

SUMMER 2023



MEMBER OF
FEEDING
AMERICA

In Gray Skies and Blue Skies Providing Relief for Recent Storm Victims

Recent storms left behind flooding and damage across Jackson County, Mississippi, including a 2-mile stretch of destruction from an EF-2 tornado in Moss Point. More than 350 homes and businesses, including one of the food bank's agencies, sustained damage. Feeding the Gulf Coast worked with pantries and other emergency response organizations to distribute nearly 35,000 pounds of food and water to residents affected. The Thursday following the storm, the food bank participated in a community-wide distribution with numerous relief organizations that connected individuals with recovery supplies, tarps, and food. **"In the midst of disaster, we all come together,"** proclaimed Jeffery Hulum III, with *Extend a Hand, Help a Friend*. **"This is what Mississippi looks like—everybody working together."**

Ms. Rosemary, who oversees the food pantry at Moffett Manna, opened her previously scheduled Saturday distribution to residents needing additional supplies following the storm.

"I ended up in a flooded area; I got stuck," said one lady as pantry volunteers loaded her car with fresh produce, shelf-stable essentials and bottled water. "Water was coming into my car." She thanked God that a firefighter was close at hand to assist her. "I don't know where I would be at." As other individuals eagerly awaited their turn to receive essential food and supplies, they recounted their experience with the storm. "It was devastating to see something like this happen in our area," said another woman in line. She was thankful no one was hurt, and her home only sustained minor water damage. "We have to keep moving forward."

Living along the Gulf Coast, the effects of natural disasters are all too familiar. Disaster relief distributions such as these are critical in helping people overcome unexpected hardships due to the financial strain of home repairs and replacing weekly groceries following power outages. Feeding the Gulf Coast is committed to serving the community's needs in both gray skies and blue.

June 1 through November 30 marks the Atlantic hurricane season for the central Gulf Coast. Take active steps now to prepare your family and home for a disaster.



Make a plan and review it with your family members.



Build a kit with items needed to shelter in place or for evacuation.



Secure your home and loose items around your yard.

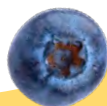


Sign up for local weather alerts from county agencies.



GET INVOLVED

Visit our website
feedingthegulfcoast.org





FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

Life can present many challenges, often when we least expect them. Whether it be financial hardship, health issues, individuals on fixed incomes such as seniors, children with a lack of access, or in times of disaster, it is critical that everyone have access to the nutritious foods they need to move forward in life.

Within the pages of this newsletter, there are several examples of our mission in action, meeting the needs of all those impacted by these challenges. It is especially heartening that many of those working alongside us today are neighbors who benefited from this very work sometime in their past.

Giving back is very fulfilling for most of us. But those helped by such kindness during the most difficult of times are often the most dedicated and committed to that work.

Recognizing the importance of community involvement and support in addressing these issues is essential. The work and partnership of organizations and individuals like you significantly improves the lives of those struggling and provides them with inspiration and hope during their times of challenge.

I hope you, too, are inspired by the difference you make every day in our community by choosing to be a part of this mission.

MICHAEL LEDGER

PRESIDENT & CEO, FEEDING THE GULF COAST



GENEROSITY IN ACTION

“We were not always the most well-off, but we did what we had to do. There were days when my parents were just unsure, and you guys came through and fed our family,” recalls Kaitlin, a Feeding the Gulf Coast volunteer. **“For almost a year, we struggled really hard. My brother was really sick growing up. So there were a lot of decisions my family had to make; do we take him to Gainesville and spend all that money to take him to the children’s hospital, or do we feed our family? It was a decision between medical care to make sure he’s still with us or feeding our family.”**

Kaitlin, a Navy Federal volunteer group member, knows all too well the impact the food box she’s packing during her shift will have on the family who receives it. For her, it is a direct way to give back to a mission that helped her family when they faced hard decisions regarding medical care for her brother and determining how they would continue to provide food for the family—choices that individuals in our

community face every day. “There was a local church right up the road from our house that you guys supported on a monthly basis,” said Kaitlin. “We went every single time and most days; it was how we ate—it was all we ate.”

Kaitlin, like others, has found a way to sow seeds of generosity through volunteering. She comes out to our Milton Warehouse with her coworkers from Navy Federal regularly, helping the staff process food donations and prepare meal boxes for the Backpack Program and the Senior Box Program. Together, Navy Federal volunteers have contributed nearly 3,500 hours in the last few years. Day in and day out, thousands of families across the central Gulf Coast receive groceries, thanks to dedicated volunteers like Kaitlin and her coworkers with Navy Federal, who strive to make a difference. Kaitlin encourages others, “If I can come out here and sort some food boxes or pack some backpacks or the elderly boxes—anytime I can do it, I’m going to do it.”

“Anytime I can do it, I’m going to do it.”



WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Scan the QR Code to watch Kaitlin’s full story and learn more about volunteering!





Site Partners Create a Safe Place for Children to Learn and Eat

“A few years ago, I was asking a kid what their favorite thing about camp was. It broke my heart when they said, my favorite thing about camp was that I got to eat today,” said Morgan Shiyou with The Salvation Army Kroc Center, one of Feeding the Gulf Coast’s site partners for the Summer Meals Program.

Summer has always been a time of rejuvenation for children as they turn their attention away from the daily grind of learning and focus on having fun, letting their imaginations run free. Yet, for those who experience the uncertainty of if they will eat that day, summer is often anything but fun.

Thanks to the partnership of nearly 150 sites, kids are having a brighter and more carefree summer across our community. More than 9,500 meals are served daily in an environment where children can make memories, learn, and spend time with friends. As summer break transitions back into school, these sites continue providing free meals for children throughout the school year.

Feeding the Gulf Coast is onboarding new sites now. To become a partner, scan the QR code or visit bit.ly/FTGCCNP to learn more.

9,500 MEALS served daily

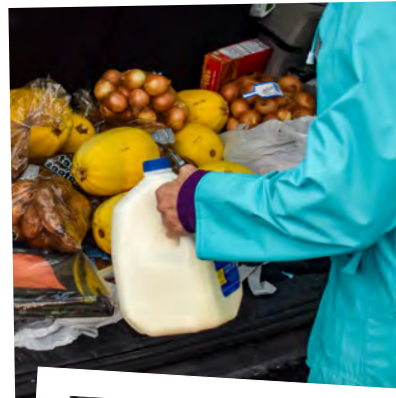
MYTH VS. TRUTH

MYTH: Food banks only distribute canned or unhealthy food

It is a common misconception that food banks only distribute canned or shelf-stable items, predominantly laden with sodium and preservatives. While these food items do play a part in ensuring the food bank has a stable inventory, especially during a disaster, Feeding the Gulf Coast strives to provide a variety of nutritious options that help families thrive.

In 2022, 59% of all food distributed by Feeding the Gulf Coast was fresh product. On average, the food bank distributed more than 700,000 pounds of produce monthly. Helping the people we serve gain access to healthy food is critical, but solving hunger through the lens of nutrition takes unique approaches.

The food bank acquires food through various sources to maintain adequate supplies of meat, dairy, and fresh produce to equip our clients with the nourishing ingredients they need to create complete meals. By working with local farmers to source fresh produce, partnering with retail stores to rescue healthy proteins such as meat and dairy, and sourcing low-sodium and low-sugar shelf-stable items, Feeding the Gulf Coast is helping seniors, children, and families eat better today and break the cycle of poor nutrition often exacerbated by food insecurity.



59% of all food distributed in 2022 was fresh product.



SUMMER 2023





Feeding the Gulf Coast works towards the vision of 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



YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS



We are so grateful for the impact of your support on our mission. Because of donors like you, thousands of children, families and hardworking individuals right here in our local community will not go to bed hungry tonight.

Take Our Quick Survey

Scan the QR code on the right or visit bit.ly/FTGCDonorSurvey.

GET INVOLVED

HOST A FOOD AND FUND DRIVE DURING HUNGER ACTION MONTH

September is HUNGER ACTION MONTH—a nation-wide initiative to raise awareness of food insecurity. Throughout this month, we encourage you to help raise awareness of local hunger and the work Feeding the Gulf Coast does to address hunger in your community.

To get started, visit our website or call us at (251) 653-1617 x127.

SEPTEMBER 15, 2023 HUNGER ACTION DAY

Go orange today to help raise awareness about hunger in your community. Share a photo on your social media and tag us @FeedingtheGulfCoast.

Make sure you follow us on social media to see all the fun ways you can get involved during the month of September.

WAREHOUSE HOLIDAY

The food bank will be closed on September 4 in observance of Labor Day.

MAY 16, 2024 24TH ANNUAL CHEF CHALLENGE EVENT

Plans are underway for our 24th Annual Chef Challenge.

This fun culinary experience serves up a night of friendly competition which brings together a talented 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 x141.



visit FEEDINGTHEGULFCOAST.ORG | (888) 704-FOOD

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