

SUMMER 2024

# THE NEWS FEED



## YOUR SUPPORT HELPS END DOMESTIC ABUSE

Each year, people are forced to remain in abusive situations because they have nowhere else to go. But did you know that through your support for Feeding the Valley, you are helping many start a new life?

Harmony House in LaGrange, Georgia, serves as a safe place for women and their children to escape abuse. While there, residents receive food, medical care, assistance with a Temporary Protective Order, counseling, and more. As you can imagine, they have to make the best use of every penny. Director Michele Bedingfield explains the vital role of your generosity, "We are able to work within a food budget of \$250 a week for our 14 clients because of Feeding the Valley Food Bank."

All that support meant the world to Erica\* when she called Harmony House. They helped her develop a safety plan and an exit plan, and Erica was able to bring her two children to the shelter. Two years later, they're in a safe home of their own, Erica continues with counseling, and the kids are thriving in school.

Michele knows that kindness can change lives. "When people give to a non-profit, they don't always know who the receiver will be, but they do it anyway," she explains. "This act of kindness allows my team and the individuals they serve to become heroes (and survivors)."

This is just one of many ways you're supporting life transformation in our community. Thank you!

*Michele Bedingfield*

*\*Name changed for privacy reasons.*



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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](https://feedingthevalley.org/getinvolved)  
to find your perfect spot!



## ON THE MOVE TO SOLVE HUNGER

Earlier this year, we welcomed a new addition to our fleet! **Thanks to Publix Supermarket Charities, in their mission to alleviate hunger, 22 mobile food pantry “Farmer’s Trucks” are rolling out of their parking lots with fresh produce to communities facing food insecurity.**

In our 18-county footprint in Georgia and east Alabama, six of the counties we serve are in the top ten counties with the highest food insecurity rate in the state of Georgia. The opportunity to offer more fresh fruits and vegetables is a game changer for these rural counties.

**“Helping provide food to our neighbors in need is at the heart of our philanthropic efforts at Publix,”** said Publix CEO Todd Jones. “We’re thankful to Publix Super Markets Charities for their continued support of hunger alleviation efforts. Their support and our work with food banks throughout the Southeast provide nourishment and better the lives of families and individuals in our communities. We’re proud to do good, together.”

**“One in ten people in America experience food insecurity, so improving access to fresh, nutritious food is as important as ever,”** said Feeding America CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot. “We know we can end hunger in America when we work together with communities, with people facing hunger, and with generous partners like Publix and Publix Super Markets Charities. We are incredibly appreciative of their long-standing support.”

## AT YOUR SERVICE!

We are open for business! Our new warehouse is gradually coming back to life after a short pause during the move from Gordon Commercial Drive. **Our new address is 231 New Hutchinson Mill Road, LaGrange, GA 30240**, and Jimmy and Barry are serving our Troup, Meriwether, Harris, and Talbot County Partner Agencies!

In addition to serving Partner Agencies, several Mobile Pantry food distributions occur every month to serve these counties. The Mobile Pantry food distribution schedule is set for the year and can be found on our website: [feedingthevalley.org/findfood](https://feedingthevalley.org/findfood).



# 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.