ministry (EFwM) located in Dunn, North Carolina.

EFwM responds to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families, and actively supports opportunities for them to become self-directive. They provide a great deal of resources to the people they service including clothes, education, but most importantly, food. Throughout their 40 years of operation, they have created a safe space for their community. "Most of the population that we serve is the Latino population and they trust us. We speak Spanish, and we make sure to go that extra mile to get people those staple foods that they need. We have even seen people outside of our service area come to us for help because we are a trusted organization," says Lariza Garzón, Executive Director of EFwM.

Our partnership with Episcopal Farmworkers Ministry has helped them serve more people, but the need is still great. "When it comes to food distribution, we are serving at least 250 people, every two weeks. Usually in the time in between distributions, we have to put some food together for families that can't make it to the next distribution. We couldn't do it without the Food Bank, that is impossible," remarks Juan Carabaña, a Program Coordinator with EFwM, when speaking about the increased need in their communities.

Team members at EFwM want to strengthen their partnership with the Food Bank so that they can offer programs to the people in their communities that teach about nutrition, something that they believe would be beneficial. They recently received new refrigerators and freezers, which means they are able to distribute more fresh, nutritious products like frozen meat, produce, and dairy.

It's important to EFwM to offer foods customary to the Latinx diet, or foods that are culturally appropriate for the people they predominately serve. "Of all the ways that we can help, food is one of the biggest ways to do that here. We would love to one day stop giving food because the people have stopped needing it but until then, we will make sure they have food."

We look forward to strengthening our partnership with Episcopal Farmworker Ministry to nourish more people and ultimately ensure no one goes hungry.

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— Juan Carabaña
Program Coordinator, EFwM



foodbank
OF CENTRAL & EASTERN NORTH CAROLINA



See inside
to learn
about Stop
Summer
Hunger!

From the President & CEO

Dear Friends,

Life is going back to normal for some. Kids began to go back to school in our area in the last few weeks.

You may be planning that summer vacation that was postponed last year or returning to your workplace.

At the Food Bank, we are hoping to provide 5 million meals to children and their families over the next two months. We will be working to ensure our 900 partner agencies can sustain the increased need they typically see in the summer on top of the surge they've seen due to the pandemic.

I'm proud to say, thanks to your support, the Food Bank was able to distribute more than 100 million pounds of food in less than 9 months. That was our distribution goal for the entire year, but you stepped up, knowing our friends and neighbors were in dire need.

I am confident you can help us do the same this summer.

One of the best ways we can ensure kids are happy, healthy, and ready to get back to school in the fall is to provide them and their families with healthy, nutritious food this summer. Let's work together to make that happen.

With sincere thanks,



Peter Werbicki
President & CEO



Families Feeling Summer Hunger

Summer has always been an uncertain time for people experiencing hunger and organizations fighting food insecurity. Nearly 328,000 children in our 34-county service area rely on free or reduced-cost meals at school and may not have access to that food in the summer. Meanwhile, the pandemic increased food insecurity by 38% in our part of North Carolina, with some of our partner agencies seeing an even larger increase. Unfortunately, summer is also a time when donations to food banks across the country tend to slow down.

The Food Bank's partner agencies are relying on us to keep their shelves stocked this summer so they can eliminate the worry of summer hunger for the entire family. Our hope is to provide 5 million meals throughout our service area during our Stop Summer Hunger Initiative.

Long-time partner WRAAP (Wilmington's Residential Adolescent Achievement Place) is a shining example of how serving kids and those who care for them can make a huge difference. WRAAP has hosted a Kid's Cafe site for over a decade, providing meals, mentoring, tutoring, and physical activity after school. But they operate year-round, incorporating families and guardians into their programming. One mom recalled that WRAAP's tutoring improved her own ability to help her child study and complete homework assignments. Food is a key element of the program – from grocery deliveries to participating families to holiday food distributions.

"I've had times when I didn't know how I was going to make ends meet and the WRAAP program came through for me," said Eva, whose daughter participates in the program.

When the rest of the family skips meals or food is short, it's a worry for kids too. Kay, a child who participates in WRAAP, wrote a long letter of thanks including these sobering words, "You providing food for us is amazing. Some of the time honestly, we didn't know where we were going to get our next meal. I feel very happy that I get to write this letter."

Keeping agencies stocked over the summer months is just one way the Food Bank is helping to feed kids and families during these critical months. Learn more about our Kids Summer Meals Program, where kids and teens can get breakfast and lunch meals in their community this summer, on page 3.

With your support, the Food Bank will continue to keep children and their families nourished all summer long and end the worry over where the next meal is coming from.

Visit stopsummerhunger.org to donate. From June 1 through July 31, every dollar you donate can provide ten meals thanks to a match by our generous partners.

**STOP
SUMMER
HUNGER**



Kids Summer Meals: Just One Piece of the Pie for Youth

Kids Summer Meals (KSM) provides families with children and teens ages 2-18 an additional resource for healthy, nutritious meals for children during the summer months. The Food Bank has sponsored the program since summer 2009 and through it, have provided more than 1.7 million meals.

KSM sites typically offer breakfast and/or lunch for children when school is officially out for the summer. And it's easier to access those meals this year in the following ways:

- Parents and guardians can pick up the meals for their children.
- Meals can be grab and go; it is not necessary for the children to eat on site.
- Sites and programs may be able to provide children and guardians with multiple meals during a single pick-up.

Visit foodbankcenc.org/kidsmeals to find a site near you.

Since 2009



1,742,507
KSM meals served to

54,225
kids and teens



1,035
KSM Sites in

27 counties
of the Food Bank's
34 counties



Hunger Leaders



Silver
International Paper

Bronze
Jarvis Memorial United Methodist Church
Junior League of Greenville

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Welcome Mariah Murrell!

The Food Bank is thrilled to welcome our new Vice President of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI), Mariah Murrell!

Mariah joined the Food Bank in April, bringing to the Food Bank's leadership team nearly a decade of experience in working to help businesses and institutions address challenges surrounding EDI. She began her professional journey as a K-12 educator and immediately noticed firsthand the inequities associated with various aspects of the nation's educational systems. This led her to seek ways to challenge structures that marginalize members of underrepresented groups. Mariah has collaborated with dozens of organizations to help drive strategic initiatives related to EDI and has a passion for helping organizations discover ways to become more culturally competent, globally aware, social justice-oriented, and inclusive for all stakeholders.



In her role as VP of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, Mariah is integral to the Food Bank's current strategic planning process, ensuring that EDI is a foundational aspect for all forward planning in the work to end hunger. She will be working closely with the Human Resources team to develop protocols around and improve the Food Bank's core values with a lens of equity, diversity, and inclusion. We're very excited to have her on board!

Giving Thanks

The Food Bank would like to share a special "Thank You" to the following organizations for their generous gifts and pledges of support for the immediate and ongoing increase in need caused by COVID-19. Check out more amazing partners who supported our work in 2020 in our Impact Report at foodbankcenc.org/impactreport.

Biogen

March 2020 brought dramatic changes to all our lives. A long-time corporate partner of the Food Bank, Biogen answered the call for additional support with a grant of \$500,000 before the call even went out. Their intuitive generosity enabled the Food Bank to make the changes we needed in those earliest days of the pandemic without any gaps in service for our 34 counties.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

The past year has seen unprecedented need, but we have also seen unprecedented generosity from our supporters. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina has shown their support of our mission and their belief in the Food Bank's ability to make an impact by contributing more than \$1 million over the past three years. They have pledged support to our healthcare partnerships, benefits outreach program, and expanding capacity through equipment for partner agencies. We are so grateful for the company's continued support of new and innovative programming, allowing the Food Bank to continue being a leader in hunger relief.

"Blue Cross NC is committed to improving the health and wellbeing of all North Carolinians, and a vital part of being healthy is having access to nutritious food," said Cheryl Parquet, Director of Community Engagement and Marketing Activation at Blue Cross NC. "We're proud to support the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina and help further its mission to increase food security and ultimately end hunger in our communities."



In Memoriam

Austin E. Sweet, a dedicated volunteer at our Sandhills Branch, passed away March 25, 2021. Mr. Sweet proudly served in the U.S. Marine Corps, attaining the rank of sergeant and then had a long career with INA/CIGNA. Upon retiring, Austin and his wife settled in Pinehurst and he regularly volunteered at the Food Bank for more than 20 years. Mr. Sweet will be greatly missed and our thoughts are with his family.