



2019 FALL NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of the
 Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

Summer Harvest Pop-Up Produce Stands

"I can't believe it!" says Kelley Javinett, the Child Nutrition Director at Tarrant Elementary. The children will not touch greens during the school year but in the Community Food Bank's summer meal program, "the kids are asking for extra chef salads! Seeing all these smiling, happy, little faces is always good."

Javinett's school is one of 17 sites that participated in the Community Food Bank's Free Summer Lunch program. Together, we offered nutritious meals to over 1,700 children at risk of hunger during the long summer break. In addition to classic sandwiches like peanut butter and jelly, this year's menu featured healthy choices such as salads as entrées, fresh berries delivered straight from local farms, build-your-own turkey wraps, and more.



And by more, we mean more fresh produce for the entire family! With the support of the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation, Publix Super Market Charities, United Way, and the Bold Goals Coalition, we have been able to host Pop-Up Produce Stands at several summer meal sites. Families picking up their children at the end of the day take home a week's supply of peaches, apples, oranges, corn, peppers, and more. Samford University

Dietetic Interns offer taste tests and cooking demos featuring delicious new recipes like peach salsa.

In surveys, families routinely disclose their struggle to afford healthy foods like fresh produce. One parent told us, **"We rarely eat vegetables because they're expensive and difficult to get to."**

"By providing access to fresh fruits and vegetables at the summer meal sites, families have the building blocks for a healthy life," said Kathryn Strickland, Executive Director of Community Food Bank of Central Alabama. "Adequate nutrition is vital for all, but especially for our children."

Solving a Hidden Hunger

Hunger causes silent suffering among many families in our community, but it hits hardest among the most vulnerable — like children and seniors.



Ron Davis who volunteers with Mt. Vernon Baptist Church noticed that one elder resident had only a single jar of syrup left in her cupboard. She told no one about her struggle. In Central Alabama, over 25,000 seniors struggle to put food on the table. Many seniors on fixed incomes are now unexpectedly caring for grandchildren.

One grandparent told us he was willing to go without so his "grandkids can eat." These are our neighbors, friends, parents and grandparents, and they often suffer without us knowing it.

Thanks to support from the United Way and the Bold Goals Coalition, the Community Food Bank and partners like East Lake Community Development, Grace Klein, and 11 senior housing facilities launched a new program to address this hidden crisis. This summer more than 1,000 low-income seniors began receiving a free, monthly delivery of groceries. Each delivery includes nutritious foods often missing in the diet of seniors like proteins and vegetables.

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"This gives us the opportunity to take action at ten senior apartment communities in greater Birmingham," says Eric Lipp Executive Director of East Lake Community Development. "After our senior residents pay for housing and prescription medication the amount of cash available

Kids Meal Campaign

In our region, more than 68,000 children lack sufficient nutritious food to grow, thrive and achieve. Of those children at risk of hunger in our region, 20,000 live in families that do not qualify for any federal nutrition aid such as free school meals or SNAP (food stamp) benefits. The programs offered through Community Food Bank's Kids Meal Campaign are particularly effective at serving children who would otherwise fall between the cracks.

We offer three interconnected services to ensure that all children have year-round access to healthy food choices.

1. **Weekenders' Backpack Program:**

Free and reduced price school meals sustain thousands of children in Central Alabama during the week, but what happens to these students over the weekend? After receiving reports from teachers about children arriving to school hungry on Monday mornings, we launched the Weekenders Backpack Program. This initiative provides weekend meal kits to children on Fridays so they arrive to school Monday ready to learn without the distraction of hunger.



2. **Family Markets:**

After we learned that 95% of children in our weekend program share their meal kits with younger

Thanks to generous support from Publix Super Markets Charities, we are expanding our fleet of refrigerated vehicles to be able to deliver these healthier foods to families with young children across the region.

siblings, we launched Family Markets — food pantries on wheels that deliver fresh fruits, vegetables and other staples to school campuses and distribute them to families referred to the program by school counselors. This innovation helps us serve more children with healthier food options like fresh produce and whole grains. School officials also report that the program strengthens the relationship between families and school staff. Tyson Foods is a dedicated partner of the Family Market program, supporting our expansion in rural communities.

3. **Free Summer Meals:**

When schools close for summer, thousands of children lose access to free school meals and are at risk of hunger. To fill this gap, we sponsor delivery of free lunches and snacks to over 1,700 children, five days per week, for up to 10 weeks over the summer break. We also source locally-grown produce for snacks and salads from Alabama farmers to encourage healthy habits.

Key to expanding the Kids Meal Campaign is investment in equipment that will allow us to safely transport perishable foods like fresh produce and milk that require refrigeration. Thanks to generous support from Publix Super Markets Charities, we are expanding our fleet of refrigerated vehicles to be able to deliver these healthier foods to families with young children across the region.



"We are so grateful," says Kathryn Strickland, Community Food Bank Executive Director, "Partners like Publix Super Markets Charities make it possible for us to redesign menus so we provide healthier foods to an even greater number of children in need."

Solving a Hidden Hunger

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for food is frequently insufficient. Empty cupboards and refrigerators put people at risk. This is too powerful an issue to be ignored. The support of Community Food Bank of Central Alabama is critical to this effort."

This year the new Senior Grocery program will deliver over 500,000 lbs. of groceries to seniors. Knowing that seniors and children in our community are struggling motivates us to find solutions so that no one in Central Alabama goes hungry. The Senior Grocery Program moves us closer to that goal.



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Birmingham Firm Wins Alabama Legal Food Frenzy



Each spring, the Alabama Attorney General's Office, the Alabama State Bar, and the Alabama Food Bank Association join together to help end child hunger through the Alabama Legal Food Frenzy. Firms across the state compete to see who raises the most food and funds for their local food bank. This year Birmingham law firms won most of the top awards including the grand prize!

Attorney General Steve Marshall presented Jon Lewis of Lewis & Feldman, LLC with the Attorney General's Cup. Other winners from Central Alabama included Morris Haynes Attorneys at Law, Longino Public Finance, LLC, and MF Walker Law Group, LLC.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to the 25 firms in Central Alabama who competed and made our region stand out! Together, they raised nearly \$17,000 or the equivalent of 136,000 meals for children in Central Alabama this summer!



Take Action During Hunger Action Month™



HUNGER ACTION MONTH™

This September is Hunger Action month — a time when people across the nation take action to address hunger in their own neighborhoods and communities. In Central Alabama, more than 230,000 people struggle with hunger and may not know where they'll find their next meal. That figure includes over 68,000 (one in five) kids who may not have enough to eat.

Hunger Action Month asks us to consider what it is like to navigate daily decisions on an empty stomach, putting a healthy life and a promising future at risk. What choice would we make if we only had enough in our paycheck to pay for medicine or food but not both? What about a choice between groceries or school supplies?

You can take action to prevent your neighbor from making these stark choices on Hunger Action Day, the second Thursday in September. Sign up to volunteer, wear orange to raise awareness about the issue of hunger, or continue your support of the Community Food Bank and local food pantries. Look for updates on these and other Hunger Action events on Facebook and at www.feedingal.org.



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Stamp Out Hunger Breaks Records

Each year the National Association of Letter Carriers hosts the Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. **This year mail carriers collected an astounding 213,000 pounds of food donated by generous residents like you across the region — making it a record breaking year!** Because of the hard work of the letters carriers and your generosity, we replenished our food supplies just in time for summer!



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