

WINTER 2019



MEMBER OF
FEEDING
AMERICA

WHEN THE UNEXPECTED HAPPENS

Weeks into the longest partial government shutdown in history, Zakkeas Aronson and his wife Teresa faced a reality they never thought possible.

"We've got 30 days to come up with rent, or we could be out of our house," Zakkeas admits.

That's because Teresa, who has worked as a medical technician at a VA facility, was furloughed during the shutdown and the couple has now missed two straight paychecks.

Even though he works as a security guard, Zakkeas' income is not enough to keep the family afloat while they wait for Teresa to go back to work. **So, Zakkeas did something he never thought he would need to do—visit a food pantry.**

After five long weeks of uncertainty, many furloughed workers resumed their jobs. The actuality of how close it can take someone living on the edge of financial concern to cross the line remains etched in their minds.

The past month provided moments for our staff to hear these stories of concern and gratitude for help along the way.

"I volunteered in Panama City after Hurricane Michael. I remember giving out the food boxes handed to me today. I never thought I would be on this side," commented a government employee as he pulled into the car line.

For those who already were struggling with hunger, these past several weeks have come with high concerns that their benefits would become unavailable.

According to Share Our Strength's Hunger in Our Schools report, 64% of low-income parents report that they would struggle to feed their children if they faced an unexpected crisis, such as a \$1,500 car repair or medical bill.

Many people we serve have to make these tough choices and more. Concerns remain about the shutdown's lingering effects. Federal workers are expected to be paid, but more than one million federally contracted employees are unlikely to receive back pay—resulting in a 10% loss of their yearly income.

Feeding the Gulf Coast anticipates that many will continue to need assistance as they recover from the financial impact of the five-week shutdown and we are prepared to be there as long as it takes.

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It's hard because even when you give it your all and do everything right... apparently, sometimes that's just not enough.

- Zakkeas Aronson, individual affected by the recent government shutdown

LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP

Visit our website
feedingthegulfcoast.org



FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Our mission—to provide nutritious food to meet the challenge of feeding people who are hungry as a result of systemic poverty, personal crisis or disaster—has become even more amplified in the wake of Hurricane Michael and most recently, the partial government shutdown.

A 2017 report shows that 78% of American workers are living paycheck to paycheck.

Additionally, 33% of Americans are one paycheck away from becoming homeless.

The events in recent months make us realize, any one of us could wake up to the day where we face hunger.

At Feeding the Gulf Coast, the entire staff and I are so honored that we have been able to serve our community, as the need continues to be great, because of our loyal partners and many new supporters. Without this help, we would not have been positioned to quickly get food out to those affected by Hurricane Michael, the partial government shutdown, the unexpected car repair, the newly diagnosed health complication, or a host of other events that could affect our ability to make ends meet.

All we can say is—**THANK YOU!**

CATHY POPE

PRESIDENT & CEO, FEEDING THE GULF COAST

OUR VISION

A Hunger-Free Central Gulf Coast

HUNGER AT A GLANCE

1 in 6 individuals are at risk of hunger



1 IN 4 ARE CHILDREN



YOU FED HOPE

FEEDING THE GULF COAST HURRICANE MICHAEL RELIEF



One of my kids has special needs, so I stay home to take care of him. Money is normally tight, it's even tighter now after Hurricane Michael. I've never seen anything like the damage from this storm before. When we came back, we had a lot of water damage to our apartment. Without the food we've been getting at the pantry, my kids would not have had enough to eat after this storm.

- Lisa Clouse, Food Distribution Recipient

For Lisa Clouse, feeding six children is not easy. When trying to rebuild life after a category 4 hurricane, it's even harder. Lisa and her children evacuated before Michael hit their home in Panama City, Florida. But they still felt the storm's effects.

On a very tight budget and without much food after the storm, Lisa turned to a food pantry in Panama City to feed her family.

No one expects their lives to be hit—especially by 155 mph winds. Yet for many individuals in our Panhandle service area, their lives will never be quite the same.

The last quarter of 2018, the food bank hosted numerous food distributions to provide residents of Bay, Holmes, Calhoun, Jackson, Gulf, Washington, and Walton counties with fresh produce, meat, and shelf-stable items.

These pantries, however, have been an act of love provided by you. We have been able to respond quickly and move in these communities because of the

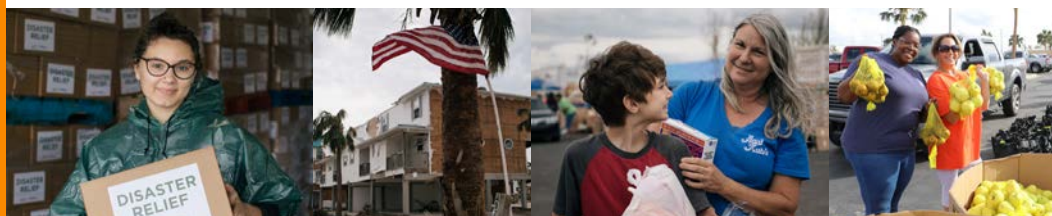
gracious donors and friends who have equipped us to have necessities and labor ready to act.

Over 3.8 million pounds of food and nonfood care items—ranging from apples to baby formula and even toilets—nearly 1,000 deliveries have been made into impacted areas since Hurricane Michael hit.

We are not done yet. As people continue to rebuild, Feeding the Gulf Coast is committed to remaining a helping hand.

Local residents have lent their hands as well. "The community has been strong. Neighbors have been great. People helping each other has been awesome," said Ericha Laymon while volunteering at a recent distribution. "I'm proud to live here, and know how everybody has really gotten together and is making a difference out of something so terrible, or trying to find the silver lining."

"We are going to make it, and it is going to be better than ever. That is what we do believe."



NOURISHING OUR COMMUNITIES



Last year, our Board of Directors and staff worked together to establish a vision to strengthen our local communities as an organization. Four key pillars were set in our strategic plan as the foundation of our efforts: **FEED, NOURISH, EQUIP, and ENGAGE.**

Our goal by 2022 is to shape meaningful progress toward ending hunger through increased access to nutritious food for individuals and families along the Central Gulf Coast struggling to make ends meet. Additionally, by working through community partners, we will help individuals access essential programs that provide much-needed resources and connect them to other community-based services.

Last year, we distributed over 22 MILLION MEALS through the hands and feet of our dedicated community partners.

Distributing this record breaking amount of meals was no small task, and it was made possible by you—our donors, supporters, and friends. We are grateful for your continued partnership to help end hunger along the Central Gulf Coast.

Here at Feeding the Gulf Coast, we strive daily to nourish communities, and **our work begins with access to healthy food.**

Our vision is to build stronger, healthier communities; thriving because families have the resources they need to succeed and children, energized from a good breakfast, are ready to learn and conquer the day.



 [VIEW OUT 2022 STRATEGIC PLAN AT FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG/OUR-MISSION](https://www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/our-mission)



YOUR SUPPORT EQUIPS US TO:



SUPPORT 400+
agency partners who
run meal programs



REACH 1,700+
seniors in need of food
assistance and support



TEACH 500+
students how to make
healthier choices



ASSIST IN TIMES
of natural disaster and
unexpected crisis when
lives need restoration

ADVOCACY CORNER | IMPACT OF FEDERAL PROGRAMS

Federal nutrition programs matter. A child who cannot rely on dinner at home has the hope of a meal at daycare because of the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP, known at Feeding the Gulf Coast as the Afterschool Meal Program). A senior who is struggling to balance medical bills knows he can rely on a box of nutritious food through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

Feeding the Gulf Coast administers five United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) federally funded programs to help ensure our community remains healthy and nourished. These programs help provide tens of thousands of meals each month to our neighbors struggling with hunger along the Central Gulf Coast. Learn more about these programs at www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/programs.



HOW YOU CAN HELP:

WE KNOW THAT WHEN WE SPEAK OUT, ELECTED OFFICIALS LISTEN.
TELL CONGRESS TO PROTECT PROGRAMS THAT HELP OUR COMMUNITIES.

