

harvest

A NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

Called To Serve

Helping Vulnerable Veterans

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Food Banking Reimagined

Introducing Our New Look

page 4



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK

A member of
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



..... CALLED *to* SERVE THOSE WHO SERVE US



Edward

Edward is a Vietnam veteran. A Lynchburg resident, he struggles with health challenges, but thanks to the Food Bank's Reach Program, he doesn't struggle to put food on his table. In fact, the food he needs is delivered to his doorstep.

"I'm thankful for the food I receive," Edward said. "I get produce like cabbage and with that I can make stews and soups. We also have great neighbors who are good cooks and they sometimes prepare meals for us."

Edward served his country for 30 years of active and reserve duty, directing Navy airplanes. After he retired from the military he worked for GE.

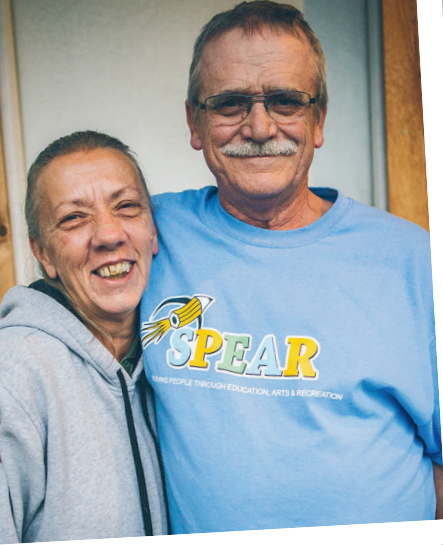
A heart attack changed everything. At that time, living in his native town of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Edward was prescribed blood thinners. Suddenly, he couldn't endure the cold climate there. Florida was too hot, but Virginia was just right.

Today, Edward isn't supposed to walk more than 250 feet. His heart condition leaves him tired. He relies on public transportation and friends to get around the city.

His only source of income is his disability payments. He lives with his companion of 20 years and enjoys the comradery of fellow veterans. They gather each Friday at noon in downtown Lynchburg for the Monument Terrace Troop Rally.

The vets who gather there have become a big source of support. "They'll do anything for you," said Edward, who is concerned about the suicide rate among veterans. "When your health goes down, it changes your life."

Twenty percent of all American households requiring food assistance report at least one veteran living in the household.



Edwin, his wife, Deb, and their three grandchildren.

Edwin, another veteran, has also personally experienced how health challenges can dramatically affect his quality of life.

“I’ve worked my whole life. I’m a Marine Corps veteran and was a concrete finisher for 30 years. Work makes me feel good — like I’ve accomplished something and helped someone at the end of the day,” he said. “It was truly devastating when one day I woke up and couldn’t move my shoulders without extreme pain. The doctors said they could help me manage the pain, but I’d never be able to work again.”

Living on a fixed, disability income is a struggle for Edwin and his wife, Deb, who works full time as an inventory specialist. Even with her income, they barely make ends meet.

The couple moved in with their daughter and her three young sons, and Deb’s mother, Jerry.

“It takes all of us pooling what we have just to make rent. After the bills are all paid, there’s hardly enough left over to buy food,” said Edwin.

“That’s why we’re so grateful for the pantry. It helps so much, it’s just amazing. Without it, I’m not sure we’d have enough to feed us all,” said Edwin. “We’d have to skip meals so that our grandsons could eat. We definitely wouldn’t have the quality of food we have now, that’s for sure.”

The couple also volunteers for the pantry that helps them.

“We may not have a lot right now, but I believe that you can give back even if you are in need yourself.”



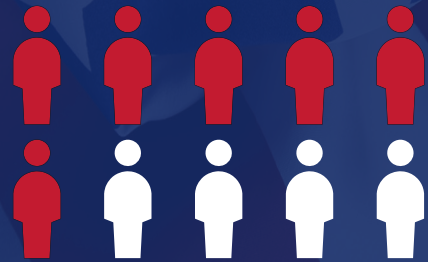
To learn more about the Reach Program for people 60 years and older, visit our website at brafb.org/reach.

To find a food pantry near you, visit brafb.org/find-help.

CHEW ON THIS

Almost 6 in 10 Americans can’t afford a \$500 or \$1,000 emergency.

For those who make very little, imagine how hard it is to save for emergencies. Where would you turn for help if you couldn’t make ends meet?



According to a 2016 Bankrate survey, most Americans (almost 60%) don’t have much money on reserve for a rainy day.

An unexpected car repair bill, an invoice from an emergency room visit, or the sudden need for a home repair would leave most in a financial crisis.

A lack of savings can result in the use of various strategies when an emergency strikes. The Food Bank and our partners stand ready to help families when unexpected tough times result in food insecurity.

Food Banking Reimagined: *Introducing Our New Look*

Like most food banks across the country, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is evolving.

We have to. The need for food has remained well above pre-recession levels for 10 years. The people who turn to us for help are no longer looking for one-time, emergency assistance – they need help more frequently, sometimes monthly, when they just can't make ends meet. And importantly, the food available to us and what we want to distribute has changed too – think fresh, think locally-grown, think healthy options.

With all those changes comes the need to communicate with clarity our direction and focus in the communities we serve and to the people who sustain our work.

We have refined several statements about who we are:

Our **VISION** is that everyone has enough to eat.

Our **MISSION** is to provide nourishing food to our neighbors in need through vibrant community partnerships and passionate public support.

Our **CORE BELIEFS** are that hunger is unacceptable, that everyone deserves access to enough food, that food sustains life and nourishes health, and that we are called to serve neighbors in need without judgement.

And in this issue of Harvest, we are proud to unveil our new logo, representing our evolution.



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK

Thank you for joining us on this
journey for the last 37 years.

Everyone should have enough to eat.



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK

A member of
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Our new logo represents our evolution and our future.
Read more on the reverse and on page 4.

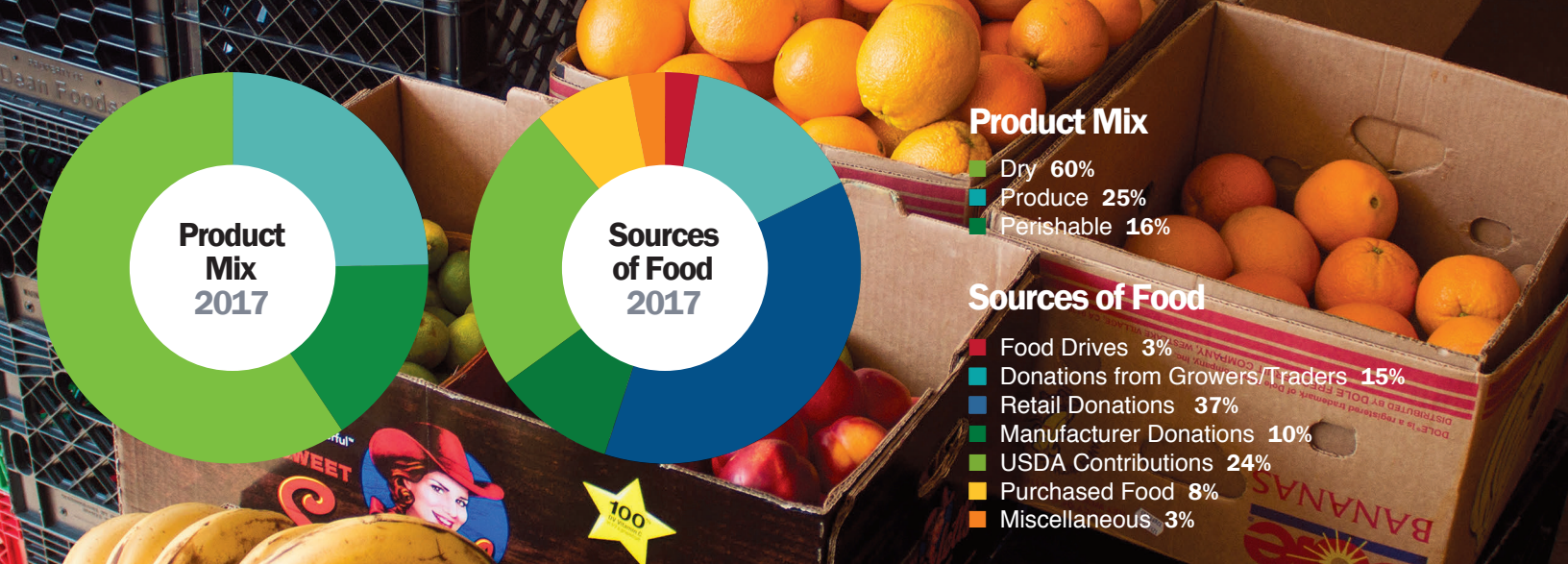
A Brighter Tomorrow

With the changes in food banking comes the need to communicate with clarity our direction and focus.

Our new logo reflects the impact the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank makes in the lives of neighbors served, and conveys our sense of optimism for a brighter tomorrow — one in which everyone has enough to eat. Elements come together to create a sunrise — a symbol of a bright future, warmth, and hope.

The apple makes a clear connection to health and nutrition, and our work to ensure no one goes hungry.

The layers of land and sky are a way to bring together Virginia's rolling hills, vast farmland, and the Blue Ridge Mountains — and they symbolize the numerous partnerships that make the Food Bank successful.



Product Mix 2017

Sources of Food 2017

Product Mix

- Dry 60%
- Produce 25%
- Perishable 16%

Sources of Food

- Food Drives 3%
- Donations from Growers/Traders 15%
- Retail Donations 37%
- Manufacturer Donations 10%
- USDA Contributions 24%
- Purchased Food 8%
- Miscellaneous 3%

A Healthy Approach

Ensuring Consistency, Variety, and Good Nutrition

You may think the logistics of food banking are fairly simple. Food in – food out. Right?

Ensuring we have the right foods in the right quantities at the right times is complex and depends on many moving parts.

Greg Knight, food procurement manager, handles this balancing act. He’s in charge of acquiring enough food to stock partner agencies – pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters – while also making sure we have enough to supply direct service programs, like the Family Backpack program or Mobile Food Pantry.

Ultimately, it all ends up on the tables of neighbors in need of sustenance.

“Our goals are to have fruits and vegetables, proteins, grains and something kids like to eat that is also nutritious,” said Knight, who works with various suppliers to acquire donations and low-cost food with high nutritional integrity.

That task is getting harder. According to Knight, efficiencies mean fewer donations from manufacturers.

“The food industry has sophisticated forecasting tools to help them decide how much food they need to produce,” said Knight. “Also, manufacturers often sell excess product to discount grocery chains, which means less food is available for donation to food banks.”

As a result, the Food Bank increasingly purchases food. Knight decides when to acquire a particular item based on demand from our partner agencies.

“For example, potatoes move out of our warehouse every two weeks, consistently, year-round, so I know we should keep a certain quantity of potatoes all the time,” said Knight.

Knight also manages costs.

Knight works hard to ensure consistency and variety in the Food Bank’s inventory, helping individuals, families, children and seniors access the food they need and eat most often.

Do Food Pantries Buy Donated Food from the Food Bank?

No.

But our partners do share in the cost of shipping and handling 25 million pounds of food per year. Here’s their share of the expense:

Donated Product –

No charge for produce, bakery, baby products, short shelf-life dairy, or water. All other food, including meat, is 5 cents per pound.

Purchased Product – They partially reimburse the Food Bank at 75% of our cost.

We can make this food available to partners at such a low rate thanks to unrestricted donations to the Food Bank.

A New Year's Resolution for Giving

Make a difference today, and tomorrow

Food Bank donors choose to help people they never meet; they decide to be a force for good in their own communities; and they work together to support their neighbors in need, regardless of changes in our economy or elected leadership.

“Our donors have generously helped their neighbors through the worst recession in modern history, and supported the Food Bank at a time of unprecedented growth,” reflects Karen Ratzlaff, chief philanthropy officer.

“We deeply appreciate your vote of confidence.”

If your 2018 resolution is to contribute toward the kind of healthy, thriving community you want to live in, here are two ways to give that might appeal to you.

1

GIVE MONTHLY: Join the Supper Club

Faithful monthly donors provide a stable foundation of income for the Food Bank and see our budget through leaner months.

Members of the Supper Club choose the convenience of monthly gifts paid automatically by bank draft (ACH), credit card, or bank bill pay.

It's easy and flexible for you — and reliable and cost-effective for us.

And the impact adds up! Just \$25 donated each month means 1,200 meals can be provided; \$50 per month helps us provide 2,400 meals over a year.

To learn more, visit brafb.org/supperclub.

2

PLAN YOUR LEGACY WITH A GIFT IN YOUR WILL: Join the Will to End Hunger Society

When you include the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank in your will or estate plan, you help ensure that your neighbors — and your children's and grandchildren's neighbors — will have access to nutritious food, when they need it.

Joining *The Will to End Hunger Society* is as simple as letting us know that you've included a gift for Food Bank in your will or that you've established some other form of future gift.

Let us know your intention by May 31, 2018 and you will be considered a **charter member** of the new society. Requests for anonymity are honored.

Visit brafb.org/plannedgift for estate gift ideas you might consider, or contact Karen Ratzlaff at (540) 213-8404 or kratzlaff@brafb.org.

THANK YOU

You helped us make
Giving Tuesday a Giving FoodDay!

On November 28, with help from a group of faithful friends who matched the first \$5,000 donated online on Giving Tuesday, you contributed \$39,812.

That's 159,249 meals generated
for hungry neighbors, in one day!

Giving FoodDay

Find Your Spot to Serve



Volunteers tell us they donate their time for a variety of reasons, but the most cited reason is the great feeling they get from helping neighbors – especially with something as essential as providing nourishing food.

Volunteer opportunities abound in the Food Bank’s warehouses and through outreach programs like the Mobile Food Pantry or Reach program. We also have Specialized Volunteer needs and are seeking skills like translating, writing, photography, and more. Visit brafb.org/volunteer to see how it all works and where we need help.

But did you know that volunteers are also needed at our partner agencies? Your local pantry, soup kitchen, or shelter could use your help, too! Use the Pantry Locator at brafb.org to find a location near you, and reach out to see what they need.

FLUVANNA COUPLE DONATES THEIR TIME TO HELP THEIR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

In Fluvanna county, Munro Rateau is a local legend. When he retired as Fluvanna County High School’s head basketball coach, Rateau had led the boys’ team to 525 wins and two state championships.

Just about everybody knows him – which is why he takes a low-key approach to volunteering. Rateau and his wife, Sharon, have been picking up food for Beaver Dam Baptist Church’s pantry since 2009.

They prefer to work behind the scenes, and their volunteer jobs as drivers are perfect for their post-retirement years. Two or three times a month, the Rateaus pick up food at the Food Bank’s Thomas Jefferson branch, and then stock Beaver Dam’s pantry shelves.



“We’re happy to help out,” Munro said. “There is a need, and we feel like it’s a ministry we can help with. These are our neighbors and so when someone needs help, we are happy to do that.”

Beaver Dam is centrally located between Fluvanna, Albemarle and Louisa. The pantry serves between 100 and 170 people a month – more during the winter months.

Local media outlets are immensely valuable Food Bank partners in the fight against hunger. They foster understanding through storytelling. They sponsor food drives to feed our communities’ most vulnerable. They inform minds and change hearts.



Thank you for helping us mobilize the public to take action against hunger!

HUNGER ★ HEROES ★

We are deeply grateful to the following Hunger Heroes who have helped us provide relief to people in need. We're also thankful to everyone who supported these events and initiatives with their time, food, funds and talent.



Giant Food

78,932 meals + 243,000 bags

Thanks to their financial donation, hungry neighbors will have a meal to enjoy during the difficult winter months, and the bag donation helps us deliver food through the Mobile Food Pantry.



J & E Berkley Foundation

42,000 meals

They're helping us feed rural neighbors served by the Mobile Food Pantry.



Woodforest Charitable Foundation

44,000 meals

With a donation to the Family BackPack program these faithful partners help us feed children and their families at risk of hunger.



Misty Mountain

Music Festival

21,080 meals

The Grammy goes to the dedicated organizers of this fun event! For seven years, the 2-day festival has featured bluegrass, country and folk performances — all to benefit hungry families in need.



Campbell Soup Company

21,488 meals

Their gift means we can warm empty bellies this winter.



21st Annual Christmas at Augusta Stone

29,860 meals

Feeding the soul and the body, gorgeous acoustic and folk holiday music generates nourishing food for people in need during the holiday season.



17th Annual Twelfth Night

27,480 meals

Choirs from the Staunton Church of the Brethren and Olivet Presbyterian Church shared their gifts while attendees shared their generosity.



Holiday Food Drive

10,167 meals

Kroger stores partnered with NBC29, iHeart Media, and Lite Rock Z95.1 to ask shoppers to fill our food barrels at stores in Waynesboro, Staunton, Charlottesville, Harrisonburg, Lexington and the Lynchburg area.



Shop to Stop Hunger

Charlottesville • 16,598 meals

Staunton • 26,104 meals

Armed with grocery carts and gumption, local celebrities raced to see who could raise the most money and collect the most food! Special thanks to **Home Instead Senior Care** and **Kroger** for co-sponsoring the supermarket sweep in both areas.

SIGN UP FOR OUR E-NEWSLETTERS

We're ready to launch several email newsletters, each with a specific function. We encourage you to visit our website at brafb.org and indicate which you'd like to receive. All are welcome!

**Be informed and
raise your voice!**

brafb.org/newslettersignup

COME TO THE TABLE

News and announcements for anyone interested in the Food Bank and our efforts to solve hunger.

GENEROUS HELPINGS

News and information for Food Bank volunteers.

ADVOCACY ALERTS

Join the community of friends raising their voices on behalf of food-insecure neighbors.

PARTNERING WITH PURPOSE

News and information for the food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters partnering in our network.

Other Ways to Stay Connected



Follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.
Share our posts and extend our reach.

Volunteer

Learn how you can make a difference with a gift of time.
Volunteer opportunities are all posted online at brafb.org/volunteer.



Virginia Hunger Symposium

26,787 meals

Hosted by Blue Ridge Community College, this series of informative and engaging activities helps raise awareness as well as much needed food and funds for neighbors in the region.



Red Nose Day Fund

40,000 meals

This national campaign created by Comic Relief Inc. was created to make a difference in the lives of children in need. Their donation will support Family BackPack programs in Winchester and Loudoun County.



Scouting for Food

83,146 meals

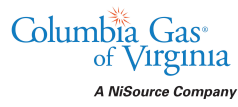
Local Scouts swept through communities in Winchester, the Shenandoah Valley, and Charlottesville collecting donated bags of food from the doorsteps of generous neighbors.



Green Bean Challenge

33,880 meals

The Kwasnick family – avid road cyclists – started an annual road race and challenged friends and relatives to pledge a can of green beans for every mile they travel. When they learned we could provide 4 meals for every \$1 raised, the focus changed to a fund drive. This year, 27 riders covered 104 miles and rode through mountain ranges as high as 11,000 feet to raise money and meals for the Food Bank.



Columbia Gas (NiSource Charitable Foundation)

40,000 meals

A social media campaign, Share to Care, organized by Columbia Gas of Virginia and their parent company NiSource, helped raise awareness and feed hungry neighbors.



Perdue — Care for Those in Need Matches Their Commitment to Agriculture \$25,000 for Virginia produce + 165,222 pounds

Perdue Farms' motto reads "We believe in responsible food and agriculture ®." The Franklin P. and Arthur W. Perdue Foundation – the giving arm of Perdue Farms – turned their belief into action this year with a significant, lead gift to the Farm Fresh Fund. The fund helps the Food Bank provide a wide variety of fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits to hungry neighbors in need, while supporting Virginia growers, too.

Perdue's challenge gift to the Farm Fresh Fund doubles the value of support from other donors, with a \$1 for \$1 match. It's a philanthropic weapon in the fight against hunger and in support of local agriculture.

Perdue Farms has also donated a huge quantity of needed proteins for distribution through our network this year.

Thank you, Perdue, for helping us fuel the potential of individuals and families who struggle with hunger.

For more information about the Farm Fresh Fund, visit brafb.org/farmfresh.



Blue Ridge
AREA
FOOD
BANK

Meet the Team

Serving Your Community

Even from the early days of our founding in 1981, it was clear that the most efficient way to effectively serve 12,000 square miles in central and western Virginia – encompassing 25 counties and 8 cities – was to establish a branch system with regional locations.

The Food Bank's headquarters and administrative functions are located in Verona, where the operations and agency relations team also works with partner agencies in the central Shenandoah Valley, while staff located at distribution hubs in Lynchburg, Winchester, and Charlottesville serve the counties around each city.



Serving the entire 25-county region, including partners and programs in the central Shenandoah Valley area, the Food Bank operations and agency relations team includes Lyn Hall, Bobby Johnson, Jimmy Deyo, Eric Callison, Susan Wolfe, and Joe Simpson. Not pictured: Faye Johnson, Annette Peters, David Farrish and Robin Swecker. Administrative offices are also centrally located in Verona. Location: 96 Laurel Hill Road, Verona.



Serving the Lord Fairfax area, the Food Bank operations and agency relations team includes Jarret Tomalesky, Cynthia Holley, Cody Pruitt, James Siver, and Kim Johnson. Location: 1802 Roberts Street, Winchester.



Serving Lynchburg and surrounding counties, the Food Bank operations and agency relations team includes James Quade, Debbie Trent, Karen Reynolds, Mike Parrish, Kevin Hammond, and Kristi West. Location: 501 12th Street, Lynchburg.



Serving the Thomas Jefferson area, the Food Bank operations and agency relations team includes Joe Caputi, Wanda Cabell, Shawn Lamb, David Batts, and Robert Wadden (not pictured). Location: 1207 Harris Street, Charlottesville.

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Chief Philanthropy Officer

An Unexpected Gift

It's easy to care about a hungry child. But what about her mom and dad? How compassionate are we toward the parents, especially if their family's plight is the result of their own, poor choices?

It's a tough question. We Americans are unique in the world for the measure of our philanthropy, but we also prize individual responsibility and self-sufficiency. We understand when people are trying hard but appear down their luck, yet our compassion can fall short when they seem to bring misfortune upon themselves.

A core belief at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is that we are called to serve people in need without judgement.

Whatever problems our neighbors may have, whatever reasons they have for seeking food, no matter what mistakes they have made, we are compelled to help. We recognize that food comes first. And that someone who is hungry isn't going to become a better parent, a better worker, or a better citizen on an empty stomach.

Through empathy we suspend judgement, we connect with people who are truly hurting, and - in the process - we experience a deeper sense of purpose and value. Giving is humanizing. It makes us feel more whole.

Through your empathy and support of the Food Bank, you have connected with complete strangers through a simple and timeless way - by sharing a meal. I hope that experience is as nurturing for you as it is for those we serve.

Thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McKee". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Michael McKee
Chief Executive Officer



Blue Ridge Area FOOD BANK



NON-PROFIT ORG
POSTAGE & FEES
PAID
BLUE RIDGE AREA
FOOD BANK

PO Box 937
Verona, VA 24482



OUR MISSION is to provide nourishing food to our neighbors in need through vibrant community partnerships and passionate public support.

BRANCH LOCATIONS

Shenandoah Valley Area Branch & Headquarters
PO Box 937
96 Laurel Hill Road
Verona, VA 24482-0937
P: 540.248.3663
F: 540.248.6410

Thomas Jefferson Area Branch
1207 Harris Street
Charlottesville, VA 22903-5319
P: 434.296.3663
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 Events page at brafb.org, or call 540.248.3663

March 5-23

Neighbors-4-Neighbors School Food Drive

Young people join forces in the fight against hunger! This annual drive organizes public and private school students in the greater Charlottesville area to help their hungry neighbors. **Calling hunger champions!** If you want your school to be part of the effort, send an email by February 15 to schoolfooddrives@gmail.com.



April 18

Great Community Give

Harrisonburg and Rockingham County residents will join together for a great day of online giving to support area nonprofits, including the Food Bank.

May 12

Stamp Out Hunger

Leave non-perishable food donations at your doorstep on Saturday, May 12, to help stamp out hunger in the Blue Ridge area. This is the Food Bank's largest annual food drive. Local, dedicated postal carriers make it happen, along with volunteers and food donors. Last year, one postal carrier from Harrisonburg whose route turned up no food decided to purchase bulk food for donation with his own money. **The 2017 drive brought in 259,578 meals, and earned Waynesboro carriers a national award.**



July 13-23

Charlottesville Restaurant Week

Calling all foodies and non-foodies, \$1 from every meal served will help the Food Bank build capacity in local food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters.

CHARLOTTESVILLE
RESTAURANT
WEEK

April 2018

Canstruction Lynchburg: April 14-23

Canstruction Harrisonburg: April 6

These cities will showcase their citizens' creativity as they assemble unique sculptures made from canned food and raise awareness about hunger during this annual competition and food drive.



Music Feeds Us

This classical music series has generated more than 140,000 meals since its inception. Help neighbors in need by bringing canned food or monetary donations to the free concerts in Staunton and Charlottesville. Visit our website in March for more details.



June 4-22

Valley Businesses Give Back

This annual food and fund drive is a friendly competition between businesses and organizations in the Shenandoah Valley to help stock the shelves of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank during the summer months. If you want your company to participate, email jclarkrobertson@brafb.org.



September 2018

Hunger Action Month

One in every 11 people in the Blue Ridge continues to suffer from hunger, but together we can make a real difference. Join us in this national movement to raise awareness about food insecurity during Hunger Action Month. Check our website in August.

