From Crisis to Recovery, and Beyond

The very best of humanity is reflected in food banking this year—qualities like compassion, empathy, generosity, and courage are all on display.

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank has been able to adapt and respond to every challenge, thanks in large measure to your steadfast support. We believe everyone should have enough to eat. And while we had to adapt how we distribute food, we never lost sight of the fact that—packed alongside the cans, boxes, and produce—we also provide hope and encouragement.

And so we march on together, prepared for whatever the next phase brings. We assure you that your trust and investment in us is well placed, but we do not take it—or you—for granted. Thank you for walking alongside us on this journey.

To watch recordings of recent online forums and updates, visit www.brafb.org/CEOtalking.
The need continues

- We’re serving about 24% more people on average than we were in 2019. In real terms, that translates to about 24,000 more visitors each month.
- Visits to Mobile Food Pantry sites were up 23% in summer 2020 compared to summer 2019.
- Since the pandemic began, almost 19% of all visitors are new to food assistance.
- More than 162,000 unemployment claims have been filed in the Blue Ridge area since March.

Achievements and updates as of November 10

- With the help of our partners, from March through September the Food Bank has distributed **17.3 million pounds of food**, the approximate equivalent of 14.5 million meals.
- Thanks to donor support, we’ve **purchased more than $3.5 million worth of food** since mid-March (a 200% increase in volume compared to last year), and we’ve **waived all expense** typically incurred by food pantry, soup kitchen, and shelter partners, including reimbursements for purchased food.
- Food Bank **programs have required significant adaptations**, especially those helping school-aged children and homebound seniors. We prioritize outreach to children and seniors, and we’ve added outreach to immigrants and refugees who may not be familiar with food resources available to them.
- We marvel at the resilience of our food pantry, soup kitchen, and shelter partners—**most have never closed their doors** despite the need to dramatically retool their operations.
- To help keep people safe as well as nourished, we’re providing partners and clients with masks, sanitizer, and other non-food supplies when we can.
- More than 1,183 people have **joined our volunteer ranks** since March. If you’re looking for a way to help, reach out to your local food pantry to see if they need volunteers, or visit www.brafb.org/volunteer or www.brafb.org/hungerhero for other ideas and needs.

---

Christine, a high school junior working toward earning a driver’s license, drove her father to a recent food distribution.

Appreciative of the effort to help their family, she simply stated, “This has been a really hard year.”

We hear you, Christine. We stand with you.

**Questions?** Reach out to Karen Ratzlaff, Chief Philanthropy Officer at kratzlaff@brafb.org or (540) 213-8404.