



## 2018 **SPRING NEWSLETTER**

A Quarterly Publication of the  
Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

# Saving Millions of MEALS

Nobody likes to see food wasted, especially when it could feed those in need—children, the elderly, the homeless—our community's most vulnerable.

We're taught as kids not to be wasteful—to clean our plate, turn off the lights, don't let the water run. Yet, in the United States, **an estimated 133 billion pounds of food from stores, restaurants, and homes goes uneaten and thrown away. That translates into a whopping \$161 billion wasted, tossed into landfills.**

"Food waste is the single largest type of waste entering our landfills—Americans throw away up to 40 percent of their food," said former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator, Bob Perciasepe. All that food wasted, yet many in the United States are food insecure, meaning they do not know where their next meal will come from.

**The Community Food Bank of Central Alabama partners with more than 100 grocery stores across Central Alabama on a very special donation program that ensures wholesome food reaches the tables of families in need instead of overflowing landfills.** Five days a week the Community Food Bank's trucks pick up food donations from partners including Publix Super Markets, Walmart, Sam's Club, Whole Foods, Aldi, Winn Dixie, Target, and more.

In 2017, these stores donated more than 5.1 million meals that then supplied 243 food pantries and shelters. That food helped

us feed between 60,000 - 80,000 children, seniors, veterans and families in Central Alabama each month.

"Getting food into the hands of those who need it is a win-win for us all," said Brenda Reid, media and community relations manager for Publix Super Markets, a Food Bank partner.

"We get to reduce our carbon footprint and families get much needed help." In addition to chicken, tuna, and other lean proteins, **Publix Super Markets donated over 100,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to the Community Food Bank in 2017.**

"Partners like Publix help us meet our goal to provide healthy food choices like fresh produce to neighbors in need," says Community Food Bank Executive Director, Kathryn Strickland.

Many of the Food Bank's partners, like Whole Foods, laud the program because it not only allows them to give back, but they are able to specifically help their neighbors.

**"I have been astounded by the dedication to giving our grocery store partners exhibit on a daily basis,"** said Jessica Taylor, the Food Bank's new donor relations coordinator.

"I'm excited to work with these companies that enthusiastically give back to their communities. Every bit that they give helps someone in Central Alabama and reduces what goes to waste in local landfills."



*Walmart ensuring items are donated to the Community Food Bank instead of thrown away.*

# The Good Keeps Going: Making Mobile Meals Possible

*"I'm on a low-income, wondering where my next meal is coming from. We have kids in my family, and it's been a joy to participate in this. It's a blessing." -Marilynn*



*Shalissa and Daelon with Mobile Pantry volunteers*

On the third Saturday of the month, we arrive at Jonesboro Elementary School in Bessemer to set up our newest mobile food pantry program. Mr. Dewayne is already there with a big smile on his face, directing the line of cars that have arrived over an hour early. Dewayne is the custodian at Jonesboro Elementary and key to our new initiative. He knows the children, the parents, and everyone in the entire neighborhood. **I ask him if he thinks this mobile pantry is helping this community. He laughs, "Really? You have no idea! I got a call at 7 am asking if y'all were coming back today."**

The Jonesboro Elementary Mobile Pantry is sponsored and staffed by Homewood Church of Christ. Willie Chriesman and Steve Graham approached the Food Bank wanting to know how their congregation could help serve those at risk of hunger in Central Alabama. Because several charitable food pantries currently operate in the Homewood area, these church leaders asked, **"Where is our help most needed? We don't have to host a pantry within the church walls. We want to go help our neighbors where it works best for them."**

Food Bank staffer, Jon Barnacastle, worked with church leaders to figure out where their resources could make the largest impact. Jon noted, **"Jefferson County is currently under served. Census tracts in the southwest portion of the county have very high rates of food insecurity combined with relatively few organizations to combat the rising need for food assistance."**

Community members in Bessemer identified Jonesboro Elementary School as the best site to reach residents in need. Marilynn, a community member participating in the mobile food pantry distribution, confirms, **"Thank God for Homewood Church of Christ, and the Food Bank for making it possible for us to have a nutritious meal and to feed our families."**



*Mario Dorsey and Howard Burnett, help at the Mobile Pantry!*

Marilynn is the first to speak with me on this chilly morning. She has been waiting since the first few cars lined up. She asks when the truck will arrive and thanks me again.

Food Bank staffers Mario Dorsey and Howard Burnett arrive, and the crowd is abuzz as the truck pulls into the parking lot. As soon as the pallets of cabbage, potatoes, and other foods are unloaded,

volunteers begin sorting the fresh produce. Each family receives a bag of fresh items with their groceries. Other volunteers direct the cars to pull up for registration and loading. The distribution has begun.

I approach Shalissa, a mother holding her two-year-old son, Daelon. He reaches for the girls volunteering from the Homewood Church of Christ youth group. The teens happily scoop him up to play and give him bubbles they brought for the younger children. The iridescent orbs float around us as Shalissa and I talk. **"This really helps us out a lot. We are in the process of moving, and I'm on WIC. I can only buy certain products with it, so this will help my family a bunch. It's a blessing from God here today."** This is her first time visiting the mobile pantry. She hugs me and thanks the volunteers as they load her car with a grocery box, a fresh head of cabbage, and a bag of potatoes. Daelon waves bye-bye to us from his car seat, clutching his bubbles and grinning ear to ear.

I walk up to a trio of girls from the youth group. They've helped make sure a flyer with future distribution dates is packed with each box and continue to entertain the children with the bubbles and lollipops, as parents sign in. I asked J.J., Claire, and Emily why they came out to help today. **"We want to start a chain reaction,"** J.J. tells me. **"We want to show that God is great, and just to make someone's day."** Emily and Claire agree, **"Yeah, if you help someone, then they feel good and want to help someone else and it just keeps going."** This statement could not be more true. Just moments before I spoke with a woman who shares the meals she prepares from her box with her elderly neighbor. **The good keeps going.**

A gentleman, on a fixed income, tells me he uses his food to feed his young grandchildren that are currently in his care. **"It's a blessing,"** I hear over and over. Melinda, who pays it forward by driving her neighbors so they can reach the pantry and spreading the word to those in need who may not know about it, echoes this sentiment, **"It's wonderful you all are out here. People here need the help. It is truly a blessing."**

Shelby and her husband Jay work the registration table and direct the volunteers. They are members of Homewood Church of Christ and were looking for an outreach project, when Willie approached them about this opportunity.

**"We wanted to bridge the gap between Homewood and the other communities nearby,"** says Shelby. She admits that they were a bit intimidated by the task at first, but now they look forward to the distribution each month, **"We just love it. I work at a school and see the need every day. I know how important this is for these families."**

# Partner Spotlight...

## Whole Foods

**“As part of our core values, we are delighted to serve and support our local neighborhoods. Ensuring that quality, perishable food doesn’t go to waste and instead gets to Alabamians who need it, is the mission of our perishable recovery program. I am proud and honored our team members have the opportunity to give back to our local community members.”**



Left: Jason Stonicher, Whole Foods Store Manager



Below: Fresh Produce from Whole Foods

## Walmart

**“Helping others and feeding the local community is what is important with our perishable donation program. I am very proud of our team’s commitment and efforts. We are making sure edible foods like fruit and healthy produce go towards a great cause to help our neighbors in need of a meal.”**



Left: Zac Childress, Walmart Co-Manager



Below: Fresh bananas from Walmart

Thank you to our supporters!



If the U.S. wasted 5 percent less food it would be enough to feed 4 million more people.

Food is the single largest component of municipal solid waste going to landfills and accounts for more than 20 percent by weight.

\*According to A-Z Solutions

Walmart Social Media  
 Baptist Church of the Covenant  
 Homewood Church of Christ  
 Vestavia Hills Baptist Church

## In Honor of...

**Stuart Arrington**

*By Jean Arrington*

**William F. Coachman**

*By Paul Baranowski*

**Hafiz Chandiwala**

*By Kathy Bates*

**Craig Neely**

*By Kathy Bates*

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**Mr. and Mrs. Caleb Chandler**

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**Mr. John Chandler**

*By Nan Broughton*

**Mr. and Mrs. Ed Chandler**

*By Nan Broughton*

**Robin Andrew**

*By her loving coworkers at*

*St Vincents rehab department*

**Gayle Cole**

*By Frank Fleming*

**Mr. and Mrs. Lee Bains**

*By Frank Fleming*

**Audrey Bagley**

*By Gene and Debbie Garza*

**Maddox Riggins**

*By Gene and Debbie Garza*

**Madison Durbin**

*By Gene and Debbie Garza*

**Lauren Bagley**

*By Gene and Debbie Garza*

**Pierce Bagley**

*By Gene and Debbie Garza*

**Linda Glasscock**

*By Dennis Golson*

**Matthew and Drea Harbin**

*By Cathy Harbin*

**Harold and Billie Garrison**

*By Sam and Donna Hendrickson*

**Forsyth Donald**

*By Elizabeth Hoffman*

**Rory and Virginia Fowler**

*By Joseph John*

**Ryan and Kristin Puett**

*By Bev Latvala*

**The coaching staff of  
the 2017 Hoover Hurricanes**

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**Dan, Jenni, Celia, and Jacob**

**Brand**

*By Vikki Massey*

**VIVA Health Plan**

*By John Owens*

**Alison O. Riley**

*By James Outlaw*

**David Parks**

*By Charlie Parks*

**Angelyn Simmons**

*By Gloria Parvin*

**Our precious children**

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**2017 Clients**

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**Doug Jones**

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*By Howard Jones*

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**Hazel Massey**

*By Laurie Massey*

**Kaye Jones**

*By Nola McNeely*

**Momma and Daddy**

*By Lisa Montgolf*

**My Father**

*By Earl Perkins*

**Frances**

*By John Perryman*

**Donald Riesenber**

*By Lee Ann Riesenber*

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