

NOURISHING LAGRANGE: NEW MOBILE PANTRY BRINGS FOOD AND HOPE TO FAMILIES

We have launched a brand-new Mobile Pantry food distribution in LaGrange. It's another way we're working to ensure no family goes without food.

"Food insecurity is on the rise in Troup County—currently affecting 17% of the overall population and a staggering 26% of children," says Jimmy Pruitt, LaGrange Site Manager. "That means one in four children may be going to bed with an empty stomach. This additional food distribution is our way of stepping up to meet that need and support families who are struggling with skyrocketing grocery and housing costs. They're working hard but just can't make ends meet, and that's where we come in."

Every second Tuesday of the month at Shuford Fields, cars begin to line up early, and in just a few hours, we've served an average of 300 families at each drive-thru since we started in March.

What makes this truly special is the spirit of service that fills the air. Volunteers from local churches, city leaders, and nonprofit partners come together and bag up fresh produce, frozen meats, dairy, bakery items, and pantry staples.

Their compassion is shown by their warm smiles and open hearts. They greet each driver with gratitude: *"Thank you for letting us serve you today."*



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

"THIS PARTNERSHIP WAS A GAME CHANGER."

After 35 years of working for the state—first in mental health, then with Department of Family and Child Services—Freida Hart brought her deep understanding of family and senior needs into a new chapter of service: leading the food pantry ministry at Faith Baptist in LaGrange.

What started as a quiet effort to help a handful of people has grown into a vital ministry serving over 100 families each month. With support from Feeding the Valley, shelves once stocked from our local grocery stores now overflow with nutritious choices. "This partnership was a game changer," she says.

The stories from their pantry are both heartbreaking and hopeful. Seniors who once felt relief from temporary food assistance now find themselves again having to choose between real meals and canned goods. Others are stepping up to raise their grandchildren, despite fixed incomes

Community partners like Freida Hart are at the forefront of sharing your generosity with neighbors facing hunger.



and health struggles. Some have shared that the pantry is the only place where they can get fresh meat, eggs, and vegetables.

One of Freida's most memorable moments came when a father who had been recently released from prison came to the pantry for help feeding his children. A year later, she ran into him in the grocery store. With pride in his voice, he said he now had a full-time job and was able to support his family again. "You restored my faith in people," he told her.

"We can't solve every problem," Freida says, "but we can meet people where they are, with dignity and a box of good food."

LOOKING FOR A WAY TO GIVE BACK?

Volunteering with Feeding the Valley is an excellent way to make a real impact in your community, and we'd love to have you on our team. Every volunteer plays a vital role in helping us nourish families facing hunger.

Our Mobile Pantries are always looking for more volunteers. In just a few hours, you can help more families put nourishing food on their

tables. Just create your volunteer profile today at feedingthevalley.org/volunteer and sign up for an event that fits your schedule. By day's end, your heart will be full, knowing you helped brighten someone's life in a meaningful way.

Come grow with us—because our community is stronger with you in it!

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 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.

