



**Blue Ridge Area  
FOOD BANK**  
Everyone should have enough to eat.



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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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# network news

Agency  
Relations &  
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Newsletter



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ISSUE 2

## Going the Extra Mile

FALL 2019

### Agency Spotlight:

#### Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift Store

In 2012, Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift Store, located in Warrenton, was set to close its doors. "Those early years were a struggle," Sharon Ames shared. "Our building was in ill-repair, we had limited equipment and storage, and we could only serve once a month."

But with clients' best interests at heart, Sharon led a group of galvanized volunteers to form their own 501(c)3. Soon after, they acquired a permanent space to keep the pantry thriving.

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank's Agency Capacity Fund and individual donors helped the pantry acquire shelving and shopping carts and make repairs. The improvements enabled them to grow their mission and better address community needs.



Today, the pantry distributes the bulk of their food twice per month and provides produce and bread daily. "This strategy helps families over the summer when kids can't access school meals and is especially important for our homeless population, who often lack storage or facilities to prepare food," said Sharon.

Fauquier Community Food Bank continues to make real and lasting impacts through donations and a variety of partnerships, including its relationship with the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. "Doing this kind of work, I take pride in knowing that we can make someone's day and share a smile," recalled Sharon. "The respect and dignity that our volunteers show clients keeps me coming back for more."

To the wonderful folks at Fauquier Community Food Bank and all those who lend their time and talents to make food assistance possible, thank you! We're sincerely grateful for your continued partnership.

### A Message from Michelle



This summer, I was so thankful for the chance to spend some time on vacation with my family. While

summer may be the ideal time for many of us to pause and slow down, it's often a time of uncertainty and hunger for our most vulnerable neighbors. Kids lose access to the free, school-based feeding programs they rely on, and childcare expenses often increase, leaving families more at risk of becoming food insecure.

Thankfully, there's a solution. It lies within your compassion, care, and diligence to ensure that your agency offers reliable services. You provide sustenance, hope, and a lifeline in times of need.

Thank you for being among a dedicated network of individuals and organizations working to make a difference. Hunger has an impact, but together, so do we!

## USDA TEFAP Food Surplus

Thank you for your partnership in helping to distribute 5.33 million pounds of USDA TEFAP and Trade Mitigation food last year, a new record for our partner network! As we pause to collectively pat ourselves on the back, we anticipate another boom in USDA product this year due to continued trade mitigation efforts.

In the coming months, expect to see more chicken and pork products, fresh fruits and vegetables, and fluid milk on Agency Express, in addition to the typical shelf-stable staples like rice, pasta, canned and dried beans, canned and dried fruits, and canned vegetables.

We greatly appreciate your continued commitment to ordering and distributing these nutritious items to our neighbors in need! If you're currently not a USDA agency and are interested in taking advantage of this free, nutritious source of food, please contact your Partner Services Coordinator to learn more.

### Food Lion Feeds Great Pantry Restock — Church of the Nazarene

Congratulations to our partner Church of the Nazarene in Lynchburg for being selected as this year's recipient of Food Lion Feeds Great Pantry Restock.

Thanks to Food Lion's generosity, Church of the Nazarene received a large donation of canned and non-perishable food from its local Food Lion retailer. Food Lion associates and pantry representatives restocked the pantry shelves and provided essential food staples for clients accessing the pantry.

## Meet a New Team Member: Joe Kreiter

**J**oe is a native Virginian and a 2017 University of Virginia graduate. He is a passionate, committed justice advocate who sought a career that pursues social, environmental, and food justice and equity.

Before finding his way to the Food Bank, Joe worked as a produce manager at MOM's Organic Market in Northern Virginia. Prior to MOM's, Joe participated in a fellowship program in Berkeley, CA, where he conducted community engagement efforts around urban farm work.

Joe is adept at building and

strengthening community connections, cultivating relationships, actively listening to the needs of others, and working collaboratively to identify solutions that meet people where they are.

Joe is most excited about working with our dedicated network of pantry and program partners in our Thomas Jefferson region to ensure that *everyone has enough to eat!*



## Meet a New Team Member: Melissa Wender

**M**elissa loves supporting her community. Before joining the Food Bank to provide nourishing food to our neighbors in need, Melissa repaired bicycles at Charlottesville Community Bikes, helped increase access to free health care at the Berkeley Free Clinic in California, and worked as a park ranger in Washington state.

Melissa lives in an intentional community in Nelson County and looks forward to traveling around central Virginia to meet the staff and

volunteers that make food assistance services possible.

In particular, she is excited to coordinate the Mobile Food Pantries (10 a month and counting!) and work with our partners to provide CSFP food boxes to vulnerable seniors across our region.



## RECIPE BOX — GREAT RECIPE FOR A TASTING EVENT

### Chicken Cacciatore

Access this recipe here: <https://hungerandhealth.feedingamerica.org/recipe/chicken-cacciatore/>.

#### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 1/2 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 1 cup frozen onion & bell pepper mix
- 2 (14.5 oz) cans no-salt-added diced tomatoes, undrained
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp garlic powder
- 1/2 tsp dried rosemary
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 (6 oz) can sliced mushrooms, drained & rinsed



#### PREPARATION:

- In a large non-stick skillet, add oil and heat over medium. Add chicken and cook 3 minutes per side, or until golden brown.
- Add onion and pepper mix, stir. Cook 2-3 minutes, or until vegetables are tender.
- Add tomatoes, lemon juice, and spices. Reduce heat to simmer. Cover and cook 20 minutes.
- Add mushrooms. Cover and cook 10 minutes, or until chicken is cooked thoroughly to a temperature of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

## Flourish with Nourish & Our Healthy Food Pantry Program

Fifty-eight percent of neighbors who need our help rely on **you** — our partner pantries, shelters, and soup kitchens — as their primary source of food. Together, how can we provide services that better address health? How can our spaces better promote the selection of nutritious foods? We believe our network can make healthy choices easy choices!

In partnership with James Madison University, the Food Bank is testing the **Healthy Food Pantry Program** in three Shenandoah Valley pantries. To start, we're focusing on the following:

- Promoting **client choice** to protect client dignity and allow families to select the best options for their unique needs
- Increasing availability and variety of produce and borrowing **produce display techniques** from grocers that are proven to increase client demand
- Offering nutrition education using **NourishEd**, an educational platform that uses green, yellow, and red signals to guide decision making based on nutritional quality
- Promoting and accommodating food-insecurity **screening referrals** from health care institutions, and helping promote *Cover Virginia* — a website where clients can sign up for Virginia Medicaid coverage. We partner with Augusta Health's Food Farmacy Program to facilitate pantry referrals.

We can't wait to see how clients respond! After evaluating the pilot program, we hope to engage other eager partner agencies to help expand the model. The future is fresh!