

ONE GIRL'S WISH FOR HER FAMILY

Zoey is a bubbly, friendly, and energetic 8-year-old. She's a pretty normal kid—she loves to play outside, go to the park, draw and hang out with her four siblings and her parents, Mikel and Tiffany.

Mikel, Zoey's dad, spent eight years in the U.S. Army, including a deployment to Iraq. Because of his time in the military he is disabled but tries to fill the gaps taking jobs as a part-time mechanic. For Mikel, a proud husband and dad of five, there's nothing more important than family.

"I was a defender in the military and since coming home, I make sure I do everything I can to provide for my family," Mikel said. Sometimes though Mikel can't find consistent work. And that means there isn't always enough food for the family. **"I worry about how we're going to pay rent, the bills or how we're going to get what the kids want for supper."**

Zoey feels the pain of uncertainty as well. "We eat rice for breakfast, lunch and dinner sometimes because there isn't much food in our house. My mom and dad have to go without just so that us kids can have food in our stomachs."

"It makes me sad, because it's either I can eat their food or I don't eat at all," admits Zoey.

The family visits a food pantry near their home once a month. At the pantry they receive nutritious food that helps them make ends meet. And while the family has the food they need, Mikel can focus on finding work, looking toward the future and doing what he loves most—being a dad.

Despite the family's struggles, Zoey remains a ray of hope. "My family is big. But if I had a wish for them, it would be that we all have food to eat."

Zoey and Mikel's story is similar to so many of the families we serve. Hunger's impact is felt in every community. Households with children are more likely to experience this struggle. Along the Central Gulf Coast nearly 110,000 children live in food insecure households. Many Americans are one job loss or medial crisis away from falling into this threshold. All it takes is one "bad month" to force a family to choose between buying food or paying bills creating another layer of unpredictability to an already stressed family.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Building Capacity for our Partners in Hunger Relief p. 2

Filling Plates, a Glance at Our 2019 Impact p. 3

Make An Impact, Become a Summer Meals Site p. 4



“

My family is big. But if I had a wish for them, it would be that we all have food to eat.

- Zoey, 8-years old

LEARN HOW YOU CAN HELP

Visit our website
feedingthegulfcoast.org



FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

I want to thank Dave Reaney for stepping in as Interim as we conducted the search for our new President & CEO. Dave's experience and knowledge have been invaluable to providing strong leadership to Feeding the Gulf Coast as the Search Committee diligently worked to identify the best candidate. We appreciate Dave's lasting commitment to our mission.

I am excited to welcome Dan Emery as the new President & CEO of Feeding the Gulf Coast. Dan brings a broad range of experience leading successful organizations across a variety of industries over the last 25 years. I am confident in his leadership and capacity to continue the growth and good work of Feeding the Gulf Coast alongside our dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters.

In 2019, we were able to provide more nutritious food than ever, and with your help, we will continue to reach children, families and seniors with the food they need to lead healthy, active lives. As always, thank you for your partnership and support.

It is your commitment that allows us to achieve our mission and serve those in need along the Central Gulf Coast.

BRAD HICKS

2020 BOARD CHAIR, 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



“

Without Feeding the Gulf Coast and our volunteers, we wouldn't be able to do what we do. We serve between 65 and 75 households at a time, somewhere between 280-330 people. We help the elderly especially, and the young people, the children who are in households where food is a problem. These families do not have enough money to pay the rent and utilities, the cost of transportation to get to work and school, and everything else. Twice a month we're able to give them enough food for 10-12 meals.

- Bruce Bonnecarrere, Crossroads Food Pantry

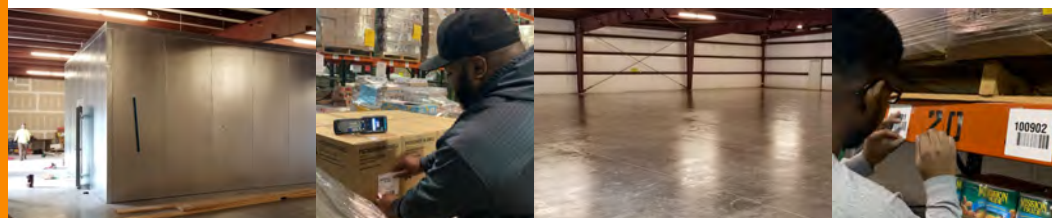
Feeding the Gulf Coast works with over 400 local community organizations to feed the one in five people who struggle with hunger. These partners act as our boots on the ground, reaching people in rural communities who lack access to nutritious food, serving meals to hungry children over the summer, and assisting seniors with applying for benefits to stretch their tight food budgets. Partners like Crossroads Food Pantry are essential to our mission, and we continuously look for ways to better support their work. In 2019, we were able to secure funding for two major projects that will have lasting impacts on how we serve our partners.

Gulf Power Foundation supported our plans to integrate a barcoding system into our operations. This barcoding system has greatly improved our inventory control across all warehouses, which in turn is increasing our capacity to serve our partners by streamlining our processes. This means we can get food out to our agencies faster and with fewer errors.

Also, thanks to Walmart Foundation, Feeding America, and Wells Fargo, we have installed a large, walk-in cooler at our warehouse in Gulfport. This cooler enables us to receive and distribute large quantities of fresh, locally sourced produce to our partners in Mississippi, many of which struggle to get fresh produce into their communities. Having a produce cooler in Gulfport means our Mississippi partners now have access to a variety of fresh, long-lasting produce for their feeding programs, which means more people in Mississippi will eat healthier.

We are thankful for these investments and others from our donors because they allow us to achieve our mission. Thanks to your help, we are feeding more people and reducing hunger along the Central Gulf Coast.

“When it gets right down to it, Feeding America and Feeding the Gulf Coast are a gigantic help to us,” said Bruce. **“[Having the food] delivered right inside our building actually makes it fun to be able to be doing what we're doing. It's all volunteer labor and everybody has a good time doing it.”**





Last year, we made strategic progress towards ending hunger across the Central Gulf Coast. We set out with big goals of serving more seniors in need, expanding nutrition programs to improve the health of future generations, and equipping working families with the tools they need to move toward long-term food security. Thanks to support from partnership like you, Feeding the Gulf Coast had a record-breaking year serving **more than 24 million meals** through the helping hands of our community partners. But more work is still needed. Across our service area, families struggle to make ends meet. Choices have to be made on a regular basis between food and other basic necessities.

A recent study by Share Our Strength and Feeding America shows that our rural counties suffer the most, often experiencing similar challenges to urban areas but with fewer resources and opportunities. Their struggles are compounded by a lack of access to nutritious and affordable fresh food in their communities.

In 2019, Feeding the Gulf Coast made a concentrated effort to reduce the food insecurity rate in our rural communities by focusing on funneling more resources and establishing stronger community partnerships in traditionally underserved areas. Additionally, we increased hunger-relief programs that focused on senior hunger. Going into 2020, we are excited to share that we have a new leader to help guide these efforts.

In February, we welcomed Dan Emery as the new President and CEO of Feeding the Gulf Coast. Dan brings over 25 years of organizational leadership, consumer-focused company innovation, and public relations which will be instrumental to the continued growth of our programs and services to reach those in need.

Most recently, Dan served as President & CEO of GreenStar Cooperative, where he led a business resurgence across the organization. Although Dan is most recently from Ohio, he is a Florida native, alumni of Florida State University, and is excited to be back in the Gulf Coast area where he can make a difference for the one in five individuals who struggle with food insecurity.



ADVOCACY CORNER | CLOSING THE MEAL GAP

Feeding the Gulf Coast and its partners are closing the meal gap across the central Gulf Coast. We take a multi-prong approach to ensure that nutritious food is getting onto the tables of households in need. With food donations from various sources, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture, retail grocery stores, local farmers, and community food drives—sourcing food remains at the center of our work.

In 2019, Feeding the Gulf Coast received over \$150,000 in state and local appropriations to support our hunger-fighting initiatives. This investment resulted in an additional 750,000 meals across our service area. Feeding the Gulf Coast is continuing its pursuit of state and local appropriations while helping our elected officials understand hunger in their communities.



LEARN MORE:
TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW YOU CAN BE AN ADVOCATE FOR THOSE STRUGGLING WITH HUNGER, VISIT WWW.FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG/BLOG.



**YOUR SUPPORT
EQUIPS US TO**



SUPPORT 400+
community partners who
run meal programs



REACH 2,650+
seniors in need of food
assistance and support



TEACH 2,000+
students how to make
healthier choices



ASSIST IN TIMES
of natural disaster and
unexpected crisis



RESCUE 13M+
pounds of product
from going to waste

Feeding the Gulf Coast works towards the vision of establishing a hunger-free Central Gulf Coast for our neighbors in need throughout 24 counties in Alabama, Mississippi, and the Florida Panhandle.

The food bank distributed over 24 million meals in 2019 through our network of over 400 partners.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Brad Hicks, Chair
- Doug Whitmore, Vice Chair
- Derrick Williams, Secretary
- Michael Holland, Treasurer
- Marion Quina, Jr., Past Chair
- Bruce Baker
- Chad Brown
- Jorge Cancel
- Debbie Floyd
- Michael Hollis
- Rufus Hudson
- Valerie James
- Leigh Anne Jones
- Willson McClelland
- Alec Naman
- Ben Russell
- Lee Teumer
- Katie Widdows

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.
 VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL STATEMENT



MAKE AN IMPACT



Summer is fun—unless you are hungry.

When school ends, so does the assurance for many children that they will have a nutritious meal every day. To fill this gap, Feeding the Gulf Coast operates the Summer Meals Program, June through mid-August. Sign up now to become a Summer Meals site. Your program can receive free meals for children, ages 18 and younger, any time during the summer.

Get Involved

Visit www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/learn-more/our-programs/child-nutrition-programs to learn more about becoming a site partner.

UPCOMING EVENTS

APRIL 18
MOBILE BAY MUSTANG CLUB
CAMELLIA CLASSIC CAR SHOW
 BELLINGRATH GARDENS
 Bring a canned good to receive \$1 off admission at the door.

APRIL 20-MAY 1
AL LEGAL FOOD FRENZY
 Attention all lawyers, law firms, law schools, and legal organizations: Sign up for the 5th Annual Legal Food Frenzy and help end child hunger. Visit alabamalegalfoodfrenzy.org to learn more and sign up.

MAY 9
NALC STAMP OUT HUNGER
FOOD DRIVE
 Set your non-perishable food donations out on Saturday. Your mail carrier will pick them up during their regular route and deliver them to the food bank.

NBC RED NOSE DAY
 Stop by your local Walgreens beginning April 13 to purchase your official red nose and tune in to the 5th annual NBC Special dedicated to ending childhood poverty on May 21.

WHEN SCHOOL ENDS,
THE SUMMER MEALS
PROGRAM BEGINS!
 Children, 18 & younger, can receive free meals this summer. Text "FOOD" to 877-877 or visit our website to find sites near you.

AUGUST 27
22ND ANNUAL CHEF CHALLENGE
FORT WHITING ARMORY
 Join us for a culinary experience as some of the area's most celebrated chefs come together to fight hunger in our community, served with a little friendly competition.

visit FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG | (888) 704-FOOD

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

\$20 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other: _____

I would like to join the Hope Harvesters Monthly Giving Club.

 Name (Please Print)

 Address

 City State Zip

 Phone #

 Email Address

Feeding the Gulf Coast's federal identification number is 63-0821997.

Payment Options

Please charge my credit card:

Visa Mastercard Discover AMEX

 Card Number

 Name on Account

 Exp. Date CVV Zip

 Signature

Please make check payable to: **Feeding the Gulf Coast**

Give online at www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/donate