



MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING**  
AMERICA

## Closing the Circle

### Working with Partners to Meet the Need

**N**obody goes hungry [today]," says Brendalee Johnson as she pulls frozen meat, canned beans, and fresh sweet potatoes from her pantry at Brownsville Church to serve the last few cars in line. Individuals have been queued up to receive food since the wee hours of what is already a sweltering day.

"Pop Up. Wake Up. Motivated," chants a volunteer to herself while handing bag after bag of food to individuals waiting in line on foot. An array of suitcases, duffle bags, banana boxes, and bicycles are in hand to transport the items back with them. "There is no questioning the need," states Brent Couch, Simply Healthcare Community Relations Representative, as he directs traffic to keep things flowing. "The need is here."

With the holidays in full swing, distributions like this help the one in six individuals across our service area facing hunger achieve a sense of normalcy. Many of the volunteers helping this morning are also recipients, their cheerful composure hiding the stress that lies beneath.

After hours of helping others, they may be just \$0.75 short of a bus ride home and faced with the decision of having to walk in the heat. For many others, it is the daily decision to pay an unexpected bill or put food on the table. More than 300,000 individuals in our community face decisions like these every day.

Food insecurity can affect anyone at any time. "People who are middle class are struggling too," says a Brownsville representative. "We all can be one paycheck away from homelessness."

In Escambia County alone, more than 40,000 people face hunger, including 13,000 children. Simply Healthcare understands the critical impact food has on health as they aim to increase food access across high-risk Florida communities by leveraging extensive research to target areas of greatest need. This distribution is one of several that the food bank has conducted in partnership with Simply Healthcare and other community groups.



### Simply Healthcare Plans and Feeding Florida have Partnered to Increase Food Access Across High-Risk Florida Communities

Simply and Feeding Florida targeted three regions to increase access to both healthy nutritious food and education opportunities within communities. Because of this opportunity, Feeding the Gulf Coast will partner with community organizations to administer more than 30 mobile pantries, providing more than 133,000 meals to at least 3,200 families.



GET INVOLVED

Visit our website  
[feedingthegulfcoast.org](https://feedingthegulfcoast.org)







## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

**POSITIVE IMPACT** for those facing hunger. This clarity of purpose serves as our guiding light. Thankfully, so many across our community share this passion for making a difference. Though this pursuit can take shape in many ways and have ups and downs, we can always know where our path should lead us.

This edition of our newsletter highlights the work of a pantry whose mantras include “nobody goes hungry today and pop up, wake up, motivated!” This drive to help those facing some of the most difficult times in their lives keeps this work moving forward.

Over the decades, new partnerships, programs, facilities, and processes have allowed us to reach those in need under both blue and the grayest of skies. We seek partnerships in all possible areas, such as our work in the healthcare space. Food as medicine is a cornerstone principle that our partners in medicine are leaning into more every day, and of course, we are eager to find ways to maximize our collective efforts.

Sharing stories and elevating voices is another vital aspect of our work. Recently we held listening sessions across our community which were then shared with the White House during a Health and Nutrition Conference.

We still face many challenges, such as shortages in our food supply and increased costs in nearly everything necessary to serve our mission.

But with 300,000 individuals relying on our network, we must all pull together to keep marching towards our ongoing goal of positively impacting those facing hunger. Thank you for all you do to make this work a reality.

**MICHAEL LEDGER**

PRESIDENT & CEO, FEEDING THE GULF COAST

## ELEVATING VOICES

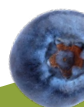
**“My calling is to do what I can for the people,”** says Rosemary. **“I love to help people, and I want to see this thing go farther.”** As the director of the Moffett Manner food pantry in Pascagoula, Mississippi, a partner agency of Feeding the Gulf Coast, Rosemary works hard to source healthy food for her community. She sees firsthand the difficulties those in her community face on a daily basis. **“When they come, they have tears in their eyes,”** she said. Sometimes, they tell her, **“I didn’t know where I was going to get food to feed my children.”**

Ms. Rosemary graciously hosted a listening session focus group this past August. As a handful of our staff sat down with about women, we listened to their concerns and struggles, but also their hopes for the community and the generation they are still helping to nurture. On more than one occasion, the ladies praised Ms. Rosemary for her kindness and passion for the food pantry, remarking how much the ministry meets a need in their town.

Ms. Rosemary is raising one of her grandchildren by herself. She was turned down for financial assistance from the electric company because she makes too much to be eligible. But after paying for her mortgage, utility bills, and car loan, “sometimes I don’t have money to put gas in my car,” she said. Because she intimately understands the needs of her community, she can provide the most beneficial resources.

She wants to create a program that will help her neighbors with their bills. “I want to be able to help people pay their rent, help people pay their light bill,” she said. And because people can’t buy paper towels, toilet paper, dish detergent, or cleaning products with SNAP funds, she offers those goods to people who visit the pantry. She also hopes to expand her pantry so that it’s open five days a week.

“What I’m striving to do with Moffett Manner is to be able to help people. My motivation, what makes me come out here, is that I know my clients,” she said. “They appreciate what I do. They appreciate me. And even if they didn’t appreciate me, I’m still going to do it.”



# 12 WAYS OF Giving

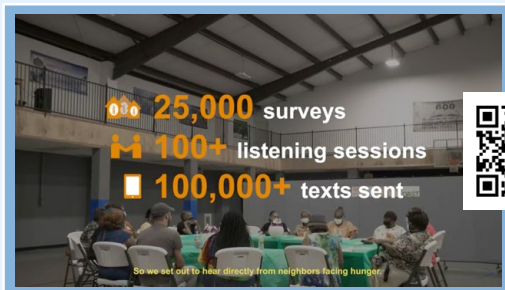
## Solutions to Address America's Hunger Crisis

Nearly 100,000 individuals may visit a Feeding the Gulf Coast pantry partner in a given month. Yet, the full scope of the hunger crisis reaches across our nation. For the first time in 50 years, the White House held a conference addressing hunger, nutrition, and health in America. In preparation, Feeding America gathered insight from nearly 36,000 people who identified as facing food insecurity. Feeding the Gulf Coast participated by hosting three listening sessions across our service area.

"Life is definitely more challenging," Takia told us as she sat next to her young daughter in a room full of individuals and volunteers who assist the pantry at The Extra Mile Club. "It certainly affects your mental health."

Many, like Takia, told us of their struggles to make ends meet. Working multiple jobs or living on a strict fixed income, yet constantly faced with unexpected challenges and rising costs from utility bills to groceries.

Feeding America compiled the sentiments and concerns of citizens across the country to share with the White House regarding anti-hunger policy recommendations. Below is a short video that provides a glimpse of the hopes and concerns of individuals facing hunger across our nation.



### LISTENING SESSIONS VIDEO

Scan QR Code to watch Feeding America's compilation of stories.

## THE REAL "WISH LIST" THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Everyone has things they hope for and the holidays are a perfect time to dream. Yet, holiday wish lists can often look different for families facing hunger. For many in our community, simple items that make up daily life, such as bread, milk, and eggs, may be at the top of their list.

Feeding the Gulf Coast, we believe that food should be on tables, not on holiday wish lists. Along with full stockings, we want people in need to have full pantries. Consider the following ways you can help make a difference. Your support directly strengthens Feeding the Gulf Coast and its partner agencies.

1. **AN ONLINE DONATION** designated to your choice of program or where the need is greatest. Visit [feedingthegulfcoast.org](http://feedingthegulfcoast.org).
2. **A MONTHLY GIFT PLEDGE** from you to the food bank provides support 365-days of the year to our hunger-relief initiatives.
3. **A DONOR ADVISED FUND** can help simplify your giving and facilitate your strategic philanthropic goals.
4. **A COMPANY MATCHED DONATION** will make your donation go twice as far.
5. **VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME AND TALENTS** to make a difference in the lives of your neighbors.
6. **HOST A FOOD DRIVE OR FUND DRIVE** by recruiting a team to collect our most needed items.
7. **MAKE A DIFFERENCE WHEN YOU SHOP** by selecting Feeding the Gulf Coast as your charity at [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).

8. **GIVE A GIFT IN HONOR OR MEMORY** to commemorate someone special.
9. **DONATING STOCKS AND MUTUAL FUND SHARES** offers you valuable financial and tax-deductible benefits.
10. **INVITE YOUR COWORKERS TO JOIN YOU IN ENDING HUNGER** through workplace giving, including payroll deductions.
11. **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.
12. **START A FUNDRAISER** by utilizing your social network on Facebook.

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

## Wish List

- Bread  
- Milk  
- Eggs  
- Apples  
- Beans







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 more than 27.5 million meals in 2021 through our network of more than 400 partners.

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

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

**Donor opt-out policy:** If you wish to opt out of having your name listed as a donor in any of our publications, please email [communications@feedingthegulfcoast.org](mailto:communications@feedingthegulfcoast.org).



23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL

# Chef Challenge

A CHALLENGE TO END HUNGER  
SAVE THE DATE for APRIL 13, 2023



## SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE NOW

Visit [FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG](https://www.feedingthegulfcoast.org) for more information.

## GET INVOLVED

### WAREHOUSE HOLIDAYS:

The food bank will be closed December 23-26, January 2, and February 21 in observance of upcoming holidays.

### TARGET CIRCLE

This holiday season, your shopping can help give back to the community. Target shoppers can enroll in the Target Circle program and earn votes from purchases. Votes cast for Feeding America through Dec. 31 will benefit your local food bank.

### HOST A FOOD AND FUND DRIVE THIS SEASON

Now is a wonderful time to get your business or organization involved with the food bank. Help give the gift of hope to those in need by hosting a food and fund drive. Your generosity will help provide more meals to those in need within your community.

To set up a food and fund drive, visit our website.

### APRIL 13, 2023 23<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL CHEF CHALLENGE EVENT

This culinary experience serves up a night of friendly competition which brings together an eclectic group of local chefs and restaurants to fight hunger in our community.

To become a sponsor or chef participant, visit our website or call us at (251) 653-1617, ext. 141.

visit [FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG](https://www.feedingthegulfcoast.org) | (888) 704-FOOD

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