THE NEWS FEED

**ISSUE:** COLUMBUS | FALL 2026

Feeding the Valley FOOD BANK

# A FULL CIRCLE BLESSING

Life can change in an instant.

Like many families, mine faced some tough challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. I was doing my best to hold everything together while dealing with financial hardship, uncertainty in my marriage, and the fear of not knowing what the future would bring. Bills were piling up, money was running short, and the prospect of eviction was feeling increasingly real.

During that difficult time, a friend reached out and told me about Feeding the Valley and its partnership with the Community Warriors, a local group of volunteers. He encouraged me to contact Feeding the Valley for help.

At first, I was hesitant. Asking for help wasn't easy, but I quickly learned that asking for help is not a weakness; it is often the first step toward hope.

With just one phone call and a little courage, I received enough groceries to help feed my family for several weeks. I was welcomed with kindness and respect.

Although I was grateful to have a job, my income was not yet enough to fully support my family and cover all of our expenses. The assistance we received through Feeding the Valley came at exactly the right moment. It relieved a burden that felt impossible to carry alone.

Your act of generosity and kindness gave me more than food: it gave me hope. Today, I am teaching 8th-grade math, and I enjoy volunteering at Feeding the Valley's Mobile Pantry with the Community Warriors. Thank you for making life a little brighter when it's needed most!

*Melissa*

Melissa
Volunteer and former Food Bank guest



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# FRESH THOUGHTS

From Frank Sheppard, President & CEO



As fall begins, we're reflecting on everything you made possible this summer. Thanks to your generosity, more than **5,000 Kids Café meals** were served each day to children across our community, while our Senior Meals Program continued providing nutritious meals to several hundred older adults living on limited incomes.

Take a look at our Annual Impact Report on the next page, and you'll see the difference you and other donors have ade. Every meal served, every child nourished, and every family supported is a direct reflection of your generosity.

Although total food distribution was about 10% lower than last year, the decline reflects an unprecedented food shortage impacting food banks across the nation. To strengthen our response, we've welcomed and promoted several leaders who know our mission firsthand:



**Marquel Jones** has moved from our driver team into a new role as a second Food Sourcing Manager helping secure more food for families in need.



**Tammy Wilson** is our new Agency Relations Manager, bringing valuable experience from her role as Columbus Warehouse Coordinator.



**Amanda O'Shields** has been promoted to Columbus Warehouse Coordinator after helping launch our Food as Medicine Program.





**Kacy Bodley** has been promoted to Albany Site Manager, while **Jay Cannon** now serves as Chief Administrative Officer.

Most of all, we want to thank YOU! Your generosity makes every meal, partnership, and success story possible. Together, we provide food, hope, and dignity to neighbors across our region.

Frank Sheppard
President & CEO

# BECOME A HUNGER HERO

**Every day, families, children, and seniors rely on Feeding the Valley Food Bank—and we rely on a special group of supporters: our Hunger Heroes.** Monthly gifts provide steady support all year long, helping us supply and distribute food through our network of partners so neighbors have access to the meals they need most.

**Just $1 helps provide 6 meals**, which means a monthly gift of **$50 can provide 300 meals—enough to help feed a family of three for a month.**

As a Hunger Hero, you're providing nourishment, hope, and stability for neighbors facing hunger while helping build a stronger, hunger-free community.

Become a Hunger Hero today at feedingthevalley.org to get started!

**Why become a Hunger Hero?**

- **Make a lasting impact:** Help provide nutritious food for neighbors all year long.
- **Give in a budget-friendly way:** Spread your support into manageable monthly gifts.
- **Simple and flexible:** Monthly giving is easy to set up, and you can change or cancel your gift anytime.
- **Provide reliable support:** Consistent gifts help Feeding the Valley and our partners plan ahead

Feeding the Valley FOOD BANK

# 25-26 OUR IMPACT!

**13** More Than Million Pounds of Food Distributed






**4** million Pounds of Fresh Produce Distributed



**6.4** Million Mobile Pantry Pounds Distributed

**512,500** Kids Cafe Meals

**48,994** Senior Meals





**33,702** Buddy Packs

**20,630** Medically Tailored Meals

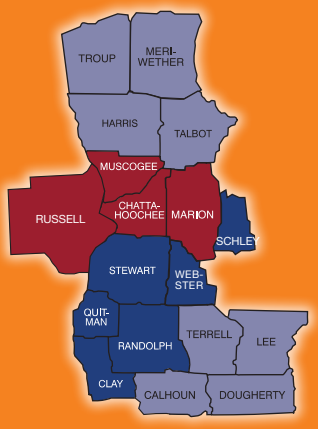
Mobile Farmers Market Truck **76,875** Pounds of Produce Distributed






**607,362** Kids Snacks

**93,368** Volunteer Hours




Serving **18** Counties





Neighbor Market served **1,015** individuals since February



# BIG GOBBLE TURKEYS

We're getting ready for the Big Gobble!

Volunteers have been signing up, and our kitchens are getting ready to prepare thousands of delicious Thanksgiving meals for neighbors across our community. The generosity and holiday spirit that make this event so special are already on full display!

During Thanksgiving week, frozen meals will be delivered throughout our service area. Then, on Thanksgiving Day, hot meals will be shared with shelters, veterans' organizations, and other community partners serving those who need a helping hand.

It isn't just gravy (pun intended!). Thanks to generous donors and volunteers, homebound seniors and families can gather around a meal and enjoy the holiday with loved ones.

**Want to help bring more to the table? Just $12.50 helps provide a Thanksgiving meal for a neighbor in need.**

Want to do even more? Become a Big Gobble sponsor! Visit **feedingthevalley.org/events** for more information. Together, we're carving out hunger and serving up gratitude, one meal at a time.

# HARVESTING HOPE



Feeding the Valley's incredible network of partners has made a deep impact felt across our communities, and Columbus Botanical Gardens is no exception.

Each year, Carolyn Reynolds and a dedicated team of volunteers lovingly tend their incredible vegetable garden. Those fresh, nutritious vegetables are served in our Kids Café and Senior Meal Programs, stocked on our Farmers Market truck as it travels across our 18-county service area, and shared through many of our Mobile Pantries.

Together, we're helping more neighbors enjoy healthy meals; proving that when a community comes together, everyone grows! Thank you to Carolyn and to all of the volunteers at Columbus Botanical Gardens for nourishing neighbors, one harvest at a time!

## LOOKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Visit our website at **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.

Feeding the Valley FOOD BANK

MEMBER OF FEEDING AMERICA

United Way Community Partner

FEEDING GEORGIA

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