



2019 **SPRING NEWSLETTER**

A Quarterly Publication of the
Community Food Bank of Central Alabama



Rx Health

"I can't always eat the way you want me to," said a patient of Erin

Clarkson (LMSW, MPH). Erin

is a clinician at UAB's PATH Clinic, which serves uninsured patients with diabetes. "Sometimes I can only eat one meal per day, and I don't always know where that meal is going to come from," the patient explained.

When Erin asked her patient if her son could help with groceries, the patient recoiled. "I'm not going to tell him. I don't want to be a burden on him – he has his own family to worry about." This exchange haunted Erin. So many of her patients struggled to manage their diabetes because they could not afford to buy the healthy foods she prescribed in their diet plan.

Last spring, the Community Food Bank worked with Erin and other UAB clinicians to design a program that meets the needs of food insecure patients. The initiative called **RX Health** fosters healthy food access for uninsured patients with diabetes or heart failure. With generous support from UAB's Community Impact Grant Program, the Food Bank introduced a food insecurity-screening tool proven valid in medical settings to the staff of UAB's PATH and Heart Failure Clinics. Patients, who screen positive, go home from the clinic with fresh produce, healthy nonperishable foods, and referrals to benefit programs like SNAP (food stamps). It is one-stop, wrap around care.

Since its launch, RX Health has provided fresh produce and low-sodium foods to over 269 patients.

"Immediately providing fresh produce to a patient who has just told you they are out of food is so impactful. It's also a wonderful teaching moment to show patients how to manage a diet-related disease with healthy food choices," says Erin.

Family Markets Expand!

More than 70,000 children in Central Alabama lack nutritious food to grow, thrive and achieve. Food insecurity exposes these children to the risk of delayed cognitive development, behavioral problems, and diet-related diseases. To address this need, the Food Bank rapidly expanded our Family Market program to **13 new schools** this fall! We host Family Markets on school campuses,

A healthy happy family makes for healthy happy students!

providing fresh fruits, vegetables and other healthy staples to families referred to us by school counselors. "In this new model, we're offering fresh produce, reaching the younger siblings of elementary school students, and strengthening the ties between families and school staff!" says Jon Barnacastle, Community Food Bank's Programs Coordinator. A healthy happy family makes for healthy happy students!

In three years, we expanded Family Markets to 21 schools in 5 counties. In 2018, we provided more than 88 tons of wholesome foods—the equivalent of 148,323 meals (35% of which was fresh fruits and vegetables)—to 3,587 people, including 1,963 children!

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Win-Win: Saving Crops, Feeding Families

Due to recent trade tariffs, many American farmers have not been able to sell their goods abroad. The Community Food Bank partnered with the USDA to make sure these surplus crops did not go to waste and instead fed families right here in Alabama.

We collaborated agencies across Central Alabama from the Superintendent of Tarrant City Schools to Birmingham Public Housing Authority to deliver oranges, grapes, pears, ham and chicken to families in need. In three months, **we helped over 7,000 families fill their shelves with fresh produce and healthy proteins.**

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“Our partners at the Foodbank operate with military-like precision with their logistics,” said HABD President/CEO Michael Lundy. “This group matches their compassion with their professionalism. As a result, hundreds of families are relieved of the burden of providing healthy meals for their families. This benefits all of us.”

“The Community Food Bank is bringing quality, wholesome foods for our families at a time of year when utility bills are high and budgets are stretched. It is very meaningful to us,” says Brian Carrington of the Bessemer Housing Authority.



ATTENTION COFFEE LOVERS!

Did you know that your morning brew could also help the Food Bank feed families? We are partnering with Firefly Coffee to provide a coffee subscription service that gives back. Each subscription raises money for the CFB!

Check it out at foodbankalcoffee.com.

We are excited to announce Walmart's Fight Hunger. Spark Change. Campaign!

Shop and donate at the same time! From April 22 through May 20, certain items purchased at your local Walmart or Sam's Club will unlock a donation equivalent to 1 meal per item. Customers can also donate to the Community Food Bank at the registers of Walmart and Sam's Club stores. Donations of \$1, \$2, \$5 or another amount will be accepted. There is no limit to what can be raised at the register! 100% of funds will be directed to the Community Food Bank.



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Tyson Foods Supports Rural Access

We are on a mission to break down barriers preventing Alabamians from accessing healthy foods in rural regions. Nearly one in four children in Blount County lives in food insecure households — significantly exceeding the national average. With limited budgets, parents are unable to afford food and pay for other necessities like utilities or rent. As a result, healthy food options are out of reach resulting in high-rates of food insecurity and diet-related diseases like diabetes.

Thanks to a grant award from Tyson Foods, Inc., the Community Food Bank is able to deliver fresh fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and other healthy staples to families when they are picking up or dropping off their children at Susan Moore Elementary School. This eliminates the need to travel long distances to the nearest food pantry.

“Ending hunger in rural counties is a key aim of the Community Food Bank. We’re thrilled to partner with Tyson Foods to reduce the number of children and adults living in food insecure households in Blount County during the 2018/19 school year,” says Kathryn Strickland.



Sharon, a mobile pantry recipient, was diagnosed with spina bifida causing paralysis and making it nearly impossible to travel to get food assistance.

Transportation is a key limitation for many people we serve, especially seniors. With help from partners like Mountain Pointe Ministries, the Community Food Bank’s Mobile Fresh Food pantries deliver food right to the doorsteps of seniors in need in Blount County.

Sharon, for example, was diagnosed with spina bifida causing paralysis and making it nearly impossible to travel to get food assistance. She says, “I really love that the volunteers bring the food all the way into my kitchen, since I wouldn’t be able to go to a regular food pantry.”

“Ending hunger in rural counties is a key aim of the Community Food Bank” – Kathryn Strickland

We are fortunate to have such generous partners like Tyson Foods, Inc., Mountain Pointe Ministries and Susan B. Moore Elementary School to help us address rural hunger.



107 Walter Davis Drive
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