

harvest

A NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK



BLUE RIDGE AREA
FOOD BANK

a member of
FEEDING
AMERICA

FEEDING
THE FUTURE

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FEEDING THE FUTURE



We are in new territory.

Even as the reported numbers of the unemployed continue to shrink, the line of individuals we serve stretches farther – from 45 miles last year, to 47 miles in 2015. Last year we provided food to an average of 118,600 people each month – more than in any year save for one, in 2012. Persistent hunger has been one of the surprises of the economic recovery.

So how does an organization like ours plan for such an uncertain future? The Food Bank focused on several important questions during a recent strategic planning process.

- 1** How will we meet the growing needs of clients?
- 2** How will we expand the capacity of our partners – food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and the volunteers and staff who are on the front lines of helping food-insecure families?
- 3** How do we add value in the communities we serve, and help change lives in addition to nourishing them?

A team of board members, Food Bank leadership, and front line staff met to explore answers to these important questions. We convened our partners, and we listened. We researched, debated, discussed, and listened some more.

Our five-year plan centered around five core strategies.

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>1</p> <p>FEED</p> <p>our neighbors in need, providing both basic sustenance and sound nutrition.</p> | <p>2</p> <p>STRENGTHEN</p> <p>our food assistance network of food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters.</p> | <p>3</p> <p>REACH</p> <p>the underserved who are especially vulnerable or who have less access to food than others who are also in need.</p> |
| <p>4</p> <p>PROMOTE</p> <p>healthful eating among families in need.</p> | <p>5</p> <p>MOBILIZE</p> <p>community members and leaders in the fight against hunger.</p> | |

Some of the strategies come as no surprise. Food banks **feed** people; that core mission remains.

But it's not only about what the Food Bank does, but *how* the Food Bank does it.

These priorities, we determined, will drive us in caring for clients and combating persistent hunger.

In addition to feeding our neighbors, the Food Bank seeks to **strengthen** our partners, where volunteers in the trenches are serving those who are waiting in the growing lines at their pantry door.

The Food Bank will extend its leveraging power and **reach** those who are underserved and those who have less access to food than others in their communities.

Providing more nutritious foods is part of the Food Bank's plan to **promote** healthful eating among clients. We know that those who are food insecure tend to experience more chronic diseases.

Finally, the Food Bank has a goal to **mobilize** its community and its leaders in the fight against hunger. We can't do this alone! We will need you and your support – food, funds, volunteers, and advocacy.

The next five years will be challenging, exciting, and, when we are successful, we believe we can say that we helped create a region in which we all want to live – one that is free from hunger.

INVESTING IN OUR PARTNERS

Work to strengthen our network of partners has already begun!

Fifteen partner agencies are now better prepared to accept, store, and distribute fresh fruits and vegetables and other perishable foods to their clients because of new coolers and equipment they received from the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.



Thanks to the addition of a new cooler at Christ Episcopal Church's pantry in Millwood, neighbors in need received a bounty of fresh vegetables in August.

In June the Food Bank was awarded a \$25,000 grant from Feeding America to address infrastructure needs in food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters. Thanks to community donations, we added more than \$34,000 to the total to provide 13 coolers plus other necessary equipment including 6 food scales, 29 thermal blankets for safe transport, 9 thermometers, and a generator.

The impact can be seen across our 25-county region, affecting every part of our service area. Partners that received coolers and other equipment are Natural Bridge Glasgow Food Pantry in Natural Bridge, Salvation Army of Harrisonburg, Loudoun Interfaith Relief in Leesburg, Page One of Page County, Christ Episcopal Church in Millwood, Seven Loaves

Services, C-CAP Front Royal in Front Royal, Adventist Community Services in Winchester, Feeding Greene Food Pantry of Green County, Church of the Living God in Orange, Greenstone on 5th in Charlottesville, Candlelight Outreach in Concord Lynchburg Daily Bread in Lynchburg, Oak Hill Baptist Church in Roseland, and Bedford Church of God, in Bedford.



The Food Bank thanks our construction partners at **Neilsen Builders**

OPEN HOUSE!
 JOIN US
Friday, October 23
4:30pm to 6:00pm
 We'd love to show you around!
 96 Laurel Hill Road
 Verona

A “New” Building; A New Beginning

From form to function – we’re working to make the Food Bank more efficient, more responsive, and better prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities we face today and those we anticipate in the future.

That includes improvements to the facilities from where we distribute millions of pounds of food each year. The most significant of these is a major renovation project launched just over a year ago at our headquarters in Verona.

When the dust cleared, we tripled our space for fresh produce – now we can store the equivalent of three tractor-trailer loads of fruits and veggies at any one time – and

we reclaimed and renovated warehouse space to increase our dry good storage by approximately 170,000 pounds.

Now we can recruit larger groups of volunteers, putting more hands to work to save us money, and we can bring together our network partners for training and education.

In a new Clean Room we can repackage bulk produce and dry goods like pasta and rice; that space addition alone will result in savings of \$25,000 to \$30,000 a year.

The new administrative addition opened-up space for food that was previously crowded

by offices. The entire facility is now accessible to guests in wheelchairs, and will be far more energy efficient.

Renovations were financed with existing cash and reserves funded largely by estate gifts received in recent years. In addition, foundations, businesses and individuals stepped up to contribute more than \$700,000.

Throughout it all, thanks to dedicated staff, volunteers, and partners, our “real” work never ceased. Last year, the Food Bank distributed more food than ever – 24.8 million pounds.

We are truly grateful to the following donors and those not listed here for their generous support (as of Sept 30)

\$1,000 OR MORE

- The Cabell Foundation*
- Genan Foundation*
- Perry Foundation, Inc.*
- Arthur W. Perdue Foundation
- Hunter Smith Family Foundation*
- Marietta M. Morgan and Samuel T. Morgan, Jr. Trust - Bank of America, Trustee*
- Leighton and Kathryn Rexrode Evans
- Dubchansky Family Foundation*
- Agua Fund
- Hilltop Foundation
- Anonymous
- Better Living Foundation
- Charles and Sara Dassance
- Charles L. Keith & Clara S. Miller Foundation
- Prayer Partners
- Round Hill Fund in the Charlottesville Area Community Foundation
- Helen Shickel
- MillerCoors
- Shickel Corporation
- WISE Fund at the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
- Robert Sack and Jannene Shannon
- Michael McKee and Susan Ketron
- Dixie Gas and Oil plus BP Fabric of America Fund
- Lynn and Tim O'Connor
- LD & B Fund at the Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
- Hershey Chocolate of Virginia
- Nancy and Bruce Bowman
- Brenda and Jeffrey Lenhart
- Susan and Michael Myers

\$100-\$999

- Michael Jansen and Sarah Mies
- Raymond Davis, Jr. and Sarah Hadden
- Cheryl Cooper
- Emmanuel Church of the Brethren - Mt. Solon

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- Richard and Barbara Miller
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- Bob Yarbrough
- Horace and Diane Russell
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- Jonna Crigler
- Tony Dorrell
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- David and Karen Hardie
- Beverly Kirsch
- Sue Lessman
- Matthew Lohr
- Donna Phillips and Gerald Monnat
- Sally Moody
- Trisha Nashed
- Dennis and Marie Simon
- David and Karen Wigginton

GIFTS IN KIND

- Blauch Brothers
- CFA Institute
- Grelen Nursery, Inc.
- Myers and Whitesell, Inc.
- Rachel Lilly
- Virginia Tile and Stone

*provided challenge, matching funds



Turning a New Leaf on Hunger Relief

This spring, the Food Bank launched a new initiative – the **Farm Fresh Program** – in partnership with the Shenandoah Valley Produce Auction in Dayton. It’s all part of an effort to improve access to healthier foods for thousands of our vulnerable neighbors in need. In time we hope to expand the program with the help of farmers across our region.

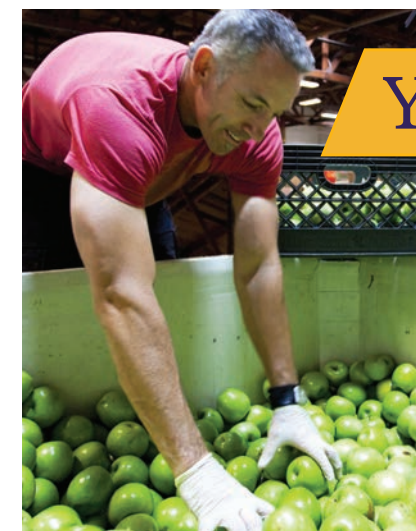
For a struggling family, a diet rich in healthy foods is often out of reach. Limited budgets mean that affordable food tends to be cheap, high-calorie, carbohydrate- and fat-rich foods that contribute to diet-related diseases like obesity, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease.

Our generous friends at Farm Credit of Virginia stepped up early to launch the initiative by contributing a \$25,000 matching gift designed to encourage others to give, too.

So far this season, more than 100,000 pounds of healthy, locally-grown vegetables and fruits have been purchased at a deep discount through the Produce Auction. With a wider variety of options available through the Farm Fresh Program, and from other sources, we will distribute more than 5 million pounds of fresh produce this year to improve access to the nutritious foods that our clients need to live a healthy and active lifestyle.

The future is fresh!

For information about supporting the Farm Fresh Program, contact Todd Lilley, Director of Development at tlilley@brafb.org or (540) 213-8424.



You believe in helping others.

You donate food, funds, and your time to help your hungry neighbors in need—and you are making a difference today.

There’s also a way you can make a difference, tomorrow. Once you have provided for your loved ones in your will, please consider including a gift to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. Your bequest is a lasting testament to a cause that matters to you, and will help us feed future families.

For information about bequests and other future gift options, visit www.brafb.org/plannedgift or contact Karen Ratzlaff at (540) 213-8404 or kratzlaff@brafb.org. All inquiries will remain confidential.

FOCUS ON VOLUNTEERS

THE POWER OF YOUTH



A person doesn't have to be an adult before they can make a big impact. Just ask Ryleigh Katstra of Charlottesville. She began her fight for hunger relief when she was just 7 years old. She saw an article in her local newspaper about a then-16-year-old Nicole Muller, who started a local (now national) food drive called Neighbors-4-Neighbors. Over breakfast an enthusiastic, young Ryleigh made it clear she wanted to help Nicole and that afternoon she rushed home, instantly made her first flyer, and delivered it to people she knew in the neighborhood.

Since that day, Ryleigh – now 13 years old – has organized an annual food drive in her neighborhood of 1500 homes, and she has engaged Charlottesville businesses in her cause. She recently organized the third annual “Bounce for Hunger” event at the local Bounce-N-Play, asking guests to donate canned food in lieu of money for the afternoon bounce session. She also started the annual “Bowling for

Hunger” event at a local bowling alley, and generated more than \$700 for the Food Bank in the event's first year.

How can a person so young harness the power to make an impact for people in need? Ryleigh suspects that youth are sometimes underestimated.

“I think there's a lot of stereotyping about kids,” said Ryleigh. “And some kids believe that they can't have a strong effect on certain things until they're older.”

“If you want to do something meaningful for others, your age shouldn't hold you back.”

Now Ryleigh has agreed to take on even more. Nicole Muller has started graduate school in Washington, DC, so Ryleigh has agreed to lead the Neighbors-4-Neighbors School Food Drive in March 2016. An important piece of the initiative that first inspired Ryleigh was placed into her capable hands, a true testament to the power of youth!

If you want to be sure that your public or private school participates in the 2016 School Food Drive (Charlottesville and surrounding counties), send an email to fooddrive@brafb.org and we'll connect you to Ryleigh.

KID POWER!



Walk the Line for Better Health

At the same time that the Food Bank was writing several nutrition-related strategies into its five-year strategic plan, we began to “promote healthful eating among families in need” with the Walk the Line initiative at several Mobile Food Pantry distribution sites.

Walk the Line is designed to share information and get conversations started about the many choices we each make, every day, that affect our health and well-being, like building a balanced meal, finding fun ways to

stay active, and getting enough sleep to recharge our batteries. Volunteers literally walk the line of cars waiting for food and share information and engage neighbors in discussion about health and nutrition.

“Following the launch of the program, some clients made appointments with their doctors, while others shared that they'd lost a few pounds from incorporating more exercise in their daily routine,” said Katie Harris, partner services coordinator.

“Overall, the feedback has been very positive, and our clients are eager to learn more!”

With diet-related diseases on the rise, and a growing number of food-insecure seniors with age-specific health concerns, sharing and promoting information about health and well-being will become increasingly important going forward. We hope to offer Walk the Line at several of our partner agencies in the coming year.



YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK: Why We Buy Food

There's no doubt about it — food banking has changed.

Donated products still make up most of our inventory, but that mix is steadily changing as manufacturers find ways to reduce errors and waste in their process (and thereby have fewer items available for charitable distribution).

Canned and dry good donations – long the staple of the Food Bank pantry – from national and regional food manufacturers have all but disappeared. While community food drives are essential to our work, the results make up only 3 percent of our total supply.

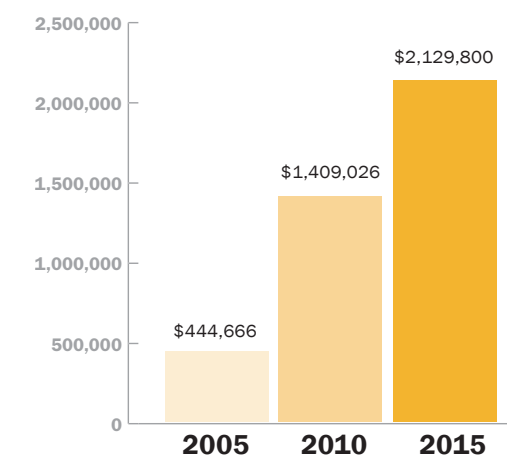
As a result, the Food Bank must purchase products to compensate. We try to keep certain food items on hand at all times because of their nutritional value and appeal to clients, like peanut butter, pastas, and canned vegetables. The only way to do so is to buy the food.

In addition, outreach programs like Family BackPack and Summer Feeding sites require pre-determined menus, which can only be accommodated by purchasing food.

We acquire just enough to keep the pipeline full, but not overwhelm the system. The Food Bank works with reputable vendors who sell us food at competitive prices.

The end result is 20+ million well-rounded meals for our neighbors in need. Last year, 12 percent of the 24.8 million pounds of food we acquired were purchased.

Dollars spent on purchased food*



* Includes food purchased for distribution through partner agencies as well as Outreach Programs

January and July
94,384 meals

Organized by C-Ville Weekly, restaurants in the Charlottesville area offer diners a wide variety of menus and then donate \$1 for every meal purchased to help feed hungry neighbors.

CHARLOTTESVILLE
RESTAURANT
WEEK

Participating Restaurants

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Aberdeen Barn* | Michael's Bistro* |
| Bang!* | Nude Food |
| Bavarian Chef* | Oakhart Social* |
| Bizou* | The Pointe at Omni Hotels & Resorts* |
| Blue Light Grill and Raw Bar* | Orzo Kitchen and Wine Bar, Inc.* |
| Boar's Head Inn | Prospect Hill Plantation Inn* |
| Brookville Restaurant* | Public Fish and Oyster* |
| Burtons Grill of Charlottesville* | Rapture* |
| C & O Restaurant* | Red Pump* |
| Café Caturra | Rocksalt* |
| Clifton Inn | Sal's Pizza #3* |
| da Luca* | Savoir Vivre - Tempo* |
| Downtown Grille* | Shadwells Restaurant* |
| Fig Bistro & Bar* | Shebeen* |
| Fleurie Restaurant* | South Street Brewery* |
| Fry's Spring Station Pizza* | Ten* |
| Hamiltons' at First & Main* | Three Notch'd Grill |
| Himalayan Fusion* | Threepenny Cafe* |
| Horse and Hound | Travinia Italian Kitchen |
| Fossett's at Keswick Hall* | Alhamraa |
| Maya Restaurant* | Zinburger* |
| Melting Pot Charlottesville* | Zocalo |

* indicates they participated in both weeks, January and July, 2015

HUNGER HEROES

We are deeply grateful to the following Hunger Heroes for hosting events that have helped us to provide relief to people in need.

We're also thankful to everyone who supported these events with their time, food, funds and talent.



Legal Food Frenzy
43,637 meals

This friendly annual competition among law firms and legal organizations raised food and funds for individuals and families in need.



Canstruction: Harrisonburg, Lynchburg, and Charlottesville
31,181 meals

These three cities helped feed hungry neighbors while showcasing the creativity of their residents, who assembled unique structures from canned food during an annual competition and food drive.



Music Feeds Us
21,337 meals

Talented musicians concerned about hunger in their communities performed in a free music series that raised donations of food and funds.



Neighbors-4-Neighbors School Food Drive
10,363 meals

This food drive, founded by then-Albemarle teen Nicole Muller, has grown to include 31 public and private schools and school central offices in Charlottesville and surrounding counties.



23rd Annual Stamp Out Hunger
203,365 meals

This national food drive is made possible by the postal workers who collect donated bags of food from homes around the country. 2015 was the most successful effort for the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, generating 18 percent more food than last year. Thank you!



Dominion Foundation
300,000 meals

A donation from the Dominion Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Dominion Resources, provided enough meals to feed more than 3,000 hungry neighbors for one month.



Our Family Foundation
\$320,216

Over the past three years, Our Family Foundation, Giant Food's giving arm, has awarded the Food Bank funds to support the Family BackPack Program during the school year and to distribute Summer Kid Packs.



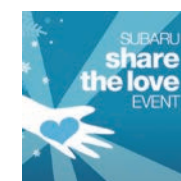
Ameriprise
104 hours, 40,000 meals and 31,250 pounds of produce

During their National Day of Service, Ameriprise employees volunteered at Food Bank warehouses in Charlottesville and Verona. They have also donated funds to nourish hungry neighbors.



Food Lion Feeds
16,666 meals

The grocer partnered with the Food Bank to donate, pack and distribute bags of food to help relieve summer hunger for at-risk children in Charlottesville. In all, Food Lion Feeds has donated more than \$59,000 to the Food Bank in 2015, plus food for distribution.



Valley Subaru
76,724 meals

Valley Subaru selected the Food Bank to participate in Subaru's "Share the Love" program. The annual event allows new car buyers to select one of five charities to receive a \$250 donation per vehicle sold in November and December.



VBA Bank School of Management
29,806 meals and 100 hours

Participants in the VBA Bank School of Management Class of 2015, meeting at UVA, staffed a food drive held at eight grocery stores in Charlottesville on one evening and collected 2,168 pounds of food. For the first time, grocery chain stores joined forces with independently-owned, local stores to collect food for neighbors in need.



Fridays for Food
10,000 meals

Donations are still being tallied from this once-a-month event during Fridays After Five, in partnership with Charlottesville nTelos Wireless Pavilion and Red Light Management in Charlottesville.



Charlottesville Radio Group
\$66,028 in-kind support

Thanks to a grant for free air time from the Charlottesville Radio Group, the Food Bank will be able to inform and mobilize the public about ways to help nourish individuals and families in need.





Thanks to the tireless planning of our media sponsors, WHSV-TV3, Charlottesville Newsplex, iHeart Radio and Monticello Media, the annual Stuff A Truck event generated **35,000 meals** for food-insecure neighbors throughout the Blue Ridge area.

We feel fortunate to have the support of media organizations who believe in caring for those in need in their communities.

Together, we can solve hunger.



THANK YOU!



THE BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK'S NEW WEBSITE

Coming This Fall - at www.brafb.org

Expect a new look, more resources for our partner agencies, and more ways for online visitors to keep up with important news from the Food Bank! The improvements will help us raise awareness of our cause in the Blue Ridge area, and will make it easier for our friends and partners to engage in the fight to end hunger.



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Growth for Good Reason

Recently I was talking with Jim Scrivener, manager of our location in Lynchburg, and he mentioned that a number of food pantries in his neck of the woods are reporting a surge in people seeking help for the first time. People who have been unemployed a long while, piecing together odd jobs, or recently laid off are just now making their way through the unfamiliar territory of charitable assistance, six years after the "official" end of the Great Recession.

It's not just Lynchburg – other partners scattered across our service area are observing the same phenomena. To be sure, some communities and some community residents are faring better than others. But the surprise of the economic recovery continues to be a rise in hunger.

Last year we provided food to an average of 118,600 people each month – more than in any year save for one, in 2012. Times are still hard, especially for workers without the skills necessary to compete in increasingly technical or specialized fields. Factory jobs aren't what they used to be, and service sector jobs paying close to minimum wage can't support a family.

Sadly, we don't see this trend turning around anytime soon. The labor market is going through fundamental and perhaps irreversible changes. CNBC recently reported that one third of American jobs are now freelance positions without the reliability and benefits of full-time employment. And while that might suit highly compensated, in-demand professionals, where does this new "sharing economy" leave unskilled workers? Too often, in line at a food pantry.

So when you read in these pages about our growth – renovations and expansion of our facilities, investments in our partner agencies, increased appeals to donors – please know that, unfortunately, it's for good reason. And, know it comes with a great deal of gratitude to those who make it possible, including you.



With gratitude,

Michael McKee

Michael McKee, CEO

Mr. McKee has recently been named Chair of the Board of the Federation of Virginia Food Banks.

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Verona, VA 24482



BRANCH LOCATIONS

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F: 434.296.9621

Lynchburg Area Branch

501 12th Street, Suite B
Lynchburg, VA 24504-2527
P: 434.845.4099
F: 434.845.6153

Lord Fairfax Area Branch

1802 Roberts Street
Winchester, VA 22604-2342
P: 540.665.0770
F: 540.722.4217

GET INVOLVED

For more event details, visit our News and Events page at brafb.org, or call 540.248.3663.

October

9th Annual Virginia Hunger Symposium

Blue Ridge Community College will host events and activities that educate and promote awareness about hunger across central and western Virginia. This year's symposium will take place Oct. 23 to 29 and the theme is the Hunger Games. Featured events include an Empty Bowl Dinner on October 29 at 6 pm and a Chopped Cook-Off with local chefs.



Scouting for Food

Area Boy Scouts will be sweeping neighborhoods for food donations during their largest annual food drive. If you live in the Shenandoah Valley or Charlottesville, leave your bag of food at your doorstep on Oct. 24. If you live in the Winchester area, the Scouts will pick up your food contributions on Nov. 14.



DCCU Shred Days

Bring your personal documents and have them securely shredded by DuPont Community Credit Union – all while helping hungry neighbors. Bring non-perishable food items to DCCU locations throughout the Valley in October. Check our website for dates for each location.

November

Holiday Food Drive/Shop To Stop Hunger

NBC29, Z95.1 and The Daily Progress ask that you join them in nourishing neighbors in need during the winter holidays. Just drop non-perishable food donations in marked Food Bank barrels at Kroger stores in Staunton, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg and Charlottesville from Nov. 19 to Dec. 18.



December

Christmas At Augusta Stone

Join us for the 19th annual benefit Christmas concert on Monday, Dec. 7 at Augusta Stone Church in Fort Defiance. Enjoy acoustic and folk holiday music from talented performers. Freewill offering.



Twelfth Night Concert

Savor the sounds of the holiday season one last time with beautiful choir music. Choirs from the Staunton Church of the Brethren and Olivet Presbyterian Church will perform in their 15th post-holiday concert on Sunday, Jan. 10.

