



2020 SPRING NEWSLETTER

A Quarterly Publication of
Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

Local Stores Join the Fight Against Hunger

"Welcome to Winston County!" said Jim Baird, Director of Main Street Ministries. "I can't wait to see how this goes." In 2019, Community Food Bank staff member David Appleby drove from Birmingham to meet Mr. Baird in Double Springs, Alabama. Soon, they were traveling the winding woodland roads of the Winston County countryside.

Mr. Baird and Main Street Ministries have spent years serving neighbors in need throughout the region. Small towns dot the landscape, while majestic pine forests tower overhead. Mr. Baird knows every side road and shortcut. But the distance between communities is great, and chances to gain new food donors are scarce. The agency will sometimes make the trip to Birmingham to pick up orders from the Food Bank, but local resources are always helpful. The trick is finding them.

Main Street Ministries already had a strong relationship with Walmart in Haleyville, but Mr. Baird wanted to connect with smaller local grocers that might also be willing to partner with the agency.

Grocery stores often have perfectly safe, fresh, wholesome food that is being replaced on shelves by the latest shipments. Rather than simply throwing it away, would the stores be interested in allowing Main Street to pick it up and use it in their outreach?

The answer, after a morning of travel, was a definite "yes."

At each stop, Mr. Baird spoke about the great need in their towns and rural communities. His agency's efforts at meeting that need inspired his audiences. "This is a great idea," exclaimed the manager of Goar's in Haleyville. "I would like to be involved."

The Food Bank has been excited to watch the growth of partnerships like this one. No single organization is big enough to address hunger on its own. As a team, though, combining our strengths and capabilities, the Food Bank and our partner agencies will continue to look for ways to make resources available to the people who need them the most. Establishing connections between agencies and their local stores is one of the many ways Community Food Bank is working to solve hunger in Alabama.



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Volunteer Spotlight

Community Food Bank's volunteers are part of a truly dynamic program. 2800 volunteers worked alongside us last year, contributing more than 6600 combined hours of service. Our volunteers help us in significant ways: sorting donated product, building food boxes, assisting the Corner Market at its community stops, and more.

Among our many volunteers, there are some who come here as individuals. Some arrive with a small group of friends or with a team from their office. Those who return always have incredible stories about their experiences.

Nick, Kylee, Sarah, and Kalani have volunteered here for several months. Their dedication is a tremendous help to the Food Bank. "The warehouse is really impressive," Nick said. "It's amazing to see how much food is there and how much gets moved." Food sorting is an ongoing volunteer project due to the volume of donations that the Food Bank receives. In addition, these volunteers also build food boxes; and they know firsthand just how meaningful that experience can be. "I like building the emergency boxes," Sarah told us. "When you know this particular item is what kids will have — that is really great." "This will make people smile," added Kylee.

The four began volunteering here because it was a tradition among their missions group. They all appreciate the ongoing opportunities to serve. "We enjoy the consistency. We come here two times per week, and it has given us a chance to meet some great friends. That was a nice surprise," Kylee said. Kalani emphasized Community Food Bank's unique ability to make a difference. "At this volunteer opportunity, you can see the

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outcome. You know that the things you do will make an impact." Sarah agreed: "So many people are affected by what we do. That's why I like coming back."

Aowen is another regular volunteer at Community Food Bank. She learned about the Food Bank through UAB's campus pantry, Blazer Kitchen, and she has returned several times per week ever since. "The reason I come back is because I'm getting as much out of it as I'm giving," she told us. "What we do here — this is good."

When Aowen volunteers here, she finds a chance to focus on something excellent — an experience unlike the corporate distractions and deadlines that exist elsewhere. "Volunteering offers freedom. That freedom leads to enjoyment. I enjoy the ability to make a difference," she said. "When I put together a box, I focus on this and nothing else. What we do is for the good of someone else, so I want to do that well."

The Food Bank greatly appreciates these volunteers, and others like them, who graciously give of their time and energy to serve our community. Friends helping friends and neighbors serving neighbors, making these connections and facilitating collaboration throughout Central Alabama — this is how we make change. Together. Together we can make a difference. TOGETHER we CAN solve hunger.

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Susan B. Moore Family Market

The Family Market program is a partnership between Community Food Bank and schools such as Susan B. Moore Elementary School in Blount County, Alabama. The program provides healthy food choices for the school's families. After parents drop off their children at school, they can visit the Family Market for fresh fruits, vegetables, and more.

Thanks to Susan B. Moore Elementary School's participation, the Food Bank has been able to distribute more than 90,000 lbs. of food to their community over the past two years! On Family Market days, a Food Bank delivery truck departs for the school early in the morning. Vice Principal Cornell Spradlin and local volunteers also gather early to meet the truck and begin preparations. They greet their guests with warmth and serve them with diligence. Mr. Spradlin believes that all of the school's households in need should be served through the Family Market. No one should be left behind.

The Family Market addresses a hidden need that exists among many families. According to survey data, 95% of children who participated in the Weekenders Backpack program — another Food Bank school program — shared their Backpack food with their families. Through the creation of Family Markets, the Food Bank provides many additional healthy resources that will help families sustain a well-nourished home life.

The Susan B. Moore Elementary School Family Market allows Community Food Bank to join with friends in a small town as we make a difference in the lives of its families. The need is real, and it is everywhere; and we are so thankful for our supporters like Tyson Foods, Publix Super Markets Charities, and other community partners throughout Central Alabama who work with us every day in the fight to end hunger!



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New Ways to Give

Did you know you can contribute to the Food Bank in honor or memory of a loved one? Did you know CFB accepts gifts of **stock** and gifts from **donor advised funds**? Have you thought about leaving a **legacy gift** in your estate plan? Visit our website and click "Get Involved" to see all the ways you can help us fight hunger!



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