

S'morgasbord

FALL 2022
FEEDING THE VALLEY FOOD BANK NEWSLETTER



There is no *Us* without *You!*

What a wonderful celebration of community. Thank you, Albany Georgia, for making us feel welcome as we open our new Ledo Road facility to serve families in Calhoun, Dougherty, Lee, and Terrell counties!

We know the best is yet to come with the increased capacity this new warehouse will bring and we know that more families will be served through our ministry of feeding hungry people.

March 24, 2022, was a milestone day, and we were honored to have Feeding America CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot celebrate with us at our warehouse luncheon and be our guest speaker. She shared strong messages of collaboration, having a united purpose, and serving families by ensuring that there is healthy, nutritious food on everyone's table.

We appreciate the trust the community has shown us, and we are committed to doing our very best to assist and serve those that need our help.

Everyone is welcome at our table.



Frank Sheppard, Ga. State Senator Freddie Powell-Sims, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, and Ga. State Representative Gerald Greene



Food Lion Feeds Albany!



U.S. Congressman Sanford Bishop presents to Claire Babineaux-Fontenot

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Food for Thought

The worst of the pandemic may be behind us, but it has transitioned into an economic pandemic. We continue to operate at a fast pace as inflation has impacted everything and everyone. Hunger may not dominate the headlines, but there is no question that the crisis continues. We just ended our fiscal year for 2021-2022, and we distributed **16,077,874 lbs. of food** in our service area. We continue to serve families that have never needed food assistance before. They are using food banks to help supplement their monthly groceries as food and fuel costs have stretched their budgets.

As we work diligently to fill these needs, we also continue our plans to open our new distribution center in Albany, Georgia. Supply chain issues and labor challenges have created delays for the project, but we are moving forward.

In March, we held a community luncheon in Albany and were honored to host Feeding America CEO, Claire Babineaux-Fontenot. We showcased our new facility and shared how it will increase our capacity and better serve some of the most impoverished counties in the state. We look forward to being fully operational in the next few months, and we are confident that we will make an even bigger impact on our four new southern counties: Calhoun, Dougherty, Lee, and Terrell.

Our expansion plans are to begin expanding our Midland, Georgia warehouse. **Our cold and frozen storage will increase by 50% and our dry storage space by 100%. Our volunteers will be much more comfortable and happy to have a new air-conditioned volunteer center!** We hope to begin this project in the early fall. It was just 5 1/2 years ago that we cut the ribbon at this warehouse,



and we never expected that we would be expanding so soon. This will be a major enhancement for our operations and give us the opportunity to provide more fresh produce and frozen meats to families in our service area.

We were delighted to have our Driven to End Hunger Car Show in March and OutRun Hunger 5K in April. In May, the National Letter Carrier's Association Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive returned after a two-year COVID hiatus, and it was a record-breaker for us. Communities were generous and we received more than **100,000 lbs. of food donations**, which is greatly needed to help us through the summer months.

There just is no US without You! None of this remarkable work would be possible without the support of our food and financial donors, our passionate Partner Agencies, committed volunteers, and the hard-working, loyal Feeding the Valley team. We thank you all for your trust and for allowing us to serve families and bring hope to their table during these challenging times.

It takes a Valley to end hunger.



Young Servant Leaders

School, extracurricular activities, and part-time jobs ... How do they find the time to do anything else? Somehow, today's youth manage to fit in time to volunteer at non-profit organizations from soup kitchens to animal shelters. These opportunities benefit them in many ways as well as benefit the community and should not be underestimated.

Young volunteers learn valuable hands-on skills, better communication, teamwork, creativity, problem-solving, and time management, those valuable "soft skills" that we hear so much about. Volunteering builds self-confidence, and serving others can be empowering as well as rewarding. These experiences can impact their future careers and make them more well-rounded and marketable, and can impact them for life.

At Feeding the Valley, we celebrate our student volunteers from local schools and colleges. We have students who come from the elementary grades through college take on many tasks in our warehouse. We have two Ready to Work high school classes that

volunteer every week through the school year, and it's difficult for us to say goodbye when school ends. Our Partner Agencies also benefit tremendously from student volunteers.



"There are many people who don't have the right access to food, especially with inflation. People are having trouble buying the basic necessities. A program like this, for working families, helps them out and that makes me feel good."

-Savannah

Savanna McSweeney, a Pacelli High School senior has volunteered every month of the school year at St. Anne Community Outreach's evening food distribution for working families.

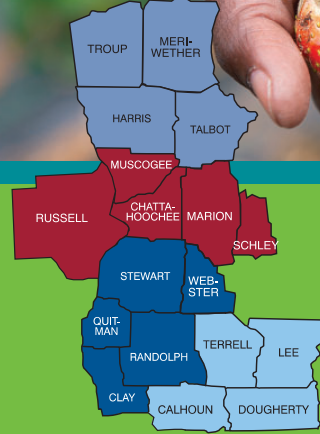
All in all, these students are making an investment in their community and that's powerful.



3,204,224 Pounds of
Fresh Produce Distributed

21-22 OUR IMPACT!

More Than
16 Million Pounds
of Food Distributed



18
Serving
Counties



22,000
Volunteer
Hours



9.2 Million
Mobile
Pantry
Pounds
Distributed

54
Food Donors



325
Partner
Agencies



14,000
Senior Meals



531,603
Kids Cafe Meals

99,294
Mobile
Pantry
Boxes



40,640
Buddy Packs