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food for Thought

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From the Executive Director

According to the recent State of Senior Hunger in America research released by the National Foundation to End Hunger, **Louisiana has the highest percentage senior food insecurity rate in the country.** Every day, 10,000 baby boomers turn 65. Many are retiring with little or no money in the bank, due to unforeseen expenses during the economic downturn. In addition to the issues facing our low-income seniors, many of them are also raising their grandchildren and great-grandchildren. **More than 63,498 grandparent households are responsible for their grandchildren who live with them in Louisiana. Twenty six percent (16,954) are living in poverty.**

Over the next several decades, the senior population will continue to grow. **By 2060, the size of the senior population is projected to double.** If the current rate of senior food insecurity does not change, the number of seniors facing hunger will also grow. **Ironically, the senior population has the greatest disparity between those who qualify and those who receive government assistance: only 41 percent of eligible seniors are enrolled in SNAP.**

Food insecure seniors age 60 and older have lower nutrient intakes than food secure seniors in the same age category. The health outcomes for depression, general health, diabetes and Activities of Daily Living limitations are also worse for food insecure seniors.

The Food Bank's Adopt-a-Senior program currently serves 1,515 seniors across the organization's 11-parish service area in Central Louisiana. Seniors in the program receive a minimum of 50 pounds of food per month for a year, which averages to 42 meals per senior box, 504 meals per year.

The average age of the Food Bank's Adopt-a-Senior program participants is 81 and the average income is \$967 per month. Eligibility is limited to those whose income falls below the federal poverty guidelines and whose age is at least 65 or 60 and disabled.

You can help support our local seniors by supporting the Food Bank of Central Louisiana's Adopt-a-Senior Program. For more information about how you can make a difference, please contact the Food Bank at 318-445-2773.

Sincerely,

Jayne Wright-Velez, Executive Director

*We could not feed so
many for so little,
without you.*

Christmas Cheer Food Drive Collects 99,522 Pounds of Food

*Tunica-Biloxi Tribe and KALB-TV
sponsor Food Drive benefitting the
Food Bank of Central Louisiana*



Christmas Cheer volunteers

The results of the 2019 KALB-TV Christmas Cheer Food Drive are complete, and **99,522 pounds of non-perishable food items were collected from Avoyelles, Grant, Natchitoches, Rapides, and Vernon parish schools.** Sponsored by the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana and KALB-TV, 60 local schools participated in the drive to help collect food for the Food Bank of Central Louisiana.

continued on page 4

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Food Bank Commemorates 30 Years of Service to Central Louisiana!

The concept of food banking began in the late 1960s in Phoenix, Arizona, when John van Hengel decided to set up a warehouse to store donated food products for a local soup kitchen. Mr. van Hengel credited his idea to a woman with 10 children and a husband on death row who rummaged for food in bins behind grocery stores. She suggested that what was needed was a place to both deposit food and check it out — like a bank.

The Food Bank of Central Louisiana was conceived when a group of concerned citizens met with Lyman Adams, who had recently moved to the area. Adams had been the director of the food procurement department of the Baton Rouge Food Bank. The group of citizens became the board of directors for the Food Bank, and Adams was installed as the executive director in 1989.

The Food Bank's mission to secure large quantities of food and process it, warehouse it and distribute it to more than 161 partner agencies creates tremendous efficiencies and reduces the overhead of these partner nonprofit organizations. Instead of struggling to locate food and duplicating efforts, these nonprofits — soup kitchens, food pantries, housing for single mothers, schools, and many other nonprofit organizations — can focus on directly assisting those in need.

As part of our 30th anniversary, the Food Bank is creating its first planned giving program and asking individuals to consider including the Food Bank of Central Louisiana in their estate plan. How you include the Food Bank in your estate plans, as a percentage of your estate or a dollar amount, is completely up to you. You might have a will or you might have a trust. Either vehicle works. When you include the Food Bank in your estate plans it creates a legacy of care and compassion, providing hope — feeding hope — for working families and seniors. If you are interested in learning more about our planned giving program, please contact Jayne or Linda at 318-445-2773.



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

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

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Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation



FILL YOUR TANK

The Food Bank of Central Louisiana received \$7,000 from the Enterprise Rent-A-Car Foundation to address food insecurity in central Louisiana. The donation is part of Enterprise's Fill Your Tank program, which launched in October 2016 to mark Enterprise's 60th anniversary by providing \$60 million to fight hunger globally.

Although there is enough food produced to feed the population, one in nine people still go to bed on an empty stomach, according to the World Food Programme. In the U.S. alone, 37 million people face hunger, including more than 11 million children, according to Feeding America. **More information can be found at www.enterprise.com/FillYourTank.**

Good Food Project



The Good Food Project's impact has expanded from the demonstration garden to its current support of more than 75 active school and community garden program sites ...

To accomplish this work GFP set out to partner with the Rapides Parish School Board and to align GFP's teaching and curriculum to the Louisiana Believe's STEM Curriculum.

Now in its second full year of the pilot school program, GFP builds on a 27-lesson curriculum created to compliment the units and scope and sequence of lessons being taught in the Rapides Parish school system. GFP works closely with school administrators and educators to plan, implement, and schedule classroom and school garden activities at Phoenix Academic Magnet Elementary and Pineville Elementary School.

As we look forward to continuing this great work in a new decade, the Food Bank's Good Food Project is excited about the potential for making a difference in the health and well-being of the children we serve, now and for their future, and in fulfilling the Food Bank's mission to "Alleviate Hunger in Central Louisiana."

Born from clay-based soil littered with construction fill material in September 2011, the Good Food Project garden sits on a one-third acre site on the grounds of the Food Bank of Central Louisiana.

Produce from this model garden has been regularly harvested to supplement the diets of Food Bank clients with fresh, nutritious vegetables. The site continues to be used as a living laboratory for garden education classes, school field trips, and for countless individual and group volunteers from the community. Gardeners of various ages and experience levels learn about and practice different organic garden options, and can volunteer to plant, cultivate, and harvest fresh vegetables, fruits and herbs that are distributed to Food Bank clients or local non-profits that serve food to the needy.

Since its start, The Good Food Project's impact has expanded from the demonstration garden to its current support of more than 75 active school and community garden program sites in the eleven parishes served by the Food Bank. **The Project impacts over 25,000 children and adults. These programs teach sustainable gardening, nutrition, and healthy eating options, while providing fresh produce for school children and senior adult participants.**

The results of the organization's 2017 strategic plan revealed that GFP's sustainable gardening program made its greatest strides working with children.



We were so excited to meet Ivy a few days before Christmas. She had been collecting food over the holiday season to help our neighbors in need.

Christmas Cheer Food Drive

continued from page 1

The total amount collected in Avoyelles parish was 15,764 pounds, 7,581 pounds in Grant parish, 5,216 pounds in Natchitoches parish, 45,864 pounds in Rapides parish, and 25,097 pounds in Vernon parish.

The following schools led their parish in donations:

Avoyelles – Lafargue Elementary (3,397 pounds) and **Bunkie High School** (4,649 pounds)

Grant – South Grant Elementary School (2,447 pounds) and **Georgetown High School** (1,907 pounds)

Natchitoches – L.P.Vaughn Elementary School (285 pounds), **Natchitoches Magnet School** (1,585 pounds), and **Natchitoches Central High School** (1,040 pounds)

Rapides – Phoenix Magnet Elementary School (14,145 pounds), **Pineville Junior High** (4,734 pounds), and **Alexandria Senior High School** (3,005 pounds). **Phoenix Magnet Elementary School** also took home the top prize for donating the most pounds per student (35.36 pounds per student).

Vernon – Rosepine Elementary School (6,911 pounds), **Leesville Junior High** (3,034 pounds), and **Rosepine High School** (4,072 pounds).

Seventy-five hundred dollars in prize money from the Tunica Biloxi Indians will be distributed to these schools for their outstanding efforts to help the Food Bank of Central Louisiana.

“We appreciate the continued support of the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe and KALB-TV for sponsoring this food drive,” said Jayne Wright-Velez, executive director. “We would like to thank the students, parents, teachers and school personnel who make this food drive a success.”

“We would also like to thank the sheriff’s departments of Avoyelles, Grant, Natchitoches and Rapides parishes, the city of Natchitoches, the Mari Center staff, Operation We Care, and the many volunteers who helped during the week of the Christmas Cheer Food Drive,” continued Wright-Velez.



Savor the Season Garden Party



The Good Food Project of the Food Bank of Central Louisiana would like to take this time to give special thanks to all those who helped make our Savor the Season Garden Party a great success!

We raised nearly \$11,000 from this year’s event. We sincerely thank the restaurants and chefs who provided a signature dish using ingredients from our community partner, Inglewood Farm and the Good Food Project: Antoon Hospitality Group, Café Desoto, Diamond Grill, Good People Kitchen, Haille’s Hot Tamales, Kitty’s (Wynn) Catering, Southern Creations Catering, and Spirits Food and Friends. Additionally, we thank Harlow’s Bakery, Huckleberry Brewery, Jack’s Liquor, Legal Grounds Coffee, KALB’S Mark Klein, and the Hoochie Digs. Special thanks go to our sponsors: Rapides Regional Medical Center, Cleco, Rapides Soil and Water Conservation District, Healthy Blue, Faircloth Melton Sobel & Bash, LLC, Woodmen Life, CENLA Family Medicine Associates, Kinder Showroom, The Pill Box Pharmacy, Thomas B. Wahlder, and Amerihealth Caritas Louisiana.