Most kids' birthdays are celebrated with a party, cake, and friends—not waiting in a food line in the middle of a hurricane-stricken town. However, judging by the smile on her daughter’s face, Ashley is confident that her daughter will not remember the stress, but only that she was a happy, bouncing 2-year old during a difficult time.

Displaced yet again by a storm, Ashley and her family of six spent several months residing in various hotels, trying to stay as close as possible to her husband’s job. Even still, with the distance, curfews, and traffic, her husband would often have to drive for an hour to get to work, causing additional stress for the family. “It was definitely not good,” recounted Ashley. Ashley and her family recently moved into a house in Panama City with another family of three. “This new place is great, but it costs a lot of money. We got lucky finding it. It’s in the same school district as the girls. But it’s rough; my husband is having to support all of it.”

With her husband working over 60 hours each week as an AC technician, Ashley talked about how hard it was to be separated as a family during this time. “I came to Florida with two bags of clothes after Katrina. I’ve gone through this before, but this time, because I do have a family, it’s been a lot harder. I’m a mom, and not being able to provide for your kids is very terrible. It’s been a horrifying experience. It’s been a blessing to have any help. You don’t know how important it is to have a bottle of cleaner and some cleaning rags until you’ve gone through this.”

Over the past year, Feeding the Gulf Coast has been active in working to rebuild and establish hope in the communities affected by Hurricane Michael. One year and 8.7 million pounds of food, water, and supplies later, we are still working through the hands and feet of amazing community partners to provide regular food pantries.

These pantries, however, have been an act of love provided by you. We have been able to act quickly to move food into these communities because of gracious donors and friends like you who have equipped us to have the necessities and labor we need to respond to disasters.
This past year, as the holidays began to roll around, Brittany was not sure her family would be able to celebrate in the traditional way. Despite both she and her husband working, they still struggle to make ends meet. They stretch every dollar to make sure their two boys have enough to eat, even if that sometimes means going without heat and special Thanksgiving and Christmas meals.

"Holiday meals are expensive," Brittany said, "and they’re not in our budget. I knew we would eat on those days, but I was planning on serving grilled cheese sandwiches or spaghetti. I’ve never been able to buy a turkey."

When Brittany discovered the mobile pantry near her home was distributing complete Thanksgiving meals, she was overjoyed. The food given provided her family with a new opportunity—holiday memories.

"For Christmas and Thanksgiving this year, we got to eat meat, and it was such a luxury!" Brittany said. We also got cranberries, potatoes, pumpkin pie—the entire meal. My son was so excited and kept saying, ‘I love turkey!’ There was something so magical about being able to sit at the dinner table with my family and enjoy that holiday meal."

For the one in six people along the Central Gulf Coast who struggle with hunger, Thanksgiving is not a time of selecting recipes and picking place settings, but a source of anxiety over whether there will be a meal on the table at all. For families such as Brittany’s, a traditional holiday meal looks more like whatever is available in their pantry.

“As a mom, it makes me feel bad when I can’t provide my sons with things other families seem to take for granted—like holiday meals,” Brittany continued. “It’s heartbreaking. But because of the mobile pantry, I could provide that for them this year. I’m grateful, it’s been such a huge blessing.”

For people who face the uncertainty of where their next meal will come from, a meal does more than fill their stomach. It nourishes them—both physically and mentally. A meal provides a sense of dignity during a time of hardship and the strength to rebuild their lives during uncertain times.

This season, through the generous support from community partnerships and individuals, Feeding the Gulf Coast is helping to make sure that more families can enjoy meals around the table and create their own traditions. This is possible thanks to donors like you who choose to share your bounty with others.
Ashley’s testimony is only a small example of the many people who are helped each month thanks to our generous donors. We invite you to share in our vision of a hunger-free Central Gulf Coast—one where all children, families, and seniors have access to nutritious food when they need it. Consider the following ways you can join us in the fight against hunger in your community and make a difference. Your support directly strengthens Feeding the Gulf Coast and the more than 400 partner agencies we work hand-in-hand with to feed over 20,000 individuals every month. These flexible giving options can benefit you while helping to provide food, hope, and dignity for individuals in need.

Take a look at the following gift examples to see which option will best fit your charitable giving goals:

**AN ONLINE DONATION** designated to your choice of program or where the need is greatest. Visit feedingthegulfcoast.org.

**A MONTHLY GIFT PLEDGE** from you to the food bank provides support 365-days of the year to our hunger-relief initiatives.

**A DONOR ADVISED FUND** can help simplify your charitable giving and facilitate your strategic philanthropic goals.

**A COMPANY MATCHED DONATION** will make your donation go twice as far.

**VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND TALENTS** to make a difference in the lives of your neighbors.

**HOST A FOOD DRIVE OR FUND DRIVE** by recruiting a team to collect our most needed items.

**MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN YOU SHOP** by selecting Feeding the Gulf Coast as your charity at smile.amazon.com.

**GIVE A GIFT IN HONOR OR MEMORY** to commemorate someone special.

**DONATING STOCKS AND MUTUAL FUND SHARES** offers you valuable financial and tax-deductible benefits.

**INVITE YOUR COWORKERS TO JOIN YOU IN ENDING HUNGER** through workplace giving, including payroll deductions.

**A GIFT THROUGH YOUR ESTATE PLAN** can be made through your will or revocable trust or a beneficiary designation of assets, such as a retirement plan or life insurance policy.

**START A FUNDRAISER** by utilizing your social network on Facebook.

Your generous donations are critical to our ability to help families struggling with hunger.

> Every dollar you give can provide five meals to those in need.

For more information on ways to give or to make your donation today, contact Cyndy Baggett at cbaggett@feedingthegulfcoast.org or (251) 653-1617, ext 130.

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**ADVOCA CY CORNER | TOUR THE FOOD BANK**

Feeding the Gulf Coast helps serve over 400 partner agencies. On average, over 2 million pounds of food move through our warehouses each month. We invite you or your group to visit on of our facilities and learn about the ways we are working to end hunger along the Central Gulf Coast. Let us show you the behind the scenes work that makes it possible for us to serve over 300,000 individuals in our 24-county service area each year!

We welcome group and individual tours, and you can expect your visit to last about an hour. We offer tours at both our Theodore, Alabama and Milton, Florida facilities.

**PLAN YOUR VISIT:**

GO TO WWW.FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG/GET-INVOLVED/TOUR-THE-FOOD-BANK TO REQUEST A TOUR.

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**2019 GRANTORS**

- A.S. Mitchell Foundation
- AARP Foundation
- Alabama Power Foundation
- Big Lots Foundation
- City of Mobile
- Coast Electric Community Trust
- Costco
- Daniel Foundation of Alabama
- Darden Foundation
- David Tepper Charitable Foundation, Inc.
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation
- Feeding America
- Food Research & Action Center
- Great American Milk Drive
- Gulf Power Foundation
- Hancock County Board of Commissioners
- International Paper Foundation
- IP Casino Resort Spa
- MGM Resorts Foundation
- Monte L. Moorer Foundation
- National Council on Aging
- New York Times Neediest Cases Fund
- Publix Super Markets Foundation, Inc.
- Red Nose Day Fund
- Santa Rosa County Board of County Commissioners
- SNOOK Foundation
- St. Joe Community Foundation
- United Way of Baldwin County
- United Way of Monroe County
- United Way of Northwest Florida
- United Way of South Mississippi
- United Way of Southwest Alabama
- United Way of West Florida
- USDA Food and Nutrition Service
- Verizon
- Volunteer Florida Foundation
- Walmart Foundation
- Walmart via Foundation
- for the Carolinas
- Wells Fargo

**WE ARE GRATEFUL!**

A special thanks to the following donors who have generously supported our mission for 20+ years.

Ron & Mary Beth Allison
Jeff & Sue Beard
Sylvia Forbes
Ronald A. Jackson
Denise Mcadory
Maurice Midgette
E.B & Celeste Peebles, III
Monika Reaney
Harvey Saffron

97% of donations go directly to programs
Feeding the Gulf Coast’s strong financial health and commitment to accountability and transparency have earned the food bank a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest independent charity evaluator. Since 2002, using objective analysis, Charity Navigator has awarded only the most fiscally responsible organizations its highest rating—4-stars. In 2011, Charity Navigator added 17 metrics, focused on governance and ethical practices as well as measures of openness, to its ratings methodology. These accountability and transparency metrics, which account for 50 percent of a charity’s overall rating, reveal which charities operate in accordance with industry best practices and whether they are open with their donors and stakeholders.

“Feeding the Gulf Coast’s exceptional 4-star rating sets it apart from its peers and demonstrates its trustworthiness to the public,” according to Michael Thatcher, President & CEO of Charity Navigator. “Only a quarter of charities rated by Charity Navigator receive the distinction of our 4-star rating. This adds Feeding the Gulf Coast to a preeminent group of charities working to overcome our world’s most pressing challenges. Based on its 4-star rating, people can trust that their donations are going to a financially responsible and ethical charity when they decide to support the food bank.”

As a supporter of Feeding the Gulf Coast, this 4-star rating assures you that Feeding the Gulf Coast will honor your intentions and act as good stewards of your gifts. You can trust that your donations to Feeding the Gulf Coast are being spent to fund programs that directly serve people in need in the community.

**View Our Profile**

Feeding the Gulf Coast’s rating and other information about charitable giving are available on [www.charitynavigator.org](http://www.charitynavigator.org).