

# harvest

A NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

## Honoring Legacy and Building Community

at the Monacan Indian  
Nation Food Bank

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40 Years of Feeding Hope  
in the Blue Ridge Area

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Blue Ridge Area  
**FOOD BANK**

Everyone should have enough to eat.

A member of  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**





The Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank (MINFB) team.

# We're All ONE,

## WE'RE ALL CONNECTED

*Honoring legacy and  
building community  
at the Monacan Indian  
Nation Food Bank*

At the Monacan Indian Nation Food Bank (MINFB), co-director Sally Latimer was getting ready for another busy day serving clients at their Madison Heights location, across the James River from Lynchburg.

"It'll take a lifetime to give back all that was given to me," Sally reflected.

The day we visited, the dynamic women running MINFB provided groceries to 30 families from the Monacan Nation and the surrounding community. "Among Native American tribes, the Monacans are known for being very hospitable and providing a very welcoming spread of food for their guests," observed Sally over a lunch that the pantry staff provided their Food Bank visitors. The food is as important as the connections and conversations sparked when people pick up groceries or the MINFB team delivers them.

Patricia, a client who had to stop working a year ago to take care of her three grandchildren, said of the women who run MINFB, "[They] have become my friends. I'm home a lot and don't get out, but I look forward to coming here."

Meet two of the hunger heroes who feed their community's spirit through their work at MINFB.

### Meet Sally

When Sally reopened MINFB in 2018, she wanted to help her tribe. One in four Native Americans is food insecure (a higher rate than for any other race or ethnicity in the U.S.), and Monacans, she said, have long been discriminated against in rural Amherst County.

But she also wanted to encourage unity and understanding. After all, Sally knew what it was like to be hungry. About a decade earlier, her husband died, and she became the sole provider for her young son (now grown, pictured with Sally on the front cover). She struggled to cover their bills.



“There’s a stereotype that people who visit food pantries are lazy,” she said. “The majority of the people that we serve are working people.”

Sally and her MINFB teammates deliver groceries if someone is sick or elderly. They call clients every week to check in and confirm appointments. They host dinners for elders and hope to start a hot meals delivery program in low-income neighborhoods. *(The Food Bank has granted MINFB funds to help purchase a truck in support of this effort; learn more about our investments in the network on pages 4–5.)*

“Every time I hand a bag of food to someone, it’s me giving back just a tiny bit of what was given to me,” Sally said.

### Meet Jennifer

As co-director, Jennifer sees endless potential to reach her tribe and the wider Amherst County community. She planted a garden with traditional Monacan staples like Tutelo strawberry corn and amaranth, which they’ll distribute at harvest.



Traditionally, the Monacans are gardeners, and Jennifer hopes to expand the plot, plant fruit trees, and create a seedling program. Growing food gives back to the earth, she said, which reflects Monacan beliefs:

**“We’re all one. From the insects that crawl to the birds that fly, we’re all connected.”**

The distributions are also a way for the Monacan tribe to stay connected. “COVID has taken its toll on our social lives,” she said. “[Regarding] some of the older people, we’re some of the only people that they get to see for that week, so we’ll sit down, have conversations with them...and make sure they’re doing OK.”

Sally and Jennifer are quick to explain that they and the three other women running MINFB are equal partners. We celebrate them *all*.



To learn more about our network of pantry partners and program sites, visit [www.brafb.org/about-us/how-we-work](http://www.brafb.org/about-us/how-we-work).



### Monacan Tribal Homeland

As the Food Bank marks 40 years of serving the Blue Ridge region, we humbly acknowledge that Monacan ancestors inhabited this region for more than 10,000 years. The earliest written histories of Virginia state that in 1607, the Monacan people and their Mannahoac allies were arranged in a confederation ranging from the Roanoke River Valley to the Potomac River and from the Fall Line at Richmond and Fredericksburg west through the Blue Ridge Mountains. A federally recognized tribe, the Monacan Nation has more than 2,000 citizens today.

Source: *The official website of the Monacan Nation (www.monacannation.com)*

### Meet “Aunt Bertie”

Bertie, 78, has cared for others for as long as she can remember. Growing up with a single mother, she helped raise her four younger siblings.

Long before the pandemic forced the closure of the Monacan Indian Living History Exhibit at Natural Bridge State Park, Bertie worked as an interpreter, cook, and gardener. Now she’s living on a fixed income, and MINFB has become a lifesaver. “I don’t have to worry about trying to get food anymore.”

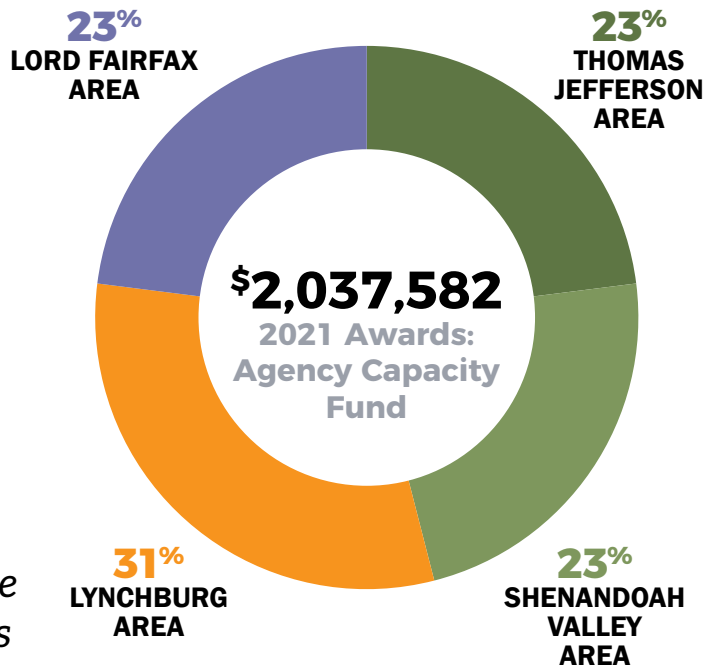


Affectionately referred to as “Aunt Bertie” by the women running MINFB, this matriarch uses the groceries she receives to help feed her 15 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and 7 great-great-grandchildren, some of whom she looks after every day.

“That’s what life is all about: helping each other and taking care of each other,” she said.

# Pandemic Lesson: Too Critical to Fail

*Donations help fortify the food-distribution network through more than \$2 million in grants from the Food Bank to our community partners*



## Food banking may never be the same again.

After more than a year of crisis operations, the Food Bank and our partners are settling into a new normal. We've learned a lot during the pandemic. Distribution partners have always been important to us, but this experience has illuminated how vital it is to have a resilient and flexible network.

That's why Food Bank leadership, including the Board of Directors, chose to dramatically expand the reach of the **Agency Capacity Fund** in 2021 and invest in partnerships in bigger and bolder ways.

An investment like this is only possible thanks to the generosity of Food Bank donors who have supported our mission throughout the pandemic.

### A tradition of impact

The Agency Capacity Fund launched in 2016 to support our primary partners: the local, community-based food pantries; soup kitchens; and shelters that form the

nutritional safety net our neighbors can turn to in times of need. These are our primary distribution partners. Another group of collaborators operate sites for the Food Bank's programs, including the Mobile Food Pantry, Family BackPack, and Reach (for seniors and people with disabilities), to name a few.

In a typical year, the Food Bank uses 100% of gifts designated by donors to the Agency Capacity Fund to purchase equipment and supplies for partners.

Over the last four years, we have provided more than \$674,000 worth of coolers and freezers; shelves, carts, and generators; and laptops and tablets.

### Bold action

This year, all 203 partner food pantries, as well as 180 program-site partners, were invited to apply for support from the Agency Capacity Fund. In addition to small grants for equipment, we also offered them the opportunity to

## 2021 Awards by Type



\*Includes two trucks gifted from the Food Bank fleet



# Examples of Impactful Awards and Investments Across the Region

Located in Sterling, **DULLES SOUTH FOOD PANTRY** received funding for a major renovation to exponentially increase their cold-storage space (which will enable them to distribute more perishable foods) and some smaller equipment items to facilitate the intake of client information.



The **CRAIGSVILLE AREA FOOD PANTRY** (Augusta County) was one of the first organizations to join our network in the early 1980s. Their 2021 award will help replace their roof so they can keep the pantry's doors open.



**34**  
SHENANDOAH VALLEY-AREA PARTNERS

**36**  
LORD FAIRFAX-AREA PARTNERS

**29**  
THOMAS JEFFERSON-AREA PARTNERS

**41**  
LYNCHBURG-AREA PARTNERS

In Charlottesville, we're investing in a project led by the **PIEDMONT HOUSING ALLIANCE** to build a food pantry as part of a community center at Friendship Court.

In downtown Lynchburg, where the impact of COVID-19 doubled the need for **OUR DAILY BREAD**'s services, extensive interior renovations we'll help fund will equip them to accommodate the increased demand. Our Daily Bread served more than 115,000 meals in 2020.

apply for large, capital grants for the first time. Investments of this size help fund items like trucks and vans, contribute to pantry innovations and improvements, and even offer rent support to organizations moving to larger spaces.

In all, the Food Bank will spend more than \$2 million on 120 Agency Capacity Fund awards this year.

## The difference made, in human terms

Our goal in distributing these grants is to help our partner organizations flourish and grow, and they're also meant to ensure a dignified, respectful environment for the neighbors who walk through their doors.

After all, the demand experienced at all locations during the pandemic has been telling. Collectively, the partners receiving awards this year typically serve, on average, 64,000 people per month. Between March 2020 and February 2021, they were providing food to approximately 79,000 people per month, an increase of 24%.

### These grants are intended to enable partners to do things like...

- move more produce and more food
- ensure that a greater variety and quantity of foods can be offered
- create more welcoming spaces that preserve the dignity of our neighbors
- launch mobile distributions to serve individuals who are homebound and can't make it to pantries

We are grateful to the following donors whose designated gifts made so many of these awards possible\*:

- Anonymous
- Bama Works Fund
- Food Lion Feeds
- Genan Foundation
- Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation
- Lewis G. Schaeneman Jr. Foundation
- Manning Family Foundation
- Paul and Martha Rees Fund

\*Additional funding for Agency Capacity Fund awards comes from unrestricted gifts made to the Food Bank in the past year.



# Ordinary People Who Made Extraordinary Decisions

**M**indy Loy was a banker from Winchester who loved cats and traveling.

Judy Bancroft of Charlottesville devoted her long career to the education of nurses.

Robert and Maxine Burkholder owned and operated the Broadway Supermarket for more than 35 years and were dedicated church members and devoted parents.

Alvin Stump of Lynchburg was an orphan, a veteran, and a successful pharmaceutical rep, serving physicians with his friendly and outgoing personality for 42 years.

Robert Boxley was a devoted husband, avid collector of antique pond boats, and a lifelong public servant.

Kenneth Keller. Janet Edwards. Beverly Cullen. Dwight Mottet. James Loughran, Jr. Myrtle Ward Sommerville. Richard Rawley. Carolyn Ann Jones. Leo

Thralls. William Currier. Richard Algoe, Sr. Chester and Margaret Titus. Alden R. Kuhlthau.

These are people who took many different journeys through life, but one thing connects them all.

Each of these compassionate folks made a significant decision to leave a gift to the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank after they died.

Many made provisions to take care of children, grandchildren, and/or friends in addition to their charitable bequests.

Others left gifts to several nonprofits, in addition to the Food Bank—benefiting causes ranging from animal care to health care to the environment.

Their posthumous donations ranged from \$500 to \$1 million. Many gifts were put to work to help fund our mission when they were received. When the bequest is sizeable, we use part of it immediately and invest the



Alvin Stump

Robert and Maxine Burkholder

rest in a growing endowment. The income from the endowment is used to help fund recurring expenses like the purchase of food.

If you are inspired and motivated to make a similar decision, review the resources on our website at [www.brafb.org/plannedgift](http://www.brafb.org/plannedgift). If you need help or want to discuss your options and goals, contact Karen Ratzlaff, chief philanthropy officer, at [kratzlaff@brafb.org](mailto:kratzlaff@brafb.org) or (540) 213-8404. All inquiries will be treated confidentially.

*A legacy gift is best made with the counsel of your legal, tax, or financial advisor.*

\*This article includes the names of people whose estate gifts arrived between 2018 and 2021. There are many, many more individuals who made similar, previous decisions and whose good works live on through the Food Bank today.



Join **The Will to End Hunger Society** by letting us know when you make plans for a future gift that will benefit the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. We want to say **thank you** now.

## Planting Seeds of Hope for a Brighter Tomorrow

If you want to assure that your charitable legacy lives on beyond your lifetime while also ensuring that future generations of Virginians grow up healthy, not hungry, you might consider one of the following:

- A **bequest gift** is made through your will or trust.
- With a **beneficiary designation** or **financial account transfer**, you can leave a gift through your life-insurance policy or retirement plan, or with the transfer of financial-account balances.
- **Charitable-gift annuities** provide regular payments to you and/or a loved one during your lifetime and then financial support to the Food Bank in time.



# The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Gets Its Start

## The First Steps in a Decades-Long Journey to Solve Hunger

In the mid-20th century, a soup-kitchen volunteer in Phoenix, AZ heard about the mounds of product businesses wasted when refreshing their inventories. *When many people lacked enough good food to eat, why was so much of it ending up in the trash?* John van Hengel employed his newfound knowledge to plant the seeds of the first-ever food bank in 1967.

The concept of food banking—so named because of the similarities to collecting, withdrawing, and distributing resources from a reserve—rippled across the country, catching on in major cities like Los Angeles, Denver, Atlanta, and Boston through the 1970s. Rural pockets in between, however, remained largely untouched.

### A founder's calling

But this didn't deter Lynchburg-native Phil Grasty from researching how he might cultivate the practice regionally. A faith-driven veteran who poured energy into a substance abuse-rehabilitation center and ministry, he recognized the oppressive presence of hunger in the Blue Ridge Area and felt called to address it.

According to *Mother Earth News*, he was told in 1980 that "Rural areas don't need food banks."



(They're agricultural hot spots, right?) Still, he trusted himself and pressed on.

### "A major experiment in food banking"

Phil recruited three additional Board of Director members and secured a 11,000-square foot structure in Staunton to act as the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank's first warehouse. And the same year they got the Food Bank up and running—1981—it was recognized as a conditional member of America's Second Harvest (known as Feeding America today).

As founding Board member Howard Houghton shared, "[Phil] was the driving force" of the operation in its earliest days. Phil graduated from his position on the Board and became Executive Director, a role he held for 19 years. He worked to engage volunteers, leverage public-private partnerships, and advocate for the needs of charitable-food assistance organizations in government halls. **What was once regarded as a rural experiment by the national network developed into a widely respected regional charity with four distribution warehouses dotting central and western Virginia.**

We've come a long way since the earliest batches of food donations—including a shipment of chocolate sauce and taco shells—arrived. But through the evolution, one thing has stayed the same: The Food Bank is driven by the belief that everyone should have enough to eat—a truth Phil Grasty boldly proclaimed decades ago. *Not just in big cities but in the Blue Ridge area, too.* He set a domino effect of compassion into motion, laying the foundation for a mission-driven network of community partners to come together and combat hunger.



Founder Phil Grasty

Turn the page and journey with us through the past 40 years. Then, catch a glimpse of where we're headed next.

# 4 YEARS



## of Feeding Hope in the Blue Ridge Area

### 1981

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank—led by founder Phil Grasty—kickstarts its operations, offering support to 35 local organizations. The Food Bank is named a provisional member of Second Harvest, the national network that later becomes Feeding America.

### 1982

Although sights were originally set on the central Shenandoah Valley alone, the Food Bank's service area expands almost immediately: Branch warehouses are established in Charlottesville and Winchester to meet widespread need.

### 1985

A fourth branch opens in Lynchburg with the Board's approval, and 75,000 pounds of food are delivered to the acquired warehouse.

### 1987

More than 150 active volunteers contribute to our shared mission, earning the Food Bank the nickname "Volunteer City."

### 1989

The Federation of Virginia Food Banks is assembled, with the Food Bank contributing to its creation.



### 2005

Starting in the early 1980s, the Food Bank forms relationships with Kroger to salvage some of the stores' unshelved food. In 2005, this system is solidified with the creation of the Partner Pick-up Program, which in its first year sources more than one-million pounds of food.

### 2004

Following the annexation of Fauquier and Loudoun Counties in 1990, the service area grows for the last time when Appomattox County is added.

### 2000

To better serve older adults and neighbors with disabilities, the Food Bank initiates the Reach program. In 2016, we add the federally funded Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), also known as "Senior Food Boxes," to our services.

### 1993

Community engagement abounds with the inauguration of the annual Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The nationwide event depends on dedicated letter carriers who collect donated food while on their routes.



## 2006

The Backpack Program finds its footing with initial support from Walmart-funded grants. Augusta County and Craigsville Elementary School students receive five-pound packs filled with food items like macaroni and fruit.

(2013 marks a shift toward household-sized portions in what is now called the Family Backpack program.)

## 2007-2021

The Great Recession forces a spike in need. The average count of people served soars from 70,000 monthly to 120,000. Resilience is required, and transformation results: The volunteer pool widens, financial support swells, and new programs launch.

## 2010

The Mobile Food Pantry hits the road, transporting fresh food—including produce—to people in rural areas where nutritious shopping options are limited and established pantries are scarce.

## 2016

Client-choice distribution is upheld as a best practice as it prioritizes guests' dignity and helps reduce food waste. Loaves & Fishes, a partner pantry in Charlottesville, is among the first to embrace the approach.



## 2021

At the table we set, all are welcome. On the heels of the pandemic's outbreak and in line with a new strategic operating plan, the Food Bank jumpstarts an initiative to reach and serve more community members who are immigrants and/or refugees. The work involves translating and distributing outreach materials, as well as applying a more holistic approach to food sourcing.

## 2020

Crisis is the real test of an organization's strength, and for the Food Bank, that test comes in the form of a pandemic. COVID-19 changes every facet of our operations, stresses our agency network, disrupts supply chains, surges thousands more people to pantries, and motivates the largest outpouring of public support in our history. Despite stress and uncertainty, 94 percent of our community partners continue serving neighbors with the Food Bank's backing, marking our network as one of the most resilient nationally.

In the same year, the first Food Pharmacy launches at the UVA Kidney Center, supplying nourishment weekly to patients in need.

## 2019

With support from Perdue, the Food Bank opens its first Good Food School Market at Harrisonburg High School. The program offers up shelf-stable items and fresh produce to teens (and their families) to help ensure they stay nourished outside of school hours.

## 2017

The Food Bank institutes its first-ever Nutrition Policy, setting a new standard for the quality of food obtained and distributed.

# Feeding Hope Today and Tomorrow

What does it look like to build upon the momentum of our past while also moving the organization forward into the future? For starters, the Food Bank’s new strategic themes, which will guide our work for the coming years, place emphasis on the following actions:

- strengthening our food-assistance network
- expanding access for underserved populations
- supporting improved nutrition and health within our communities
- centering advocacy on federal support and statewide initiatives

We’re bolstering the existing system that allows us to serve so widely even as we’re looking to better it. We’re challenging notions of what charitable food assistance “should” look like and pursuing innovation to press toward the brighter tomorrow we believe in.

In the words of CEO Michael McKee, the goal is not only to “feed the line but also to shorten the line and reduce the need for us to be here in another 40 years.”

Our history is in our hands—and so is the future of food banking in central and western Virginia.

## Pandemic Snapshot

March 2020 - Feb. 2021



**125,350**  
Average visitors served monthly



**25.4 million**  
Meals provided



We’re looking forward to gathering in person again!  
*Please join us if you can.*

## Get Involved *Events Are Out of Quarantine*

### AUGUST 7-14

We’re marking 40 years of serving our communities throughout central

and western Virginia. Help us collect enough to provide 400,000 meals: Donate funds anytime during the week and/or drop off food donations at your local branch on August 13 and 14 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Working together, we can realize a future where everyone has enough to eat. Branch locations: Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Verona, Winchester



### SEPTEMBER 13-26

#### Construction

Lynchburg competitors will build unique virtual sculptures using architectural software and share their works of art to raise awareness and funds for local families experiencing hunger. The 2021 theme is “Mythical Creatures and Fairy Tales.”

### OCTOBER 7

#### CEO Forum

At this virtual event, CEO Michael McKee, will share important updates about the Food Bank and answer your questions. Register to attend: [www.brafb.org/ceotalks](http://www.brafb.org/ceotalks).

### OCTOBER 22

#### LIVE2LEAD

Hosted by Dove Development & Consulting at Blue Ridge Community College, LIVE2LEAD is a professional-development opportunity designed to equip attendees with new perspectives, practical tools, and key takeaways.

### OCTOBER 28

#### Empty Bowl Dinner

Join Blue Ridge Community College leaders, faculty, and students for this event, part of the annual Hunger Symposium that promotes hunger awareness in local communities.

### NOVEMBER 11

#### Make Every Rep Count

Athletes raise funds and awareness for local nonprofits, including the Food Bank, with every rep they log during this weight-lifting competition at Shenandoah Powerhouse Gym in Waynesboro.

### NOVEMBER 30

#### GivingTuesday

On this global day of giving, anyone anywhere can support the causes they care about. Following Black Friday and Cyber Monday, remember to go online and make your contribution to the Food Bank, alongside many other caring individuals.

### SEPTEMBER

#### Hunger Action Month

One in every 12 people in the Blue Ridge area experiences hunger, but together, we can make a real difference. Participate in this month-long, national movement to raise awareness about food insecurity.



## Public-Private Partnership Provides We Care Boxes

The Food Bank could not do its work without valuable partnerships—from our network of 203 pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters to our health care and school allies—who team up with us to nourish lives.

In response to COVID-19's impact, a public-private partnership between Virginia companies, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Federation of Virginia Food Banks was established to provide sustenance in the form of We Care food boxes. Sentara and Truist made significant upfront investments to launch the program in order to aid Virginians experiencing hunger during the pandemic. The supplies were beneficial when the pandemic disrupted the emergency-food supply chain and food donations fell.

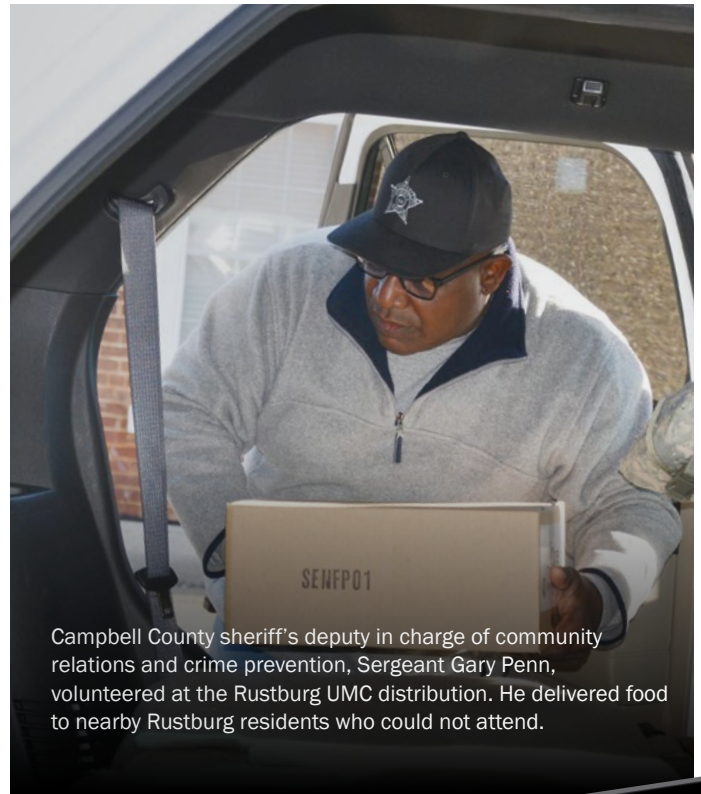
### From donation to distribution

Dedicated volunteers assembled the boxes and filled them with food supplies in our warehouses. Thirty-two (32) Food Bank partners shared 17,000 boxes—containing 255,000 meals—with households throughout the Blue Ridge region.

“We distributed a total of 205 food boxes from May through December 2020, serving a total of 630 individuals,” said Patra Reed, Sentara RMH director of community health services. “We saw a growth in box usage at the end of the year with the increase in COVID cases during the holiday season. The addition of the Sentara We Care boxes offered more heart-healthy options for community members with food insecurity who were in treatment for heart failure.”

Partner pantries loaded We Care boxes into the trunks of cars whose drivers expressed gratitude for the groceries. Pam Booth, who manages the Rustburg United Methodist Church (UMC) Food Pantry in Lynchburg, expressed, “The We Care food boxes have been helpful for our guests.” They distributed more than 900 boxes from July to December 2020.

Thanks to the influx of We Care food boxes, our distribution partners could reliably offer groceries to families and individuals at a time when they needed help the most. Virginia's food banks will continue pursuing similar public-private partnerships that make programs like this one possible.



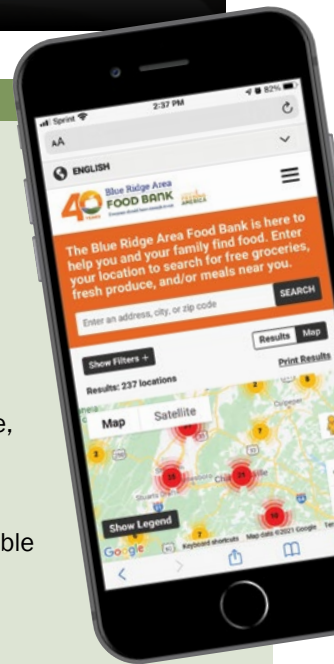
Campbell County sheriff's deputy in charge of community relations and crime prevention, Sergeant Gary Penn, volunteered at the Rustburg UMC distribution. He delivered food to nearby Rustburg residents who could not attend.

## Making it Easier to Find Food

This spring, the Food Bank debuted its brand-new Food Finder tool online, designed to help neighbors quickly and easily access nearby resources.

The user-friendly and mobile-accessible Food Finder can be navigated in 12 different languages and displays a broad range of partner and program sites (including Neighborhood Produce Markets, summer meal locations, and more). After entering your location, you can filter your search by service type, days of operation, distance, and even the availability of evening hours. Answers to frequently asked questions and links to additional resources are also highlighted on the Food Bank website.

Do you need help securing groceries or know someone who does? Visit [www.brafb.org/find-help](http://www.brafb.org/find-help) to locate assistance right around the corner.





We are deeply grateful to our donors who inspire us with gifts of their time, food, funds, and voices to help ensure that everyone has enough to eat. When we stand together, hunger doesn't stand a chance.

Across our 25-county service area, thousands of financial donors, volunteers, advocates, and friends actively support our work and have an impact in the Blue Ridge area. We appreciate every one of you! Here, we highlight just a few examples of the many ways that our community stepped up in recent months.

COVID-19 couldn't cancel the annual post-holiday concert, **Twelfth Night**. Instead of hosting the usual live performance, organizers broadcast past recordings on local radio stations in January. Since 2008, the choirs from the Staunton Church of the Brethren and the Olivet Presbyterian Church with Mini-Orchestra, under the direction of David MacMillan, have helped provide more than 306,000 meals for neighbors.



**River Bend Elementary School** hosted a cereal drive to benefit the Food Bank and local pantries, and students and staff had fun with it. They lined up the nearly 6,000 boxes of donated cereal and set a new, unofficial world record for the longest domino chain constructed! *Aim your phone's camera on this QR code and watch the sequential topple.*



### Cheers! To Charity

selected the Food Bank as their 2021 charitable beneficiary and quickly hit the ground running. They hosted a fund drive that will help provide 32,800 meals, held a fundraising event (Digging for Daylilies) in July, and plan to host a food drive and a music event on October 23 at Winchester Ciderworks. All the while, they'll use social media to promote the Food Bank's cause and help the people we serve.



At **Wind River Chimes**, "Inspiring Harmony" is core to their mission. The family-owned business in northern Virginia put that theme into action when they stepped up—big time—to support the food banks in their area. Both the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and Capital Area Food Bank were beneficiaries of their generosity during COVID, including a matching-challenge gift made in support of Giving Tuesday 2020.



# VOLUNTEER LEADERS

## Welcoming Our New Board Members

The Food Bank is delighted to welcome four new members to our Board of Directors: **Kim Blosser**, EdD, President of Lord Fairfax Community College; **Mike Davis**, District Manager, Kroger; **Clint Merritt**, MD, Chief Clinical Officer for Population Health, Augusta Health; and **Debbie Metz** of Staunton.

From the original founding five to today's vibrant group of 11, our Board leaders help advance the Food Bank's mission through policy and resource governance. We're proud and grateful they have chosen to lend their talents and time to help lead our organization. At a transformational time in our history, they each bring important perspectives to the table.

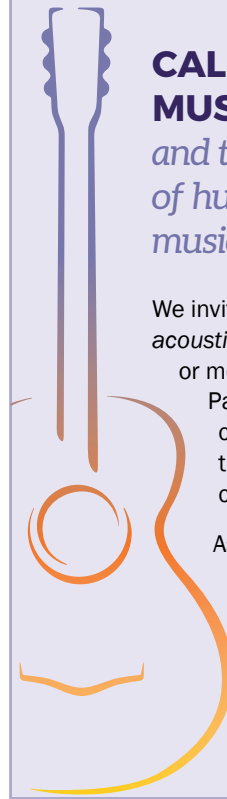
### CALLING STROLLING

**MUSICIANS!** *Donate your time and talent and provide the gift of human kindness by playing music for Food Bank clients.*

We invite musicians (ages 18+) who play *portable, acoustic* instruments to entertain our guests at one or more of the Food Bank's outdoor Mobile Food Pantry (MFP) distributions. You'll entertain community members waiting in line for food, transforming the parking lot into an outdoor concert venue.

As MFP program manager Melissa Wender says, "Why shouldn't a food pantry be fun and feed the soul, too?"

The distributions are scheduled in advance, and dates and times vary by location. Want to learn more? Contact us at [volunteer@brafb.org](mailto:volunteer@brafb.org).



## Thank You, Generous Corporate, Foundation, and Event Partners!



# Volunteer Flexibility: One Key to Success During the Pandemic

When Tori Macmillan, a former volunteer at a food pantry in suburban Boston, relocated to Charlottesville nine years ago, she brought with her a commitment to serving her neighbors. She's passionate about helping ensure everyone can conveniently access nutritious food and believes in fostering warm and supportive environments for people seeking aid.

Tori first took notice of the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank on trips to her local grocery store. She began to purchase extra pasta and canned goods each time she shopped at Kroger and dropped them in the Food Bank's collection barrels, but she often wondered how the food made its way from there to households in need.

A few years later, a blossoming friendship with Hatsy Vallar—who serves on the Food Bank's Board of Directors—motivated Tori to get more involved.

## Volunteer roles onsite

Three years ago, she began working occasional shifts in the Charlottesville warehouse. At first, Tori helped pack and distribute Emergency Food Boxes, a task she revisits often. "I enjoy working with [guests] when they visit Harris Street in need of...food. It's a chance for friendly conversation, and they are immensely appreciative of the help, especially parents raising [families]."

Over time, Tori tackled other jobs, including sorting and inspecting donated food, stocking shelves, and joining the assembly line to pack Senior Food Boxes. She appreciates the guidance of seasoned volunteers who helped orient her to each role.



## Pivoting to outreach and advocacy

Then along came the pandemic, and Tori took an understandable step back from in-person volunteerism. But her commitment to the cause never waned, and she responded to a recruitment call for remotely based Food Lifeline volunteers. In this specialized volunteer role, she and other community members have made more than 1,000 phone calls to senior clients to check in on their status and need for food, and to refer them to additional resources as appropriate.

Tori's relationship with the Food Bank continues to evolve. While she waits to return to the warehouse, she advocates for this cause that has become so important to her and her family.

She shared her experiences with her husband, Jamie, and they became monthly donors, and she recently recruited a friend in Crozet to join the volunteer team.

Tori is confident that she has learned as much from her volunteer journey as she has contributed so far. "The only way the Food Bank can serve this community successfully is with donations of time and financial treasure," she says. "There is a job at the Food Bank for anyone who has time, ability, and a caring heart."

Interested in volunteering? Visit our website to learn more: [www.brafb.org/volunteer](http://www.brafb.org/volunteer). Already registered as a Food Bank volunteer? Thank you for serving! Remember to check our site often for new opportunities, including **Specialized Volunteer** roles.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

JULY 2021 – JUNE 2022

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# Finding Unity in Community

We're fond of saying that we pitch a big tent at the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank. Everyone is welcome to lend a helping hand, and indeed, every hand is needed.

Ensuring that everyone has enough to eat is no small undertaking. It's a mission that begins at the Food Bank but doesn't stop there. Our volunteers number in the thousands. Our community partners—food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and additional feeding programs—collectively engage volunteers numbering in the tens of thousands. And our work, just like theirs, is supported and made possible by many generous donors.

And among all these volunteers and donors, we find people from every walk of life, every faith, every belief system joined together across 25 counties in common purpose. That we should work together to end hunger is at least one idea in our society that everyone can agree on.

In his Oscars speech (Yes, I just admitted that I occasionally tune in to pop culture), Tyler Perry asked his audience to meet him in the middle, to meet him where our values come together. Good advice.

I'm grateful that the Food Bank is one big “middle”—a place where a vast array of people can come together, even if they never actually meet each other, and make a remarkable difference in the lives of their neighbors.

Through your support of the Food Bank, you are finding common ground with many thousands of people who share your sense of humanity and compassion. Thank you, and please keep coming back. Our tent is always open.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael McKee".

Michael McKee  
Chief Executive Officer





# Blue Ridge Area FOOD BANK

Everyone should have enough to eat.



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

P.O. 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

We serve your community through one of four distribution centers:

**Shenandoah Valley Area Branch & Headquarters**  
P.O. 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 22601-6312  
P: 540.665.0770  
F: 540.722.4217



## 40 YEARS LATER: Much More Than Cheese

*An abundance to share with our partners!*

*In February 1982, the Food Bank received its first-ever delivery of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) products.*



**1982:**  
First USDA Delivery



**TODAY:**  
Average Weekly USDA Delivery