

BRANCHES OF HOPE: GROWING SECOND CHANCES IN LAGRANGE

In the heart of LaGrange, there's a small house with a big purpose: to stand as a refuge for those who have nowhere else to turn.

At Branches of Hope, every bed, every warm meal, and every encouraging word is made possible by people like you who believe in second chances.

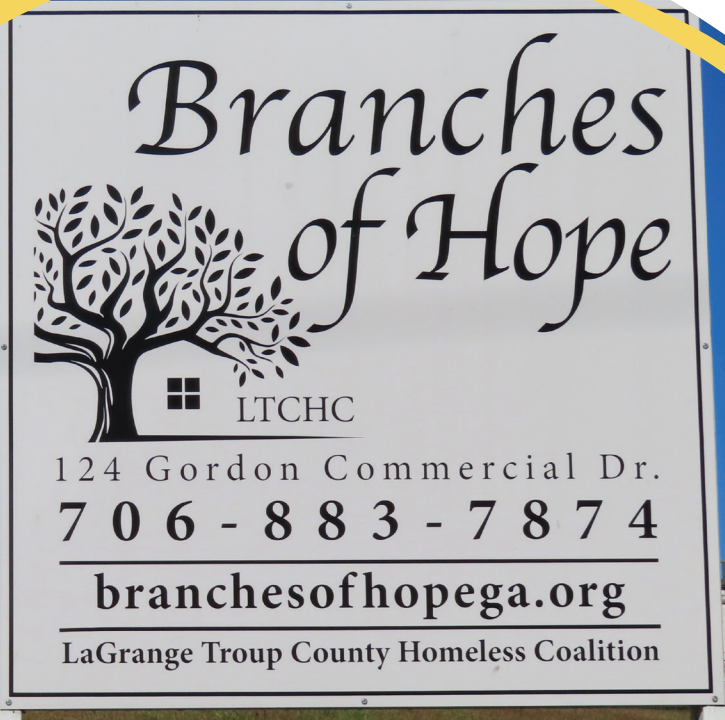
Branches of Hope provides **emergency and transitional housing**, along with supportive services, leading to an enhanced quality of life. Men and women facing homelessness are often referred by law enforcement or emergency services. These individuals are welcomed, cared for, and given the tools necessary to stabilize their lives. During their two-week stay, the focus is on helping them find employment and take their first steps toward independence. For those ready to rebuild, a six-month transitional program offers housing, financial counseling, and case management, helping residents save toward a permanent home and a new beginning.

One guest, Orlando, came to Branches of Hope lost and weary from living the "fast life." Over six months,

he rediscovered faith, discipline, and the joy of helping others. Today, Orlando has his own place, a steady job, and still returns to volunteer, reminding new residents that hope really does take root here.

LaGrange's compassionate community, full of people like you, makes stories like Orlando's possible. **The kind gifts of our donors provide more than shelter—they offer safety, dignity, and a path forward.**

Together, we're growing hope, one life at a time.



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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.



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:

- Western Heights** - "Strength in Partnership Award"
- Smyrna Baptist Church** - "Service Without Limits Award"
- Faith Baptist Church** - "Volunteer Leadership 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.

THEY CAME. THEY LEARNED. THEY LEFT INSPIRED!

We were privileged to host our friends from the Baptist Tabernacle at our LaGrange warehouse! From behind-the-scenes tours to updates on our programs in LaGrange and Troup County, it was a positive evening, full of energy and purpose. Plus, we got to share a sneak peek at some exciting new initiatives!

Baptist Tabernacle has been a long-time partner in fighting hunger, but this visit gave members a front-row view of the big picture: the daily work, the heart, and the community impact we're creating together.

We loved having them here! Want to bring your church or organization for a visit? Reach out to Jimmy Pruitt at jpruitt@feedingthevalley.org—we'd love to show you around, too!



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 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.

