

## WHERE KIDS FIND FRIENDSHIP, FOOD, AND FAMILY

Every morning, our kitchen team shows up with heart and purpose, putting care into every meal they prepare for our Kids Café Program. During the school year, they craft about 2,500 meals a day, but when summer rolls around and schools close their cafeterias, that number doubles to 5,000. It's a fast-paced, high-energy environment, but they would not have it any other way.

Thanks to generous donors like you, the Kids Café Program is able to provide fuel for growing minds and bodies, and stability during a season that can be uncertain for many families. Your support packs our trucks and vans with good meals heading throughout Albany and beyond for the children who need it most.

Our partnership with the YMCA's Childcare Program means children enjoy hot, nutritious meals that nourish their bodies and create moments of togetherness and belonging.

With nearly 38% of children in Albany facing food insecurity, the YMCA plays a vital role in supporting families and providing a safe, uplifting space. Here, siblings in foster care who may not share the same home are given the opportunity to spend meaningful time together. And all students, whether reconnecting with school friends or making new ones, enjoy sharing a warm meal together.



Bright smiles at the Albany Area YMCA, where your support delivers delicious meals daily!

This partnership ensures that every child in the program receives the nutrition they need to thrive, both physically and emotionally. The meals served each day represent more than food, they represent the caring support of a community that believes every child deserves the chance to grow strong and flourish.

# FRESH THOUGHTS

From Frank Sheppard, President & CEO



Thank you for helping us end our fiscal year strongly, distributing more than 13 million meals to children, families, and seniors across our region. I hope you'll take a look at the impact report in this newsletter to see more of your support in action.

Yet even with this good news, Feeding America data shows food insecurity is growing in our counties. More working families are turning to us for support. Your continued support is critical to provide nourishment and care. Here are a few ways we're meeting the need:

## Food Drives:



The National Letter Carrier's Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive, two community drives led by local TV stations in Columbus and Albany, and another hosted by a major Columbus dealership stocked our shelves just in time to meet increased summer need. Food drives are a powerful force bridging the meal gap.

## Food as Medicine:

Launched a year ago in partnership with local healthcare providers, this program delivers healthy meals each week to patients with diet-related

illnesses. Patients also receive cooking guidance to prepare their own meals. We're proud of this growing work.

## Nourishing LaGrange and Troup County:



Thanks to a generous grant from Kroger, we're able to store more perishable foods in our brand new walk-in cooler. We've also been able to add a new Mobile Pantry in the heart of LaGrange. Caring volunteers have stepped up and more neighbors are coming as word spreads. And our mobile farmer's market truck now makes regular monthly visits to senior centers across LaGrange and Troup County.

## New Service in Columbus:

We'll soon open a Neighbor Market at our Columbus warehouse with evening hours designed especially for working families who can't make it to our weekday mobile pantries.

Because of you, families are nourished, seniors are remembered, and children go to bed with a full stomach. Thank you for standing with us and for making sure no one faces hunger alone.

Frank Sheppard  
President & CEO

## FOOD INSECURITY IN OUR SERVICE AREA

COUNTY	POPULATION	OVERALL FOOD INSECURITY RATE (ALL AGES)	CHILD FOOD INSECURITY RATE	COUNTY	POPULATION	OVERALL FOOD INSECURITY RATE (ALL AGES)	CHILD FOOD INSECURITY RATE
Calhoun	5,528	17.70%	29.80%	Quitman	2,092	19.20%	32.10%
Chattahoochee	9,181	18.60%	23.40%	Randolph	6,270	20.20%	37.60%
Clay	2,853	18.40%	36.10%	Russell (AL)	58,858	20.00%	30.00%
Dougherty	83,915	19.70%	37.80%	Schley	4,539	15.30%	15.90%
Harris	35,509	11.50%	11.40%	Stewart	4,978	21.90%	39.00%
Lee	33,337	11.60%	13.60%	Talbot	5,753	17.30%	33.40%
Marion	7,474	16.90%	25.20%	Terrell	8,941	21.60%	40.00%
Meriwether	20,757	17.90%	28.00%	Troup	69,821	17.10%	26.00%
Muscogee	204,383	17.90%	28.50%	Webster	2,348	17.10%	31.40%

\*Source: Feeding America data 2023

# GROWING LEADERS, BUILDING CHARACTER

The Young Marines is more than just a youth program, it's a place where young people in Albany grow into strong, responsible leaders. Open to boys and girls ages 8 through high school graduation, this national program is rooted in building character, discipline, and a commitment to living a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

In addition to physical fitness and team building, the Young Marines serve our community by volunteering at fun runs, clean-up events, and Feeding the Valley. "The Young Marines have been volunteering at our warehouse for many years, and I know firsthand of their work ethic and character as young individuals and a unit. It doesn't matter if it's a scheduled volunteer appointment or a last-minute request for help; they show up ready to work and serve their community with honor and good citizenship," says Jay Cannon, Albany Facility Manager.



You're never too young to make a difference in your community!

This program empowers kids to make good choices. With a strong focus on drug prevention and health, the Young Marines equips youth with the tools they need to thrive—physically, mentally, and morally. It's a powerful start for any young person ready to grow into their best self.

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE: HOST A FOOD DRIVE!

During our current food shortage, food drives are a critical way to bridge the meal gap. When you host a food drive, every can, every box, and every bag of non-perishable food adds up to real hope for families facing hunger.

Host an in-person drive or raise donations for a virtual food drive as a fun fundraising challenge. Either way, you'll make a difference in your community. To get you started, here are some of the best non-perishable items to gather:

- Canned meats and tuna
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Canned fruits and vegetables

- Boxed meals (mac & cheese, pasta kits)
- Rice, pasta, and dry beans
- Cereal and oatmeal
- Shelf-stable milk
- Canned soups and stews
- Snack items for kids (granola bars, crackers, fruit cups)

Every can counts. Every effort matters. And every dollar donated can help provide **six meals** to neighbors in need. For more, visit [feedingthevalley.org/give-food](https://feedingthevalley.org/give-food).



# 2024-2025 OUR IMPACT!

More Than  
**15 MILLION POUNDS**  
of Food Distributed



Mobile Farmers Market Truck  
**71,595 POUNDS** of Produce  
Distributed



**4.8 MILLION POUNDS** of  
Fresh Produce  
Distributed



**5.9 MILLION**  
Mobile Pantry  
**POUNDS** Distributed



**482,899**  
Kids Cafe Meals



**71,050**  
Volunteer Hours

**101,254**  
Mobile Pantry  
Boxes

**18** Serving  
**COUNTIES**

**81,409**  
Senior Meals



**42,791**  
Buddy Packs



**1,454**  
Medically  
Tailored Meals



## LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Visit our website [feedingthevalley.org](http://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.

