

## THE NEIGHBOR MARKET: GROCERY SHOPPING WITH HEART AND DIGNITY

We are excited to share the opening of our new **Neighbor Market!**

Designed with working families in mind, **the Neighbor Market is a fresh, inviting food pantry that is open to visitors in the evenings,** offering the same client-choice shopping experience they'd find at any supermarket.

Here, neighbors don't just receive a pre-packed box or bag of pre-selected food. They get to shop for the foods that fit their family's tastes, needs, and routines. The market feels like a **cozy neighborhood grocery store,** complete with

shelves, coolers, and freezers filled with a variety of nutritious options. Shoppers grab a cart, browse the aisles, and fill it with the foods they know their families will enjoy.

And because we want this experience to be warm and welcoming for everyone, **there's even a special space for kids to color or work on puzzles while mom and dad shop!**

What makes the Neighbor Market truly special is the dignity and empowerment it provides. Clients can get the helping hand they need, and choosing their own food brings a sense of independence and respect. It's environmentally friendly, too: this kind of shopping experience helps reduce waste, since families take only what they'll use.



**The Neighbor Market is more than just a pantry. It's a place of hope, connection, and community, and a step forward in our shared journey toward a hunger-free future!**

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# FRESH THOUGHTS

From Frank Sheppard, President & CEO



## Partner Agency Mini Grants

The past few months have brought their share of challenges. Ongoing food shortages, reduced federal funding, a government shutdown, and cuts to SNAP and Medicaid have left most of us feeling anxious. But even during these difficulties, we're thrilled to share some great news!

Thanks to special capacity-building funds from Feeding America, we've been able to invest directly in our partner agencies through a new mini grant program. These grants are designed for

short-term, smaller projects: purchasing coolers, freezers, and other essential equipment, or using the funds as food credits. By purchasing food at wholesale costs and creating ways of storing fresh food safely, we're stretching every dollar even further, ensuring more nutritious food reaches our neighbors in need.



It's exciting to see these funds at work, strengthening our network and helping our partners serve their communities even better.

## Neighbor Market

And there is more good news! Thanks to a generous grant, we've launched our new Neighbor Market, a welcoming, thoughtfully designed space to help hardworking families who are still struggling to put food on their tables.

The Neighbor Market operates in the evenings, which better accommodates visitors with busy work schedules. It also uses a "choice" model, designed to mimic



the average grocery shopping experience. Guests can choose foods they know they'll use and enjoy, rather than pre-packaged bags or boxes. The result is a warm, inviting space where everyone feels comfortable and respected.

Because everyone deserves a dignified shopping experience, and no one should ever feel ashamed for needing a little help.

## Community Hunger Relief Fund

Thanks to you, our Community Hunger Relief Fund continues to gain momentum and inspire generosity across the communities we serve. It's truly a beautiful reflection of unity and compassion, neighbors helping neighbors, standing together to fight hunger.



**COMMUNITY  
HUNGER  
RELIEF FUND**

Feeding the Valley Food Bank

## Thank You

Every act of giving, large or small, makes a real difference. Your trust, kindness, and support make everything we do possible.

From all of us at Feeding the Valley, thank you for being such an important part of this mission. We are deeply grateful to you!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Frank Sheppard".

Frank Sheppard  
President & CEO

# HERE'S TO YOU!

**To all of our volunteers, partner agencies, community supporters, and our incredible donors, thank you!**

Your tireless efforts on behalf of your community haven't gone unnoticed. Whether you're packing a meal box, delivering food to seniors, running a local food drive, or simply making a gift in support of Feeding the Valley, you are truly changing the lives of seniors, children, veterans, and those experiencing homelessness—all thanks to your dedication, compassion, and commitment.

Your time, talents, and resources have a ripple effect—someone you may not have even met has gone through the life-changing experience of receiving support and a helping hand. Every can, every box, every bag of food adds up to real hope for families and individuals facing hunger.

This spring, we especially wish to thank our partner agencies, in particular those who have been



recognized at our Annual Partner Agency Training Meeting:

**Ebenezer Baptist Church** - "Community Commitment Award"

**Warm A Heart** - "Legacy of Compassion Award"

**Wynnton Neighborhood Network** - "Everyday Impact Award"

**These are the partners who are on the front lines, welcoming neighbors day in and day out, working to ensure that anyone in our community facing food insecurity has somewhere to turn.**

## THREE EVENTS, ONE GREAT CAUSE SAVE THE DATE

Let's turn hunger into history by filling plates (and hearts!) with love. We have three family-friendly events lined up, and we would love to see you there! Every dollar raised helps put food on tables and smiles on faces.

### **Annual Empty Bowl Luncheon | March 8**

You'll be bowled over! Join us at Northside Recreation Center and enjoy a delicious bowl of soup, bread, and dessert. You'll take home a beautiful, hand-crafted bowl as a reminder of the neighbors you've helped to feed.

### **10<sup>th</sup> Annual OutRun Hunger & Fun Walk | April 5**

For runners, walkers, and anyone who loves fresh air and fun! Lace up, stretch out, and make strides to end hunger.

### **Driven to End Hunger Car Show | April 18**

Rev up those engines and cruise on over to our **Driven to End Hunger Car Show on April 18!** From classic cruisers to hot rods and motorcycles, it's a feast for the eyes, and every entry helps fill our shelves.

Learn more at [feedingthevalley.org/events](https://feedingthevalley.org/events).

# FEEDING YOUNG MINDS: SCHOOL PANTRIES MAKING A DIFFERENCE

For students facing hunger, school pantries are a lifeline.

Imagine running late, skipping breakfast, and starting the day hungry. It's a long time until lunch, and focusing on schoolwork is tough when your tummy is rumbling.



Thankfully, there's a school pantry to the rescue! Students can grab a cereal bar or snack and head to class ready to learn. Located in a designated space within the school, these pantries complement meal programs by providing nutritious food during and after school hours.

These pantries are more than just shelves of food; they're shelves of opportunity. By ensuring students have access to the nourishment they need, school pantries help young people focus better, feel supported, and thrive both academically and socially.

Together, we're helping schools nourish bright futures, one student, one snack, one pantry at a time.



Thanks to our friends at Publix, we will be rolling out a second Mobile Farmers Market truck in the coming months! That means more fresh fruits and veggies on the move to nourish seniors and families across all 18 counties.

## GOBBLE... GOBBLE... GOBBLE...

It's a special day we look forward to every year, Thanksgiving and The Big Gobble!

Our entire community comes together with heart and purpose, from the dedicated teams helping with meal prep to the volunteers who deliver hot meals on Thanksgiving morning. In fact, volunteers start signing up as early as September because this day means so much to so many.

This year, we touched all of our 18 counties, delivering more than 5,000 Thanksgiving meals to families, homebound and disabled neighbors, veterans, and the homeless.

We are deeply grateful for the generous sponsors who make this beloved tradition possible:

- Maria Fondal Hill of Hope Foundation
- Kemps Dalton West Flooring
- Fred Taylor Company, Inc.
- Nucor
- Anonymous Sponsor

With their support, neighbors across our region will experience the warmth, dignity, and care of a community that shows up for one another.

## LETTUCE CELEBRATE!

## 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.

