



Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Charlottesville Area Community Partnerships Expand Reach to Seniors During COVID-19 Response

(CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va.—April 17, 2020)—The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and the Jefferson Area Board for the Aging (JABA) have enhanced their longtime partnership to continue nourishing the lives of JABA’s seniors, despite the temporary closure of JABA.

JABA began partnering with the Food Bank nearly three years ago to distribute Senior Food Boxes or Reach food bags to eligible seniors in need. JABA senior centers in Greene, Esmont, Charlottesville, Nelson, and Scottsville serve as distribution sites.

“When JABA closed its centers in response to Virginia’s COVID-19 stay-at-home order, Emily Foreman and I started brainstorming alternatives,” says Melissa Wender, partner services coordinator at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

Emily Foreman manages senior nutrition programs at JABA. Other JABA managers also weighed in on possible ways to creatively meet food assistance needs while following protocols to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

“We are grateful for the partnership with the Food Bank. During this unprecedented event, so many of those we serve are now more isolated and without access to proper nutritional supports and resources,” says Emily. “Once we got an idea of how these programs would move forward in this crisis, the Food Bank was right there ready to move forward alongside us.”

“We came up with different plans for each site,” Melissa adds.

In Nelson County: Transportation assistance donated by JAUNT helps the senior center with deliveries. They meet at the Food Bank’s Mobile Food Pantry distribution in Arrington and load food boxes and food bags assembled for homebound seniors. A Jaunt driver then makes deliveries to identified areas of the county.

In Esmont: A similar plan involving JAUNT is under way to get food boxes to the homes of seniors in need.

In Scottsville: Seniors are picking up their boxes from, or sending a proxy to, the Food Bank's Mobile Food Pantry in Scottsville. They drive through, pop their trunk, and leave with a food box.

In Charlottesville and Greene County: JABA managers are delivering food boxes themselves.

"These food delivery alternatives and enhancements represent a coming together of dedicated community partners and friends to solve problems and exercise flexibility," Melissa adds.

For more information or to cover this story, please contact Abena Foreman-Trice at 540-280-6588.

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About the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank:

Founded in 1981, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank is the largest organization alleviating hunger in western and central Virginia. Headquartered in Verona, VA, the Food Bank serves 25 counties and eight cities through distribution centers in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester, and Verona. The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank distributes nearly 26.4 million pounds of food annually to 103,500 people each month through a network of 205 community partners – food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, churches, and other non-profit groups – and 175 program sites serving children, seniors, and families. The Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, a national food bank association that supports 200 food banks across the United States. For more information, visit www.brafb.org.