

SEEDS OF

HOPE

Fall 2018

kansasfoodbank.org



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DEAR FRIEND,

I am so grateful for the gracious support you showed your Kansas neighbors this past summer. Your generosity has provided healthy meals for kids who might otherwise have gone hungry.

Now that classes are back in session, boys and girls can once again count on meals in the cafeteria. But the risk of hunger persists after school, over the weekend and on holiday breaks. We must do all we can to meet the nutritional needs of Kansas children.

With your support, the [Food Bank](#) is able to help stock local food pantries, deliver fresh groceries to rural families and connect students in need with healthy weekend food through the *Food 4 Kids* program. Thanks to you, *Food 4 Kids* is now operating in 390 schools across Kansas and serves 6,608 chronically hungry children!

As we gear up for the busy holiday season, I hope you will join us in recognizing [Hunger Action Month](#). Every September, friends like you across the United States champion the fight against hunger by hosting food drives, volunteering, raising money and giving voice to this often-invisible issue. Please show your support!

Throughout this fall issue of *Seeds of Hope*, you can meet just a few of the countless Kansans you help through your partnership. Flip to page 8 to learn how your support of the *Food 4 Kids* backpack program has brought hope to a family in Junction City.

Thank you sincerely for doing your part to ensure families, children and seniors can access healthy food. You make a difference throughout the year.

Gratefully,

Brian Walker
PRESIDENT AND CEO

THANK YOU FOR SHARING HEALTHY FOOD

Kayla and Tanner live in Lost Springs and are thrilled to welcome their first child — a baby girl — in just a few months. But happy as they are to see their family grow, the couple has plenty of concerns.

You see, due to some complications, Kayla's pregnancy is considered high-risk. With numerous doctor appointments and other issues — like lack of transportation — she is not able to work right now. Tanner is in college but has some time before he can graduate and earn an income.

In the meantime, they are struggling financially. They face tough choices, like whether to pay bills, buy gas or to visit the grocery store. Kayla says their situation would be impossible, if it were not for you.

Her mother told her about [Marion County Food Bank](#), which provides a variety of healthy groceries for neighbors like Kayla and Tanner. The couple knows this food pantry would not be able to stock its shelves without the support of friends like you, and they were so glad to share their gratitude.

“The care and love you show is greatly appreciated,” Kayla says. “We get lots of protein for the family!”

Because you choose to give, Kayla and Tanner's growing family has the good nutrition they need to thrive. Kayla's looking forward to joining Tanner in school — she loves animals and hopes to become a veterinarian someday.

Your gifts are fueling this family's bright future. Thank you for providing hope in the form of healthy food!

Tanner and Kayla at Marion
County Food Bank in Marion

“The care and love
you show is greatly
appreciated.”



YOU'RE FEEDING THE FUTURE OF KANSAS!



Each year, the [America's Farmers Grow Communities](#) program partners with local farmers to provide grants to local nonprofits. We are honored to announce that Harvey County Farmer, Ivan Goering, nominated the Kansas Food Bank and we were chosen for a \$2,500 donation. Grow Communities, which is sponsored by the Monsanto Fund, provides farmers the opportunity to support and give back to nonprofit organizations they care about in their local communities.



The Kansas Food Bank is very excited to congratulate Steve Waggoner, Produce Manager, [Dillons Marketplace at Central & Rock](#) in Wichita, as a 2018 Retail Produce Manager of the Year from United Fresh! In honor of Steve, Dillons donated 150 cases of ripe bananas to the Kansas Food Bank summer feeding programs. That's over 14,000 bananas for kids at the summer meal sites!



Also helping out with our summer feeding program this year was Chonci Lekawa of [REMAX Solutions](#). Our summer food programs vary based on where they are located across our 85 counties. Some sites qualify for the USDA program where kids come to eat their meals on site while others offer prepacked meals to go, and yet others offer weekend meals. All of the programs require additional time and travel so we can help provide summer meals for kids when school is not in session. Chonci gladly stepped up to help cover the additional cost associated with summer meals.



Mobile pantries help us reach communities that lack or have limited pantry service. [Amerigroup](#) has been a partner with us the past four years helping to fund mobiles across the state. This year they have gifted \$20,000 to distribute in Meade, Sublette, Cimarron and Kinsley in southwest Kansas along with Beloit and Council Grove in northcentral Kansas. The staff from Amerigroup joins us at the mobile distributions. We are very thankful for their support and dedication to our mission.



Dates to Remember
Empty Bowls
October 13th, 2018

STAFF PROFILE:

A LIFETIME OF SERVICE!



Larry stands proudly with Phil the Backpack.

“ I’ve found it a privilege to be part of the team. ”

Back in 1993, the National Association of Letter Carriers joined with the Food Bank in hosting Wichita’s very first Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive. The drive’s chair was Larry Gunkel, who later became program director of *Food 4 Kids*!

Larry became a letter carrier after serving in Vietnam. When he retired after 34 years, he decided to continue his relationship with [Kansas Food Bank](#) and officially joined our team.

As director of *Food 4 Kids* since its beginning, Larry’s watched the initiative expand from 30 schools to over 400 — feeding over 6,000

children every week! He’s led the backpack program for 14 years and is now retiring again at 70.

Reflecting on his work with the Food Bank and the growth he’s seen, Larry says he’s very proud.

“Through working for Kansas Food Bank, I’ve learned that I can do more than I ever thought I could,” he says. “Everyone needs food. We’re giving the basic need to people.”

Larry hopes to spend more time with friends and family during his golden years. Although we’re sad to see him go, we have so much appreciation and admiration for his service. From

a Stamp Out Hunger volunteer to the driving force behind *Food 4 Kids*, Larry has made a real and lasting impact in the fight against hunger in Kansas.

“I’ve found it a privilege to be part of the team,” he says.

On behalf of the countless children and families who are living better lives because of you, Larry, thank you sincerely for your hard work. Your dedication is truly inspiring!

If you’d like to volunteer at the Kansas Food Bank, contact us at volunteer@kansasfoodbank.org.

LOCAL CHILDREN ARE GRATEFUL FOR YOU!

Raven, 12, and her younger brother, Michael, 8, live in Herington with their mom and dad. They are happy, active children — Raven plays volleyball and Michael loves flag football. You would never know from their energy and smiling faces that their family cannot always afford food.

Money was especially tight when the kids' dad was laid off. He drives a flatbed truck now, but because his income depends on the size of the load he transports, it can be pretty unstable.

Michael and Raven are able to eat free meals at school, which is helpful for the family's food budget. But filling their plates on evenings and weekends can still be a challenge for their parents.

Fortunately, their mom, Windy, reached out for help. She went online and found Family Resource Exchange, a [Kansas Food Bank](#) partner agency near their home. She says she is thrilled to have access to healthy groceries — especially items like meat and produce, which are often too expensive at the store.

We met Windy, Raven and Michael at Family Resource Exchange's food pantry, and they told us how much they appreciate your generosity.

Michael and Raven at Family Resource Exchange in Herington.



"Thank you," Windy says to caring friends like you. "Without it my kids would not eat."

Your gifts share comfort and relief with families facing hunger. Thank you for your partnership in this important work!

YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING

FAMILIES FLOURISH



Harmony and Tyrenn — participate in the Food 4 Kids program at Spring Valley Elementary.

“ It really helps out a lot. ”

Your support of the [Food Bank's](#) *Food 4 Kids* backpack program connects children at risk of going hungry over the weekend with nutritious, kid-friendly food. The food-filled backpacks are a comfort for families who do not always have enough money for groceries.

Harmony, 9, receives a *Food 4 Kids* bag from Spring Valley Elementary School in Junction City every Friday. She started participating

in the program last school year when her family was experiencing significant financial problems.

When we met Harmony, Tyrenn, 5, Melody, 2, and their mom, Jordan, they were struggling to stay afloat.

Jordan previously worked as a waitress but had a hard time caring for her children with the job's unpredictable schedule. Jordan is anxious to land a job so she

can better provide for her family. Fortunately, she found some childcare help when she went to apply for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits.

Jordan has already enrolled in emergency medical technician (EMT) training at Cloud County Community College — she hopes to soon become a firefighter. As she gets her family's budget back on track, she says it is a comfort to know Harmony can bring home healthy food. She was excited to share her gratitude for the program with the people who help make it possible.

“When we are running low on food, it helps out a lot,” Jordan says of *Food 4 Kids*. “Thank you so much.”

Having enough to eat seems so simple, but it could not be more important — especially for growing children. Your gifts are a true lifeline to families in need. Thank you!

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