

THE NEWS FEED

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A HEART FOR SERVICE

"It's more than just handing out food," says Madison Kinnering, a spirited junior majoring in Biology at Columbus State University.

Madison has been volunteering since she was a little girl, when her mother encouraged her to volunteer with Autism Speaks. **"I've always felt a pull toward helping others,"** she says with a bright smile. "When I discovered the CSU Servant Leadership Program, it felt like it is where I belonged." Through this program, Madison is honing her leadership skills while making a tangible difference in her community.

"It's about recognizing the silent struggles of others and extending a hand of support."

Already, Madison has logged more than 300 volunteer hours with Feeding the Valley, and she's still going strong! She's a jack of all trades in our warehouse. We can count on her to take on anything and do it well. She's found that even the simplest acts, like sealing boxes on the mobile food pantry line or offering a listening ear to someone in need, have a profound impact when done with kindness.

Amanda Jones, Feeding the Valley Volunteer Coordinator, says, "Madison is a well-rounded leader. She's a 'take charge' volunteer. I can rely on her to give directions and delegate responsibilities, all with a positive spirit."

For Madison, service isn't just a duty—it's a privilege. Madison, it's **our pleasure** to work with you!

If you'd like to volunteer at Feeding the Valley, visit feedingthevalley.org/volunteer



Madison Kinnering

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The Southern Oregon Softball team returned to volunteer with us! They are participating in the NAIA Championship, and as part of this experience, they dive into a community service project for a half day. We were happy to see them again!



FRESH THOUGHTS

From Frank Sheppard, President & CEO

I hope you'll take a moment to look at the Impact Report in this newsletter. **Our Partner Agencies, our volunteers, our team, and YOU made a difference in the lives of so many families during our last fiscal year.**

Your support has been especially important because Feeding America data shows that **food insecurity has increased by 7% across our 18-county service area**, driven by inflation and rising grocery costs. With your help, we've been able to step up to this challenge.

Local foundations and individual donors like you also helped fully fund our \$5.7 million expansion project. While funds from the American Rescue Plan and CARES Act kickstarted the project, we relied on our community for 40% of the funding, and you came through!

During the first half of this year, we cut the ribbon and opened our new Aflac Hunger Action Center (HAC) at our Columbus facility. This state-of-the-art center boasts expanded warehouse space, increased cold and frozen storage, and a brand-new volunteer center. With these enhancements, we're better equipped than ever to meet the growing demand for hunger relief in all of the counties we serve, providing more nutritious options like lean meats and healthy, fresh produce.

Our volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization. We invite you to enjoy our climate-controlled volunteer center and help us feed neighbors in need.

To our generous grant providers and private donors, we extend our sincerest thanks. **Through your support, you are tackling the urgent issues of food insecurity head-on, reaching more families, children, seniors, veterans, and homeless individuals in our community than ever before.** Together, we're making a real and lasting difference in the lives of those who need it most.



FOOD AS MEDICINE: A Lifeline for Health

Food insecurity is not just about hunger; it's a major health crisis. Poor nutrition can cause serious health issues like diabetes. According to the National Library of Medicine, diabetes rates jump from 10% in mildly food-insecure households to 16.1% in those facing severe food insecurity.

Recognizing the critical link between diet and health, Feeding the Valley has teamed up with our partner agency, Food Mill, to offer a lifeline. Together, we're providing free, nutritious meals to healthcare patients who need them most, thanks to a generous grant from the Elevance Foundation. Patients with diet-related illnesses can also attend healthy cooking classes, learn how to shop for healthy food on a budget, and receive delicious, nutritious recipes.

WITH YOUR SUPPORT, we can turn the tide against food insecurity and diet-related illnesses, one meal at a time.



DID YOU KNOW?

FOOD BANKS are the backbone of the hunger relief system, ensuring a steady supply of food to smaller, community-based food pantries. **FOOD PANTRIES** are the critical frontline service points that directly assist individuals and families facing food insecurity. Both are part of a comprehensive network working tirelessly to combat hunger in our communities.

FOOD BANKS

Typically operates at the regional level, serving numerous local pantries and other organizations.



OPERATION:

Operates at the community level, often run by churches, non-profits, or community organizations.

FOOD PANTRIES

Receives donations from food manufacturers, retailers, farmers, and community food drives.



SOURCE OF FOOD:

Receives food from food banks, local donations, and community food drives.

Equipped with large warehouses capable of storing vast amounts of food, including refrigerated and frozen items.



STORAGE:

Typically has limited storage space, focusing on distributing food as quickly as possible.

Supplies food to food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other community programs.



DISTRIBUTION:

Offers food directly to clients, often through scheduled pick-up times or appointments.

2023-2024 OUR IMPACT!



More Than **15** Million Pounds of Food Distributed



4,537,460 Pounds of Fresh Produce Distributed

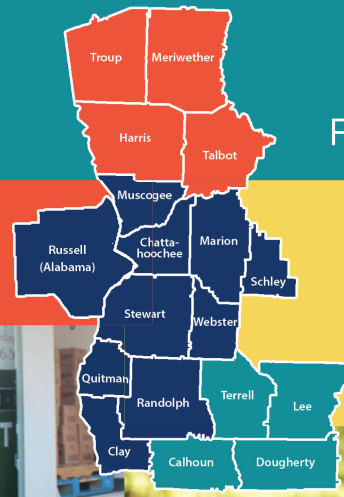
62,428 Volunteer Hours

110 Food Donors



38,757 Senior Meals

Serving **18** Counties



5.2 Million Mobile Pantry Pounds Distributed



41,250 Buddy Packs

141,925 Kids Cafe Summer Meals

LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Visit our website feedingthevalley.org for ways to get involved! You can donate food, start a food drive, volunteer at the Food Bank, or make a donation. Join us in ensuring that no one in our community goes hungry.

