

YOUR SUPPORT HELPS A COMMUNITY FOCUS ON HOPE

For 40 years, FOCUS Ministries has supported the emotional, educational, financial, and spiritual needs of their neighbors in Harris County.

“Authenticity is what draws people to FOCUS,” says Associate Director Curt Ellis. “People trust us because we show authenticity. It’s not about abilities but about availability.”

Your support of Feeding the Valley allows FOCUS to stock their shelves with donated food for their community. This leaves more resources for their other assistance programs, such as rent and utility assistance and pastoral care. “It’s a blessing,” Curt says.

Every day, your generosity helps people overcome their challenges through our partner agencies!

FOCUS has recently moved into their new facility, the FOCUS Philomena Center, allowing them to expand their services. A larger, client-choice food pantry is a highlight, along with their innovative Level Up! experiential arts programs—offering activities

like culinary skills, arts, music, martial arts, drama, sewing, and more.

Rodica is grateful for the help and community she finds there. Originally from Romania, Rodica performed as an opera singer across Europe and moved to the U.S. with her husband, an American opera singer. But life changed dramatically after his passing, and Rodica sought a fresh start in Pine Mountain. “I meet the kindest people at FOCUS, and they look after me,” she says. “I need people, and I need their hugs. This place gives me hope.”

Thank you for giving hope through hundreds of partner agencies like FOCUS!

Curt and Rodica at the new FOCUS Philomena Center



FRESH THOUGHTS

From Frank Sheppard, President & CEO



Generous community members like you really stepped up to make 2024 a year of growth and transformation for Feeding the Valley! Here are just a few of the things we've accomplished together:



Facility Expansion Complete

We completed our 24,000 sq. ft. expansion and opened our new Hunger Action Volunteer Center to give our heroic volunteers an even

better experience. Volunteers are the backbone of our mission, giving their time and talents to make an impact. We want each volunteer to leave feeling fulfilled and motivated to return, bringing others with them!

Farmer's Truck Launch

During the growing season, our new Farmer's Truck—filled to the brim with fresh fruits and vegetables—traveled to specific areas to reach seniors and underserved communities, especially in smaller counties where resources are scarce.



Food as Medicine Gains Traction

Funded by a grant from the Amerigroup Foundation, our Food as Medicine program continues to grow. Partnering

with healthcare providers, we deliver nutritious,

healthy meals to patients battling diet-related illnesses. We're also empowering individuals to take charge of their well-being through healthy cooking classes and smart shopping tips for nutritious meals on a budget.

Big Gobble Success

Thanks to our donors, we delivered more than 3,000 traditional Thanksgiving meals to seniors, homebound individuals, veterans, and people experiencing homelessness. There's nothing more rewarding than knowing you made someone's holiday brighter!



These accomplishments are all the more important when you consider that food insecurity has been rising across the area we serve. As more families and seniors struggle to balance their budgets in 2025, every donor, volunteer, and partner is essential to meet the growing need. Thank you for your incredible support to feed hope and fight hunger in your community!

Frank Sheppard
President & CEO

MORE THAN MEALS, WITH YOUR HELP

Valley Rescue Mission on 2nd Avenue is a longstanding beacon of hope in Columbus. Meals, thrift store vouchers, hygiene kits, and heartfelt care offer healing and dignity to people experiencing homelessness and other challenges. Their addiction recovery program is led by graduates of the program itself, and their transitional living program helps 15 men at a time connect with job training, meals, and the support needed to rebuild their lives.

Their daily Loaves & Fishes ministry provides warm meals to the community, no questions asked, with the help of fresh ingredients and pantry staples provided by Feeding the Valley donors like you. On a recent visit, we saw your support in action.

Among those waiting in line were an elderly woman, a young man, and his dog resting by his feet. Smiles and greetings were exchanged, reflecting the warmth inside. At 3 p.m., the doors opened. Staff greeted many guests by name, and volunteers served generously, offering both physical



nourishment and spiritual encouragement through a prayer led by a program graduate. Here, guests left with more than food—they left with a sense of community and compassion.

Chef Quinn Tolbert, who oversees meals for 60–90 people each day, shared his reason for being there: “You get a chance to love people who don’t always feel loved. They need someone to lean on.”

Every day, thanks to your generosity, scenes like this are repeated at partner agencies across Georgia. Thank you!

THREE EVENTS- ONE MISSION!

SAVE THESE DATES

MARCH 9 | **30th Annual Empty Bowl Luncheon**

Like a warm bowl of soup and beautiful artsy bowls and pottery? You’ll be bowled over at our 30th Annual Empty Bowl Luncheon on March 9 at Northside Recreation Center!

APRIL 5 | **9th Annual OutRun Hunger and Fun Walk**

Like to Run? Runners and walkers looking for fresh air, good exercise, and family fun, join us on April 5 for our 9th Annual OutRun Hunger and Fun Walk!

APRIL 26 | **Driven to End Hunger Car Show**

Like cool cars? Rev up your engine and enjoy browsing some beautiful, old, classic, hot cars and motorcycles at our Driven to End Hunger Car Show on April 26!

Feed

FARMER'S TRUCK ON THE ROAD!

In senior living communities, many of our neighbors are living on a fixed income and struggling to afford the nutritious food they need to stay healthy. Meanwhile, in many remote areas in our southern counties, it can be hard for residents to access fresh foods. The solution? Our new Farmer's Truck!

Thanks to the generous support of Publix Charities, we were able to launch this new program last summer. Fully loaded with fresh, healthy fruits



and vegetables, the Farmer's Truck traveled to underserved communities, where people were eagerly awaiting this special delivery. It didn't take long for shelves to empty and bags to fill with delicious produce. The smiles said it all—the Farmer's Truck is a huge hit! Here's to nourishing our community together, one delivery at a time.

NEW OVENS HEAT UP MEAL DELIVERIES

We're excited to share that our commercial kitchen—where all the meal magic happens—will be getting two brand-new ovens!

Our Kids Cafe, Senior Meals, and Food as Medicine programs rely on our commercial kitchen to turn the ingredients you supply into healthy, filling meals for many of our neighbors facing food insecurity

and other challenges. These new ovens will help us serve even more meals to those who need them most.

We're grateful to Publix Charities for their investment in our community and to all of our donors whose caring support helps put good food on the table!



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.

