

harvest

A NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

Diagnosing Hunger

page 2



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK

A member of
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Rx

for Hungry Kids

*Pediatricians Are
Helping to Fight Hunger*



“This problem is so common and prevalent in our patient population—we see it every day.”

— Liz Ramírez-Weaver, LCSW,
a clinical social worker at
UVA Children’s Hospital

Kids who don’t have enough to eat are at risk for a host of challenges: health problems, developmental delays, and difficulty in school. Those who serve on the front lines of children’s health are well positioned to aid the fight against hunger.

Child hunger is widespread, affecting more than 12 million U.S. children. One in eight children in the Blue Ridge area doesn’t know where their next meal is coming from. Pediatricians can play a greater role in both identifying food insecurity and advocating for more effective safeguards.

The Birdsong General Pediatrics Clinic at the University of Virginia Children’s Hospital, for example, screens for food insecurity through the “Safe Environment for Every Kid” (SEEK) questionnaire, administered at each child’s annual checkup. Providers also look for signs of malnourishment in infants or



How can pediatricians get started?

1. **Educate and train medical staff** about food insecurity, how to administer screening tools, and how to intervene if needed.
2. **Schedule regular screenings** during annual checkups or anytime food insecurity is suspected.
3. **Add screening to the workflow**, such as during registration or intake.
4. **Show sensitivity** by screening all patients, regardless of background.

Source: Food Research & Action Center, *Addressing Food Insecurity: A Toolkit for Pediatricians*

For more information about pediatricians' role in improving food access for kids and recommended screening tools for their practices, visit brafb.org/DoctorsScreen

children who aren't gaining weight as expected — and in children struggling with obesity.

When patients are identified as lacking adequate food or formula, UVA providers address families' unique circumstances and point them to community resources that offer relief.

"There's often shame and stigma attached to not having food or not having *enough* food," says Ramírez-Weaver. "This tool allows us to engage families in a way that is safe for them."

Pediatricians also must be prepared to offer more detailed help than they might assume. The effects of food insecurity can last a lifetime. One local doctor treated a successful young mother. When advised to

provide a healthy diet to her growing baby, she asked for more information, explaining, "I don't know how much food is enough for a child! I didn't have the food I needed, growing up."

The Food Bank operates several child nutrition programs aimed at closing the hunger gap, including Kids Café, Family BackPack, Summer Kid Packs and Summer Feeding, and the Neighborhood Produce Market. Partner food pantries are a local source of healthy foods, too. Local pediatricians can connect families to the Food Bank to access appropriate resources.

"We are bravely opening Pandora's box by asking families questions about this difficult subject every day," says Ramírez-Weaver. "When you open that door, you need to offer support."

When Company Values Align with Hunger Relief

Business leaders can bring energy and attention to the fight to solve hunger, and often do. The Food Bank is grateful to host corporate volunteer groups, and each year we benefit from many financial and food donations generated by customers and associates of local businesses, large and small.

Devils Backbone Brewing Company, based in Lexington and Nelson County, is one example of a company demonstrating its commitment to creating healthier communities.

“Philanthropy is core to who we are—it’s in our DNA,” says Elizabeth Tual, corporate social responsibility manager.

Devils Backbone has worked closely with the Food Bank and its partner agencies for many years. Its tradition of giving is guided by the Heartland Initiative—a community impact program inspired by its corporate mission and values, and designed by employees.

The company has found many creative ways to support the Food Bank. For example, last fall Devils Backbone chefs developed healthy recipes using ingredients typically distributed at Mobile Food Pantries. They supported the distribution of recipe cards to clients. During the holiday season, Devils Backbone teamed up with Blue Point Brewing Company to create a special brew, “Karma Points” to fight hunger. That partnership raised funds to provide more than 130,000 meals. And the company is providing financial support to implement a Client Insights initiative in the Food Bank network.

“With our company’s success, my wife Heidi and I have been able to focus more on the needs of members of our communities,” says co-founder and CEO Steve Crandall. “Adequate and nutritious food is the basis of any person’s success to move forward. We appreciate all the work and time our food pantry and food bank angels give to eliminate hunger in our region.”



Devils Backbone associates have volunteered for Mobile Food pantries, packed boxes for seniors, and staffed backpacks for school children.



“Philanthropy is core to who we are—it’s in our DNA.”

– Elizabeth Tual, corporate social responsibility manager
Devils Backbone Brewing Company

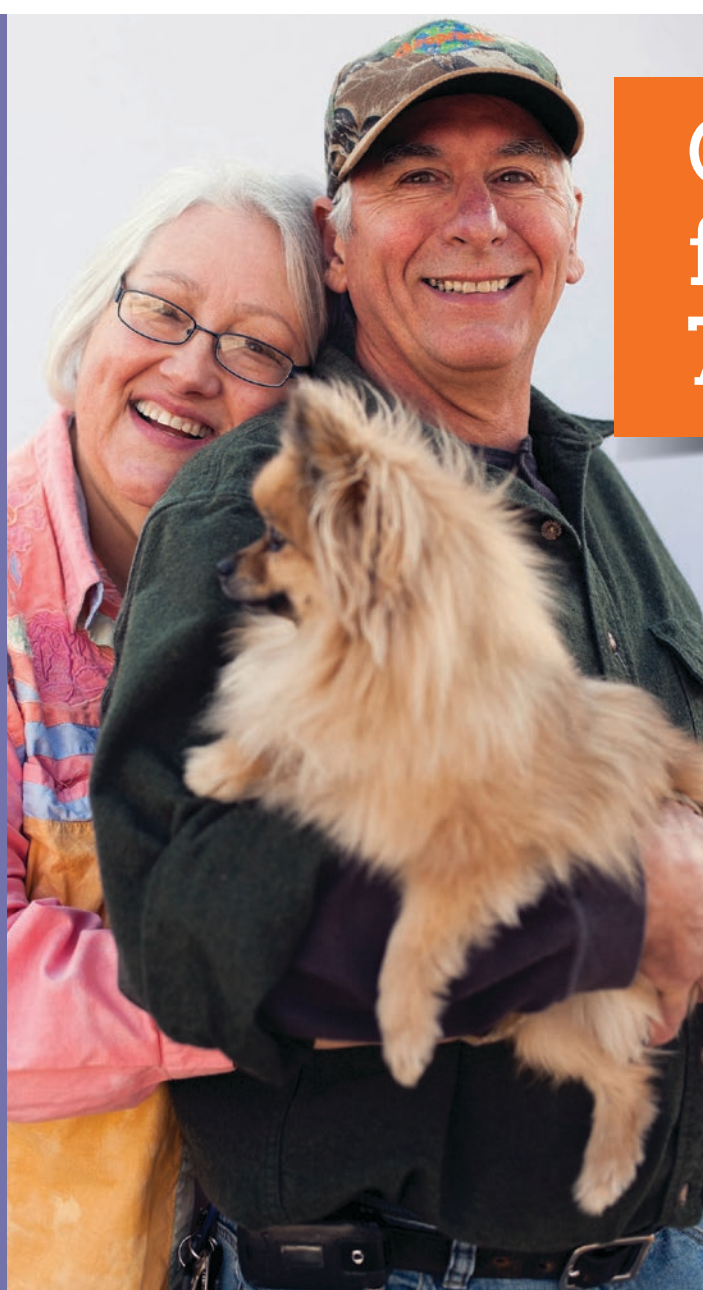


Are you and your employees concerned about hunger in your community?

Here's how your company can help:

- **Make a gift** and we can publicly recognize your business as a partner.
- **Organize** or **sponsor** a special event to raise awareness and funds
- **Sponsor** a distribution to feed hungry families in your community
- **Plan** an offsite retreat and volunteer experience for your team
- **Host** a fund or food drive

For more ideas and information, please visit www.brafb.org/business-partners or call **540.213.8404**.



Great news for those age 70½ or older!

You can donate to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank directly from your Individual Retirement Account (IRA).

By making your gift with a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) – including all or part of your required minimum distribution – you can reduce your taxable income and potentially your tax burden.

For every \$1 you contribute to the Food Bank, you can help us provide 4 meals.

For more information, contact your financial advisor or the company managing your IRA, visit our website at brafb.org/give, or call Karen Ratzlaff, Chief Philanthropy Officer, at 540.213.8404.



New Mobile Food Pantry Serves Northern Rockingham County

Timberville, Virginia has been added to the Food Bank’s growing list of Mobile Food Pantry destinations. There are now nine mobile pantry sites throughout our service area.

“We identify rural areas where we know the need for food is great, but the access is low,” says Michelle Hesse, director of agency relations and programs. “Our partners offer valuable support to create sites where people feel safe and comfortable going for assistance.”

Since April 2018, the Plains District Community Center, a facility of Rockingham County Parks and Recreation, has hosted the Timberville mobile pantry. Martin’s Family Foundation – the charitable giving arm of Martin’s stores – has committed \$80,000 to fund all mobile pantry sites in the central Shenandoah Valley area for two years, including Bath and Highland counties and Timberville.

There are numerous volunteer opportunities at all mobile pantry sites, as well as with the Neighborhood Produce Market – a partnership between the Food Bank and The Reading Road Show/Gus Bus that brings fresh produce to kids without access to healthy food. The program serves 15 neighborhoods in Harrisonburg and Page County during the summer, and is also currently funded by Martin’s.

Is There a Mobile Food Pantry Near You?

Families in need who live in communities with limited access to a permanent food pantry may find assistance at our Mobile Food Pantries:

- Millboro (Bath County)
- Timberville (Rockingham County)
- Monterey (Highland County)
- Arrington (Nelson County)
- Dillwyn (Buckingham County)
- Orange (Orange County)
- Columbia (Fluvanna County)
- Scottsville (Albemarle County)
- Palmyra (Fluvanna County)

Want to volunteer at a MFP site near you?

For information, please contact volunteer@brafb.org or 540.213.8402, or visit www.brafb.org/volunteer.

Meet Our Newest Team Member: Michelle Hesse, RD



The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is pleased to announce that Michelle Hesse has joined our team as Director of Agency Relations and Programs. A registered dietitian, Michelle is passionate about improving access to healthful food. Prior to joining the Food Bank in April, she was an assistant professor at James Madison University. She also served on the Food Bank’s board of directors and volunteered at Blessed Sacrament, a food pantry in Harrisonburg.

“Finding ways to better serve clients is not just about serving *enough* food,” she says. “It’s about serving nutritious food.”

In 2010, she received her Ph.D. from The Ohio State University Nutrition Program, where she collaborated with the local health and education communities to create a school-based, health screening program to identify children at risk for obesity and diabetes. Michelle and her family moved to the Shenandoah Valley in 2014.



Find *Your* Purpose and Place as a Volunteer

Caring individuals often lend a hand at our four warehouses—located in Verona, Charlottesville, Lynchburg, and Winchester. They sort and pack food for distribution and help with administrative tasks.

But if a warehouse setting isn't what you're looking for, community-based volunteer opportunities abound.

Do you want meaningful contact with neighbors in need? Volunteers pack and distribute food at Mobile Food Pantry locations, or at a local food pantry.

Homebound seniors in need get a nutritious boost when volunteers deliver food right to their door through the Reach or Senior Food Box programs.

■ **Do you speak another language?** We can use your translation skills in some of the neighborhoods we serve.

■ **Are you a retired tech-junkie?** We're introducing new technologies to food pantry partners who can use help from computer-savvy people, especially those who are adept at data entry.

■ **Do you enjoy events and believe in our cause?** The Food Bank can send outgoing, well-informed ambassadors to community fairs and tabling events.

Whatever your goals, we can probably find a role for you. Last year, volunteers generously contributed more than 27,500 hours to the Food Bank—the equivalent of 14 full-time positions.

“Our volunteers believe in our mission, and it shows in the work they do each and every day,” says Jennifer Clark Robertson, volunteer coordinator.

Volunteering is easy, and it's fun. Pull together a group of family, friends, and co-workers, and join us in our mission to solve hunger. You can make a difference!

To learn more about all types of volunteer opportunities, visit www.brafb.org/volunteer.

Questions? Contact volunteer coordinator Jennifer Clark-Robertson at jclarkrobertson@brafb.org or 540.213.8402.



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.



Stamp Out Hunger

257,903 meals

Hats off to hardworking postal carriers, volunteers, and food donors for making this yearly food drive possible. Letter carriers collected more than 308,000 pounds of food from residential doorsteps throughout the Food Bank's service area, including Staunton, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, Winchester, and Lynchburg!



Food Lion Feeds

108,500 meals + the Good Food Truck

What if kids were clamoring for the veggie truck to visit their neighborhood? That's the idea behind the Food Bank's Good Food Truck, a walk-in vehicle purchased with Food Lion's generous \$50,000 gift. It's an educational and fun way to deliver fresh food to families in need at our Neighborhood Produce Markets. Food Lion also helped provide thousands of meals for neighbors in need. We are grateful to their associates for volunteering at our Verona warehouse and for the Food Lion *Great Pantry Makeover* project at partner pantry Oak Hill Baptist Church.



UVA Challah for Hunger

29,444 meals

Way to go, Wahoos! For years, this group has kneaded and rolled dough every week during the school year to raise awareness of, and money for, hunger relief through the sale of Challah bread.



Martin's and Martin's Family Foundation

343,200 meals + 2,000 jars of PB&J

Our friends at Martin's have outdone themselves this year! Their sponsorship of three Mobile Food Pantry distribution sites and the Neighborhood Produce Markets, in 2018 and beyond, ensures these important programs can provide even more meals to hungry neighbors in vulnerable Shenandoah Valley communities. Martin's also joined the Food Bank to *Spread the Love* by sponsoring this first-ever peanut butter and jelly drive. And we can't thank their store associates enough for their many volunteer hours at our main warehouse and program sites.



Wegmans

158,918 meals

This big-hearted grocer contributed funds they collected through their *Check Out Hunger* campaign and made generous food donations throughout the year.



Valley Businesses Give Back

34,083 meals

Year after year, Shenandoah Valley businesses show how much they care about their neighbors in need! This annual food and fund drive, led by area chambers of commerce and local businesses, raises money and collects food to help stock the Food Bank's shelves in the summer months.



Bank of America Charitable Foundation

97,200 meals

Thank you, Bank of America! Donors made gifts to the Food Bank through their *Give a Meal* campaign, which matched every dollar 2 to 1. In addition, Bank of America awarded a grant to the Mobile Food Pantry.



Impact1890 Fund - A National Lutheran Fund \$10,000 grant

They helped provide 100 food-insecure seniors with nourishing food boxes delivered monthly to their homes and community centers this year.



Farm Credit x 3

\$40,000 to Virginia food banks

Mid-Atlantic Farm Credit, Colonial Farm Credit, and Farm Credit of the Virginias understand the importance of agriculture to our mission. Their combined support allowed the state's seven food banks, in partnership with the Federation of Virginia Food Banks, to rescue locally grown produce and nourish hungry families in their communities.



WE THE PEOPLE

Protect Through Policies

The Food Bank recognizes that decisions made by our leaders in Washington, Richmond, and in local elected offices can affect everyone in our communities, including neighbors who struggle with hunger.

To learn about our Public Policy priorities and join us in advocating on behalf of those who are food insecure, visit brafb.org/advocate. To stay informed, subscribe to our Advocacy Alerts at brafb.org/newslettersignup.



UVA Health System

20,000 meals

They're helping us feed hungry rural families through our Mobile Food Pantry distribution sites in the Thomas Jefferson Health District.



Walmart

415,000 meals

Through its annual campaign — *Fight Hunger, Spark Change* — Walmart continues to make an enormous difference for hungry families in need.



Neighbors-4-Neighbors School Food Drive

4,070 meals

Eighteen schools in Charlottesville and Albemarle County participated in this spring drive led by Albemarle 10th grader Ryleigh Katstra. Since it began in 2011, the drive has provided 47,573 meals for neighbors in need!



Legal Food Frenzy

54,000 meals

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



Up On A Roof

11,126 meals

A big thank you to King Photo of Harrisonburg, the Harrisonburg Radio Group, and the listeners who supported this 3rd annual event. Broadcast from the rooftop of King Photo for four straight days and nights, this Hunger Action Month event raised funds, collected food, and increased awareness about hunger!



Kraft Heinz Company Foundation

\$20,000 grant + 22,750 meals

The Family BackPack sites at Garland R. Quarles and VA Avenue Charlotte Dehart Elementary School benefit from this grant award. In addition, the company helped nourish families in need with donations to *Fight Hunger, Spark Change*.



Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation

\$11,000 grant

The foundation's generous support of the Food Bank's Agency Capacity Fund helped partner pantries acquire food storage and transport equipment, such as freezers and coolers, so that they can provide critically-needed food to more hungry neighbors in their communities.



Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge

\$6,500 grant

We are grateful to this Shenandoah Valley foundation for supporting Family BackPack sites at schools in Waynesboro and Augusta County.



Berglund Oak Ridge Toyota

20,000 meals

This dealership continues to be a driving force for nourishing Lynchburg-area children, seniors, and families.



Enterprise Rent-A-Car

45,060 meals

Enterprise helped us provide meals for hungry individuals and families with their *Fill Your Tank* feeding program.



Caliber Collision Centers Foundation

42,662 meals

What a smashing success! Support from this foundation's *Rhythm Restoration Food and Fund Drive* helped us provide meals to families in need.



Inaugural Spread the Love Peanut Butter and Jelly Food Drive

Enough PB&J for 83,000 sandwiches

Media partners WHSV TV-3 and iHeart Radio worked with retail partner Martin's Food Markets in Harrisonburg, Staunton, Waynesboro, and Culpeper to collect peanut butter and jelly for children in need, providing more than 5,191 jars of PB&J to help them fuel the start of a new school year. Their work engaged local communities to spread the love to kids in families spread too thin.



above: The Good Food Truck is the latest addition to the Food Bank fleet, purchased with help from Food Lion Feeds.

Delivering Hope to Those Who Need It Most

A fleet of trailers, trucks, and vans are critical to the Food Bank's operation. Last year, our fleet traveled more than 260,000 miles to deliver food and hope across the 25 counties we serve.

Last year, we also launched our Delivering Hope partnership opportunity, and several generous donors stepped up to sponsor a vehicle in our fleet.

At various points in time, **Food Lion, Kroger, Walmart, Sysco, Better Living,** and the **Charlottesville Area Community Foundation** have all made gifts enabling us to purchase needed vehicles or to help fund Food Bank operations for at least three years.

The Food Bank is proud to publicly recognize these partnerships on the highways and byways of central and western Virginia, as we work together to solve hunger.

Thank you!

To align your company with the Food Bank's mission, as part of *Delivering Hope* or other initiatives, read how on pg. 4-5.

Not All Setbacks Are Created Equal

While moving my 23-year-old son into a new apartment on a sweltering summer day, I took the opportunity to help him put a frustrating experience into perspective.

Twenty-four hours earlier, we were squeezed into his old Saab, together with all his belongings. We had long hours ahead of us, but the car, unfortunately, had come to the end of its road. It wouldn't start.

Suddenly, he not only had to recalculate out how he would manage the move, but also what he would do for transportation. The car was past repair.

A quick call to U-Haul and about \$100 later, the move was taken care of. His bank approved a car loan over the phone, and of course, my wife and I were ready to help if truly needed. His problems were inconvenient but not insurmountable.

Imagine, I said to him, if you earned less, had poor credit after years of financial setbacks, and that your only source of financial aid came from a payday lender charging an interest rate of nearly 100 percent. Imagine no savings and no parents to backstop you in emergencies.

What would you do with all of your possessions in a car that wouldn't start? How would you get to work and keep a job with no transportation? How would you pay the rent, or recover when you lost both the apartment and the security deposit? Who would you turn to?

It's easy to overlook how hard it is to be poor, how grinding the experience can be, how daunting it is to claw your way back to some measure of financial stability. It's easy to overlook the despair if poverty isn't your experience.

But not for you. Whatever your reasons, you have chosen to reach out to people struggling with misfortune, and through your support of the Food Bank, provide a little relief and hope.

You've chosen empathy over indifference.

You're making a big difference in the lives of many people experiencing poverty every day and for that, we are deeply grateful.

Thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McKee". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael McKee
Chief Executive Officer

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

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GET INVOLVED

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

Nov. 3
Charlottesville, Staunton, Harrisonburg, and surrounding counties
and Nov. 10



Winchester and surrounding counties
Area Boy Scouts will be sweeping neighborhoods for food donations during their largest annual food drive. Leave your bag of canned food at your doorstep at the date noted above for your location.

Nov. 27
GivingTuesday at brafb.org/give-now
#GivingTuesday is a global day of giving. Anyone, anywhere can participate — look for our posts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and on our website.



Nov. 17 – Dec. 15
Holiday Food Drive

NBC29, Z95.1, and Kroger ask that you join them in nourishing neighbors in need during the winter holidays. Just drop non-perishable food donations in Food Bank barrels at Kroger stores in Staunton, Waynesboro, Harrisonburg, Charlottesville, and Lynchburg.



Dec. 3
Christmas at Augusta Stone
Join us for the 22nd annual benefit Christmas concert at Augusta Stone Church in Fort Defiance. Enjoy acoustic and folk holiday music from talented performers. Free will offering.



Jan. 6
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 18th post-holiday concert.

