

SUMMER 2024

THE NEWS FEED



YOUR SUPPORT NOURISHES BETTER HEALTH

Imagine getting a diagnosis of diabetes from your doctor and being told you need to eat plenty of fresh veggies and lean proteins—exactly the things you can't afford at the grocery store. That's what happened to Henry.

Sadly, many of our neighbors face financial barriers to the nutrition they need to manage a health condition, especially if they're also having to stretch the budget to cover necessary medications. But at Feeding the Valley Albany, supporters like you are stretching out a helping hand.

The Catalyst Project is a collaboration between United Healthcare, Feeding the Valley, Flint River Fresh, and Albany Area Primary Care (AAPC). Patients referred by AAPC, like Henry, receive weekly "prescription boxes" tailored to their dietary needs, with healthful choices like turkey, shrimp, fresh greens, sweet potatoes, and apples.

"Before, I did not take care of my diabetes," Henry admits, as he was forced to eat mainly processed foods. **"Now I can eat lean, healthy food, which helps so much. My mood has improved!"**

Paul, another Catalyst Project participant, once had to choose between paying bills and buying food. "I appreciate everything AAPC and Feeding the Valley do for me," he says joyfully. "I feel better!" Oven-roasted sweet potatoes, nostalgic due to memories of his father, have become a favorite. Together, we're breaking down the barriers to better health!

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FRESH THOUGHTS

April was National Volunteer Month, the perfect time to honor and recognize the hundreds of Superhero volunteers behind so much of our work. With selfless dedication, they pack food boxes and Buddy Packs, sort donated food and fresh produce, and lend their helping hands in our kitchen. They truly are heroes in solving hunger in our community.

We're also grateful to all who participated in the National Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger food drive this spring and to local media outlets and retailers that hosted food drives of their own.

As you may know, we help thousands of children during the summer months when school lunches aren't available, so this opportunity to "stock up" is a lifeline. Thanks to these food drives and your support, we can send nearly 5,000 Kids Café meals a day to children in Muscogee County and outlying rural counties.



Cathy Horne of Open Door Community House in Columbus, GA, says gratefully, ***"We have a vital partnership with Feeding the Valley. Our after-school students and summer camp students receive a hot, nutritious meal every day through Feeding the Valley's Kids Café Program. For some students, this is their only afternoon meal."***

Meanwhile, our Farmer's Truck is racking up the miles distributing fresh fruits and vegetables, a true blessing for families facing budget challenges due to high grocery costs. The smiles we see are priceless.

This summer, *lettuce* celebrate the goodness we can create and the nourishment we provide to families facing hunger!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Frank Sheppard".

Frank Sheppard
President & CEO

**WANT TO BECOME
A SUPERHERO
VOLUNTEER YOURSELF?**

Visit feedingthevalley.org/getinvolved
to find your perfect spot!

FOOD LION FEEDS THE DAWSON COMMUNITY

A drizzly January day didn't discourage the eight Food Lion store managers and associates who showed up in force to volunteer at our first Mobile Pantry of the year. Their bright blue shirts read, "I'm helping to feed so no one has to choose between dinner and rent."

In our last issue, we shared how a grant from Food Lion Feeds transformed the food ministry space at Raines Baptist Church in the Great Food Pantry Makeover. These volunteers continued the generosity by working alongside the Dawson Fire Department to distribute food to the Dawson community.

The need was obvious: Cars began lining up three hours before the food distribution began. Volunteers bagged groceries and fresh produce, then placed them in more than 300 cars. Please join us in thanking Food Lion Feeds and their hard-working volunteers!



"I came out to help today. It's always great when you can see events like this in the towns we serve, but it's rewarding when you can be a part of it." Food Lion Volunteer



LIFTING OUR PARTNER AGENCIES

With some special grant funding from Feeding Georgia, Cutliff Grove Baptist Church received a new forklift! This special grant is aimed to support Partner Agencies in rural Georgia. Frank Sheppard, President & CEO, and Steve Watson, Director of Operations, presented Juanita Nixon with the new forklift, and she was overjoyed! She didn't waste time taking it for a test drive. We know that it will be put to good use to streamline the operations of their food ministry.

THANK YOU FOR HELPING OUR NATION'S HEROES



Like most Americans, you probably honor our servicemen and women for selflessly protecting our freedom. Yet also like most Americans, you may not realize that one in six of them are grappling with food insecurity. **To put it simply, many of our nation's heroes struggle to put food on their tables.**

The reasons are complex. The soaring cost of living, the demands of growing families, the costs of frequent relocations, low pay scales for enlisted service members, and the struggles of military spouses to find employment at new duty stations—all contribute to this reality. Most soldiers do not qualify for assistance because their Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) is considered part of their income.

Yet, in the face of these hardships, military families are resilient, and your support for Feeding the Valley is helping to ease the burden.

At Fort Moore, formerly Fort Benning, Ga., for example, we're working with the Chaplains on post and through our partner agency, St. Anne Community Outreach, to make a difference. A Mobile Pantry food distribution started in January exclusively to serve active-duty soldiers and their families.



Volunteers packing groceries you helped provide for the Active-Duty Mobile Pantry Food Distribution at St. Anne Community Outreach

Thank you for honoring our military neighbors in a truly meaningful way!

"Many of our team members at St. Anne's are military families themselves, and they see the struggles firsthand. Our soldiers, especially our junior NCOs (non-commissioned officers) with families, should never have to worry about where their next meal will come from. They've already committed to deploy and defend our nation's interests; ensuring their families are cared for shouldn't be another battle they have to fight." - Kelly Tolman, St. Anne Community Outreach Director and also a military spouse.