



MEMBER OF  
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AMERICA

## New Programs on the Horizon

### The Intersection of Health and Nutrition

**F**or people facing food insecurity, the challenge of adequate diet and nutrition, doctor visits, and medication is often unmanageable, creating a cycle of tough choices that results in otherwise manageable diseases becoming a health crisis. Feeding the Gulf Coast recognizes the parallel union proper nutrition has in combating the impacts of food insecurity on health. We believe no one should be without the food they need for a better life. As part of our work to address this, Feeding the Gulf Coast has established a new Community Health and Nutrition department to ensure every community has access to a balanced, nutritious diet.

The aim of the Community Health and Nutrition department is to develop comprehensive nutrition education and health programming to engage individuals and families who utilize food, health, and human services at relevant partners. These programs aim to create an avenue of attainable steps that clients can use to make better choices regarding their diets and meal planning while providing them with the means to afford healthy, nutritious foods.

Currently the food bank is finalizing three programs to roll out this Spring.

**Healthcare Partnerships:** We will work with healthcare providers to address food insecurity as a social determinant of health. This will expand and grow our current *"Food as Medicine"* initiatives seeking to improve health outcomes by increasing access to nutritious food and education.

**Nutrition Education Classes:** Team members will conduct classes focusing on vulnerable populations, including SNAP-eligible households and individuals residing in food deserts and harder to serve rural areas.

**Mobile Market (Millie):** The Mobile Market program will provide highly subsidized produce to households who otherwise would not have access to nutritious food at a minimum of 20% below market cost. Additionally, Millie will accept SNAP benefits and participate in the Fresh Access Bucks program, allowing households to maximize their benefits.

The Community Health & Nutrition department will develop and implement programmatic initiatives that help the food bank address the intersection of health and nutrition within our communities.



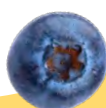
Partnering with healthcare professionals to address and screen for food insecurity



Increasing client/neighbor access to fresh produce



Educating on the importance of a healthy diet



GET INVOLVED

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



## FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Health and prosperity through nutrition is a principle that guides us daily. This can be seen in our work with children, striving to ensure they have the nutritious food to grow physically and mentally into productive, happy adults. Or in the expansion of our Senior Box program, which provides carefully selected foods appropriate for a healthy diet to help stretch a senior's fixed income dollars.

Food insecurity is not just a lack of food but a lack of nutrient-dense foods. These foods are critical to good health. Poor diet dramatically increases the risk of developing diabetes, heart disease and stroke, dementia, and at least 13 types of cancer, among many other issues. The cost of this to an individual and to our society is immense.

This is why we are even more committed to addressing this issue through our Health and Nutrition department. Through this, we will share educational resources about healthy foods and their benefits and provide nutrition based classes to teach how to prepare delicious meals with these healthier food options.

Of course, we will continue to make these healthy foods available, particularly in food deserts where options are limited. We will use our tools and partnerships to accomplish these goals, including our new Mobile Market, named Millie (*please inquire if you are interested in being a sponsor*).

This work is only possible with partnership.

As always, we will engage our community to help support these important initiatives through food, feet, and funds. For those who are long-time supporters, THANK YOU! For others thinking about joining our mission, these new opportunities may be just the place to start, as the return on investment is powerful on an individual and societal level.

**MICHAEL LEDGER**

PRESIDENT & CEO, FEEDING THE GULF COAST



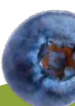
# PANTRIES FOR KIDS

**“It’s about getting kids where they need to be,”** says Tyler Lee, Project Engineer at Baskerville-Donovan, Inc., and Jessica Truett, Board Certified Behavior Analyst at Andrews Research & Education Foundation, two of many voices working together to make a difference in their community. They help guide the 60-member class of men and women of Leadership Pensacola (LeaP) Class of 2023 as they take a new approach to addressing hunger through the Feeding the Gulf Coast School Pantry Program.

Tyler states that, as a class, they saw the impact they could make for future generations by providing kids with basic needs. “Some of these kids don’t even have access to proper food, hygiene (which) can impact them physically, mentally, and socially,” Tyler explains. This project will set up food pantries at three local community centers in the Pensacola area to provide essential hygiene items and nutritious shelf-stable food for children and their families. By having access to these items, kids can improve their health and have the confidence to be the most successful

version of themselves, “not only for this generation but also for the next generation of kids.” Jessica believes this project is a wonderful way for those who want to help but don’t know how to make a difference. “With this project, we hope to make the biggest impact we can on the community by linking families with their basic life essentials within their community, having it readily available, and serving as the model for others,” she said. “This is a great model to show how \$1 can help so much.”

The excitement from Jessica, Tyler, and the other class members is contagious, and they are already seeing success by gaining support from the local community. One member shared the experience of interacting with a child at one of the centers who said how excited and thankful he was for the pantry to be established. Jessica summed up the overall mission well, “we’re doing it because we know they will be the leaders of tomorrow. Not having to worry about those necessities will create a great family environment and help take care of those families.”







## Providing Children with Choice Through School Pantry Program

“For us, having this is huge,” says Zack Wigstrom, principal of Bay Minette Middle. “We have a student population that lives at or below the poverty line. We have many students that often come to school, and their lunch or breakfast is the only meal they’ll get during the day.”

Bay Minette Middle is one of nearly 40 schools participating in Feeding the Gulf Coast’s School Pantry Program. Similar to the Backpack Program, School Pantries provide older students with easy access to nutritious, nonperishable, and easily consumed food and other necessities. It also gives them a choice in selecting the meals they want to take home each weekend. However, it is unique in that it offers more than just food. It also helps reduce the stress many students experience when they cannot afford basic toiletries such as soap, toothpaste, and feminine hygiene products. These products can be expensive and may not be covered by other assistance programs.

By providing students access to nutritious, ready-to-make foods and other items, the School Pantry Program ensures that teens can focus on their education instead of worrying about where their next meal is coming from.



### SCHOOL PANTRY VIDEO

Scan QR Code to see our School Pantry Program in action!

## WHAT A YEAR

Last year we continued to focus on improving lives for families, seniors, and individuals in our community. However, 2022 remained a challenging year for individuals navigating rising food and gas costs. With food insecurity rates across the central Gulf Coast higher than the national average, this is especially true for those in our area facing hunger.

Feeding the Gulf Coast worked through more than 800 community partners to distribute nearly 29 million meals to those in need. Through this incredible work, the network provided more than 4,000 seniors with nutritious food boxes tailored to fit a diet for individuals facing chronic conditions such as hypertension and diabetes. This work also ensured 15,000 children received meals through the food bank’s four child nutrition programs. The food bank invested in developing new programs that will improve the health and nutrition of our communities. These impactful efforts would not have been possible without your generosity and support.

As we work to strengthen programs and improve more lives, we invite you to join along and help make a difference in your community. Whether through volunteering, donating, or partnering with our mission, your support of the food bank ensures more families facing hunger have access to the food needed to enjoy a nutritious meal around the table.

# Thank You,

## YOUR SUPPORT LAST YEAR HELPED US



**PROVIDE 29 MILLION** meals for people facing hunger in our community



**ENSURE 15,000+** children had access to meals through child nutrition programs



**CONDUCT 750+** Mobile Food Distributions through community partners



**REACH 4,000+** seniors with tailored food boxes to supplement their diets



**DEVELOP INITIATIVES** and programming to connect communities in food deserts with nutritious foods



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 South Alabama, South Mississippi, and the Florida Panhandle.

In 2022, the food bank distributed nearly 29 million meals through our network of more than 800 community partners.

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This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR FULL STATEMENT



FEEDING THE GULF COAST RECOGNIZED AS ONE OF THE TOP FOOD BANKS IN THE NATION

According to a recent release by 24/7 Wall Street, Feeding the Gulf Coast has ranked #2 in the nation's top food banks. 24/7 Wall Street's methodology analyzed the food bank's Charity Navigator score which evaluates the organization's impact, accountability and finance, culture, and leadership.

'We're honored to be included in this list and to be recognized as one of the top Food Banks in the country among more than 2,300 peers,' says Michael Ledger, President and CEO of Feeding the Gulf Coast.

View Our Profile

Feeding the Gulf Coast's Charity Navigator rating and other information about charitable giving is available on www.charitynavigator.org.



GET INVOLVED

WKRK STOCK THE PANTRY FOOD DRIVE

APRIL: ALL MONTH LONG
Join WKRK News 5, Feeding the Gulf Coast and participating sponsors for Stock the Pantry Food Drive.

FIGHT HUNGER. SPARK CHANGE

Walmart and Sam's Club customers can make a difference with their grocery carts from April 10-May 8. Look for specially marked products when shopping in-store and online.

MAY 13 COAST YOUNG PROFESSIONALS WALKING ON WATER BRIDGE WALK & FOOD DRIVE

BILOXI BAY BRIDGE
Visit mscoastchamber.com/events to learn more.

MAY 13 NALC STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE

Set your non-perishable food donations out on Saturday, May 13. Your mail carrier will pick them up during their regular route.

MAY 21 2ND ANNUAL THE MAX VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

JUANA'S PAGODAS
Join us for a spectacular day at Navarre Beach filled with an action-packed volleyball tournament, food and drink specials, live music, and the opportunity to give back to the community in honor of Maxine Connelly.

Visit themaxvolleyball.com to become a sponsor or to register your team.



visit FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG | (888) 704-FOOD

MAKE A DIFFERENCE TODAY!

Input fields for donation amounts: \$20, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, Other

Input field for joining 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

Input fields for payment options: Please charge my credit card, Visa, Mastercard, Discover, AMEX

Card Number

Name on Account

Exp. Date, CVV, Zip

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Input field for check payable to: Feeding the Gulf Coast

Input field for giving online at www.feedingthegulfcoast.org/donate

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.