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food for Thought

A PUBLICATION OF THE FOOD BANK OF CENTRAL LOUISIANA

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From the Executive Director

As the end of the school year quickly approaches, the staff and volunteers at the Food Bank of Central Louisiana prepare to see an increase in the number of families needing our help. When schools let out for summer, many children will no longer receive daily meals through the National School Lunch Program, and this puts a strain on already tight family budgets.

In addition to the increased need during this time of year, food banks are also notoriously empty during summer months, having exhausted the supply of donations received from food drives conducted during the holidays that are then distributed during spring.

This is why the Letter Carriers Food Drive is so important. We are so pleased to work with the Alexandria/Pineville/Marksville 932 National Association of Letter Carriers and are thankful for their efforts in coordinating and conducting this food drive.

Central Louisiana residents can join the Food Bank of Central Louisiana and support community members who struggle with hunger by simply collecting non-perishable food items and leaving them in a sturdy bag near their mailboxes on May 11th. A letter carrier will collect the donations and deliver them to the Food Bank of Central Louisiana. Items will then be distributed to those facing hunger right here in our community.

The Food Bank and its partner agencies reach more than 22,000 impoverished people in Central Louisiana each month, distributing more than six million pounds of food and grocery products. We could not do the work we do without food donations from food drives, local retail stores, and food manufacturers, as well as financial donations from individuals, organizations, foundations and businesses. It's through these partnerships that we can provide safe, emergency food to those in need in our community. We are so thankful for this community for supporting our mission of alleviating hunger in Central Louisiana.

Sincerely,

Jayne Wright-Velez, Executive Director

BackPack Program Completes Another Successful Year with Support from Food Bank Donors



In our region, one in five children struggle with hunger when away from school.

A lack of nutritious food, especially in the earliest formative years, can have a lasting impact on physical and behavioral health, along with development and academic achievement.

We are so thankful for those who support the Food Bank of Central Louisiana's Backpack Program. This Backpack program meets the needs of hungry children at times when other resources are not available, such as weekends and school vacations. The backpacks are filled with food that children take home from school on Friday afternoons to provide food for the weekend. A donation of \$150 will sponsor a child on the program for an entire school year.

We appreciate the following groups who supported the Backpack Program for the 2018-19 school year:

Capital One Bank
Feeding America – Red Nose Day
Junior League of Alexandria
Louisiana Children's Trust Fund
Martin Foundation
Pineville First United Methodist Church
United Way of Northwest Louisiana
Woodforest Charitable Foundation

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Volunteer Coordinator
Vera Tyler
Warehouse Assistant
Jayne Wright-Velez
Executive Director



Food Bank's GFP Gets a New Set of Wheels

Thanks to Healthy Blue for their donation of a Sprinter to the Food Bank of Central Louisiana's Good Food Project. This vehicle will be used to support the garden programs, including installation of gardens, nutrition education, and community garden support.

Through education and community partnership, The Good Food Project works to connect children with healthier food options, healthier behaviors, and improved health outcomes. **The program currently has 72 school and community gardens, impacting 17,660 children and adults.**

Healthy Blue is one of Louisiana's leading managed care plans with more than 235,000 Louisiana members who participate in the state's Medicaid, Medicaid Expansion, and LaCHIP programs.

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(1) Mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410

(2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or

(3) email: program.intake@usda.gov

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Second Lining for Neighbors in Need

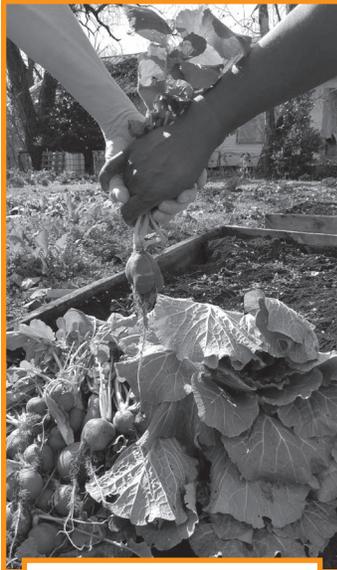
Thanks to the Garden District Neighborhood Foundation for Second Lining for our Neighbors. **This year's event raised 867 pounds of nonperishable food items and \$170 for the Food Bank of Central Louisiana.** We appreciate the food donations to support our neighbors in need — more than 3,573 meals since the event began in 2015.

Community Gardens Are Sprouting Up

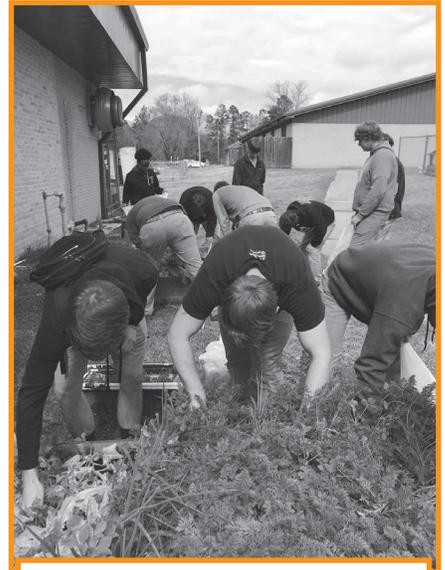
With Help From Volunteers, Students, And The Good Food Project



A student at Mabel Brasher Elementary who has just harvested a radish for the first time.



Community members work together to harvest fresh food at the North Alexandria Community garden.



High school students at Dodson High in Winn Parish harvest from the school garden. Produce grown at the school goes to the food pantry in Winnfield.



Students at NSU Lab School admiring the giant cauliflower they are growing in their school garden.



Kids at Pineville Youth Center thoroughly enjoyed a fresh salad of Buttercrunch Bibb lettuce donated by Gray Walk Farm and greens from the GFP demo garden.



A student in the Special Ed program at Goodpine Middle School in LaSalle parish harvests fresh cauliflower and green onions from the school garden. Students taste the produce in class or take it home.



Two dedicated volunteers at Mary Mother of Jesus Catholic Church in Woodworth maintain the community garden and harvest produce for low-income seniors in the community.



A teacher and her Special Ed students at Nachman Elementary who spent the morning harvesting vegetables they had grown together.

Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive

Saturday, May 11, 2019

Saturday, May 11th marks the 27th anniversary of one of America's great days of giving — the National Association of Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger Food drive.

Letter carriers walk through the community every day, often coming face to face with a 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 from our customers. The donations we collect locally go directly to food pantries in central Louisiana to provide food to people who need our help.

Last year, we collected 71.6 million pounds of food nationally.

Over the past 5 years, the Food Bank of Central Louisiana has collected 258,445 pounds of non-perishable food. The estimated value of that food is \$447,109.

The need for food donations is great. Almost 50 million Americans — 1 in 6 — are unsure where their next meal is coming from. Among them are millions of children, senior citizens, and military veterans.

Our food drive's timing is crucial. Food banks and pantries typically receive the bulk of their donations during the winter holiday season. By springtime, many pantries are depleted, entering the summer low on supplies at a time when many school meal programs are not available to children in need.

Participating in the Letter Carrier Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive is easy. **Just leave a nonperishable food donation in a bag by your mailbox on Saturday, May 11th, before mail delivery, and your letter carrier will do the rest.** Please help us in the fight to end hunger, as we celebrate our 27th anniversary year in America's great day of giving.



LETTER CARRIERS'
FOOD DRIVE
SAT. MAY 11, 2019

HELP FIGHT HUNGER IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

Some local families don't have access to adequate food or nutrition and need your help. Join your Southern Quality Ford Dealers and local food banks in the Ford Peanut Butter Drive.

From now until May 31st, simply donate a jar of peanut butter right here and help spread the love.



Visit FordSpreadTheLove.com for more details.

Help Fight Hunger In Our Communities

Hunger is closer than you think. According to Feeding America, Louisiana and Mississippi rank in the top three states in the country for food insecurity. Food insecurity describes the lack of access to enough food necessary for all members of a household to achieve active, healthy lives.

Your Southern Quality Ford Dealers and local Food Banks throughout Louisiana and southern Mississippi are teaming up to combat food insecurity with the Southern Quality Ford Spread the Love Peanut Butter Drive.

Due to its protein content and long shelf life, peanut butter is an ideal food to help feed those in need. It's extremely versatile and can be eaten anytime of the day for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack. And with more than 90 percent of American households having one or more plastic jars of peanut butter in their pantry, it's easy to donate a jar.

How can you help? Between now and May 31, take a plastic jar of peanut butter to your local Southern Quality Ford Dealer. Then, Southern Quality Ford dealers will distribute the plastic jars to participating local Food Banks who will then make sure those in need get the food they need.