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food for Thought

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From the Executive Director



Dear Friends,

In previous surveys conducted with Food Bank clients across Central Louisiana, we asked them to identify foods they want most, but do not usually get from the meal or grocery program they were visiting. Their responses were not surprising to us. 87.4% of the clients identify fresh fruit and vegetables as the most desired item not received, 47.5% of the clients identify protein foods like meat, and 41% of the clients identify dairy products such as milk, cheese, or yogurt.

We know good health starts with good food. That's why we are committed to providing nutritious food for our neighbors who are at risk of hunger.

The Food Bank's ability to distribute more nutritious food is directly related to its level of cold storage capacity. With our new coolers and freezers, the Food Bank has more than doubled its cold storage capacity, building new larger units that are racked to optimize the height of the storage.

The level of food sourcing activities will increase as the Food Bank's cold storage capacity increased. So our food safety training is an important part of the work we do with our partner agencies and volunteers. This is critical to maintain the quality of donated food distributed as the amount of perishable food increases across our distribution network.

Our families, communities and economy are stronger when everyone has the healthy food they need to grow and work. All of us have a role to play in solving hunger in Central Louisiana – individuals, charities, farmers, and businesses. We must work together so every family in Central Louisiana has enough nutritious food to fuel a bright future.

Sincerely,

Jayne Wright-Velez
Executive Director

Celebrating a 5 Year Partnership with Hope House

Good Food Project of the Food Bank of Central Louisiana partners with over 70 organizations in the eleven parishes served by the Food Bank. GFP has installed sustainable organic gardens at these sites with the goal of changing the culture of health for the children of our region.

A community garden partnership with Hope House of Central Louisiana, Inc., a homeless shelter for women and children, began in March of 2013. Hope House offers



housing to women, 18 years or older who are homeless, capable of pursuing individualized goal-setting that will lead to self-sufficiency; and who actively participate in life skills training to enhance personal and professional skills. Hope House also expects that the women will willingly pursue alternatives that will change their situation of homelessness. Good Food Project provides a weekly garden and nutrition program for

the women residing at Hope House that is considered one of their required life skills classes.

GFP originally installed a container garden at Hope House's former location on Bolton Avenue. This was a residential-style home with little green space to provide a garden of great size. A year later, in March of 2014, and once Hope House had settled into its move to its current location at 5115 S. MacArthur, GFP was able to install 4x8 raised garden beds, and some lasagna-style rows where fresh produce could be raised to use in-house.

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The 26th annual Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive— Making a difference, one bag at a time



Saturday, May 12 marks the 26th anniversary of one of America's great days of giving – the National Association of Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. Letter carriers travel through the community every day, often coming face to face with the sad reality for too many, hunger.

So, each year on the second Saturday in May, letter carriers across the country collect non-perishable food donations across the community. These donations go directly to local food pantries to provide food to people in Central Louisiana who need food assistance.

In Central Louisiana, **more than 44,147 pounds of food was donated** to provide food to those in need throughout the Food Bank's 11-parish service area. We are so thankful for everyone who donated, and **a special thanks to Alexandria/Pineville/Marksville 932 National Association of Letter Carriers. We are also grateful for The Rotary Club of Alexandria for sponsoring the bags for this year's food drive.**

The need for food donations is great. Currently, 49 million Americans — 1 in 6 — are unsure where their next meal is coming from. Sixteen million are children who feel hunger's impact on their overall health and ability to perform in school. And nearly 5 million seniors over the age of 60 are food insecure, with many who live on fixed incomes often too embarrassed to ask for help.

This food drive's timing is crucial. Food banks and pantries often receive the majority of their donations during the Thanksgiving and Christmas holiday seasons. By springtime, many pantries are depleted, entering the summer low on supplies at a time when many school breakfast and lunch programs are not available to children in need.

Participating in this year's Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is simple. **Just leave a non-perishable food donation in a bag by your mailbox on Saturday, May 12 and your letter carrier will do the rest.** Please help us in our fight to end hunger, as we celebrate the 26th anniversary of the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive.



“The Food Pantry Has Been a Lifesaver.

By giving us nutritious staples to get through the month, **it's turned a situation that could have been one of hopelessness and despair into a hopeful one** – where we can feed our family and hold our heads up high through a difficult, but temporary, time.”



The Food Bank of Central Louisiana's Board of Directors broke ground on the Client Services Center on November 18, 2015

Celebrating the Completion of the *Capital Campaign and Construction!*

Food Bank of Central Louisiana Hosted an Open House at Renovated Main Distribution Center to celebrate the completion of the Capital Campaign.

Thursday, March 8, 2018 — The chair of our campaign leadership committee, Brooks Harris, shared a few words....

The Food Bank of Central Louisiana has been serving families' greatest needs for 28 years. We serve more than 22,000 men, women and children each month across 11 parishes in Central Louisiana.

As the chair of the campaign leadership committee, I would like to thank the individuals, families, businesses, organizations, and foundations who supported this campaign, allowing us to reach our goal. I would also like to thank those who served on the Campaign Leadership Committee – Richard Cecil, Brian Couvillon, Stan Lott, Debbie Mahfouz, Kay McCray and Todd St. Romain. These facilities will allow us to expand our services to the more than 100 agencies we work with across our community and serve our clients in a more dignified manner.

Jayne Wright-Velez, Executive Director of the Food Bank of Central Louisiana, also spoke to the guests....

Welcome and thank you for joining us today. This building, along with the Client Services Center and Food Resource Center, represent the culmination of hard work, dedication, and tremendous support from this community. These facilities are tools, enabling the Food Bank of Central Louisiana to serve more people in a more efficient manner, helping them on their journey from hunger to hope. We are so thankful for our donors, partners, board of directors and campaign leadership committee who made this possible. I want to recognize one of our board members, Kevin Broussard and his firm Ashe, Broussard, and Weinzzette, who donated their architectural services for this entire project.

I would also like to thank The Rapides Foundation for their partnership as funders of various programs, including two current grants under the Healthy Behaviors Program Grant.

The Healthy Behaviors Program Grant funds projects which have a focus on healthy eating, active living, or prevention of tobacco use, substance or alcohol abuse.

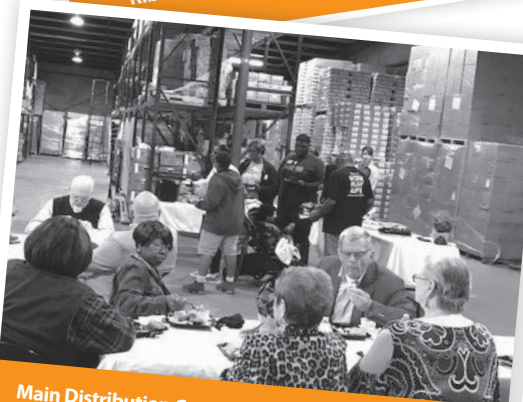
We look forward to being able to utilize our new and upgraded facilities as we continue to work towards our mission of alleviating hunger in Central Louisiana. We are grateful for the financial support from this community that allowed us to meet the goals of this campaign.



Brooks Harris, Campaign Leadership Committee Chair, welcomes guests to open house.



Ribbon cutting ceremony.



Main Distribution Center Open House, 3/08/2018



Main Distribution Center Open House, 3/08/2018

MAIN DISTRIBUTION CENTER

This project began with
*the removal of the
original* cold storage
which was built in 1996



The new cooler
and freezer
has doubled
our cold storage
capacity



The new
*freezer and
cooler doors*
were installed
in January 2018



Our new racking
system allows for
*more efficient
operations*

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Celebrating a 5 Year Partnership with Hope House

Since that time, women and children living in the shelter have had opportunities to learn about small-scale sustainable,



organic gardening. They get hands-on experiences of planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting any produce grown; garden maintenance is built into their weekly/daily chores. Some of the produce grown has included tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, okra, squash, cantaloupe,

watermelon, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, cabbage, green onions, and red potatoes. GFP's garden programs benefit from an almost year-round ability to grow food; the people we serve can have access to fresh, nutritious food at any time.

GFP teaches nutrition lessons to both the women and the children. Cooking demos take place often, with the residents participating in the preparation of a healthy dish or snack for their peers. GFP staff brings fresh fruits or vegetables each week for the women and children to enjoy as a snack or as part of a cooking lesson. Good Food Project also partners with other organizations such as the LSU AgCenter to teach the women about how to make better food choices when shopping or cooking for the family. The women who participate in Good Food Project's garden and nutrition program at Hope House gain life-long skills, experience, and resource information that not only benefits them, but can have a lasting impact on their children, as they move toward improving their homeless status and their lives.

