

SEEDS OF HOPE

Holiday 2020

kansasfoodbank.org



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THANK YOU FOR TAKING HUNGER OFF THE TABLE

Dear Friend,

I am pleased to present your special holiday edition of *Seeds of Hope*. The smiles and heartfelt words of thanks of Phyllis, Vickie and Kalyn featured in this issue reflect the gratitude your struggling neighbors have for your ongoing compassion and generosity.

It has been a difficult year for all of us. But families with children, isolated seniors and people who are coping with significant health issues have been facing serious hardships created by COVID-19. We have been working hard to make sure these Kansas neighbors can access the healthy food they need.

Your support has been life giving. You make nutritious food available to families and individuals who are juggling bills and rent so they can put food on the table.

I am truly grateful to count you as a partner in this important work that is putting hope in the hearts of neighbors who are struggling as we are working our way through these unprecedented times.

With the holidays upon us, I ask for your kind support. Together, we can take hunger off the table for families and individuals who are facing hunger, joblessness and more.

Thank you again for your partnership with Kansas Food Bank, which is providing food and hope this holiday season!

Gratefully,

Brian Walker
PRESIDENT & CEO

HEARTFELT THANKS FROM A A GRATEFUL FAMILY

After a long cross-country move that ended in Hays, Phyllis was thrilled — and relieved — to be able to select some healthy food to feed her family until they could get moved into their new mobile home and settled into their new life.

Accompanied by her daughter Laura and son Lowell, Phyllis received a warm welcome at the Hays Community Assistance Center.

Your support keeps the shelves there stocked with nutritious choices,

which is critical for her family who are facing a number of health concerns, including complications from Phyllis' heart surgery.

"We aren't doing that bad," Phyllis says. "We just need the basics."

After selecting fresh fruit, vegetables, meats and canned

items, the family expressed sincere thanks to the center's volunteers — and to friends like you whose donations are making a huge difference during a difficult time.

"This is fantastic," Phyllis says with a smile. "We love that we can come get the food we need."

With your support this holiday season, more families like Phyllis' can get the help they need to put food on the table. Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

*"We love that we
can come get the
food we need."*



Phyllis is thankful for the food she received to help her family through a lean time.



THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING STAFF!

When this year began, our staff at the Kansas Food Bank had no idea how their jobs would change. By March, they joined the ranks of essential workers and have worked tirelessly to get food to people in need — and the need for food has increased significantly while the staff size has remained the same.

That means our order pullers have gone above and beyond to fill larger orders. Plus, they have processed additional orders, many at a moment's notice.

Our drivers who deliver to our out-of-town partners are making more stops, putting on more miles and delivering much more food.

The local drive team continues picking up rescued food from our local grocery store partners and making sure to do so safely.

Food sourcing is doing their very best to keep cupboards full, making sure we have the food and supplies for our partner's needs. This is a struggle. At times, we face the same issues as those going to local stores: some items are simply not available. But we make it work and continue to ensure we have the food our neighbors need.

Due to the increased need for assistance our SNAP (food stamps) specialist has helped so many more people fill out their applications.

Across the state our partner pantries have distributed more food than ever, and our agency relations team has worked diligently to ensure they have plenty of food to meet the increased demand. They also helped arrange for meal pack boxes provided by the state to be delivered by the National Guard which were staged in different areas of Kansas.

Our IT guru makes sure we can all participate in online meetings to meet virtually as a staff. He also keeps track of all the data we need to provide for those who have helped fund us through this time.

We have distributed three times the amount of food through our Summer Food Program, which meant three times the work for the staff who worked with the sites and three times the food we needed to share.

Food 4 Kids staff worked with schools and volunteers to ensure the program continued despite schools closing in mid-March. Volunteers assisted with home deliveries and some schools held special drive-thru distributions.

Cleaning staff continue to ensure we are all safe with constant sanitation.

On behalf of all the people who have needed food assistance — thank you to our staff for stepping up to the challenge and getting the job done all while staying six feet apart and wearing masks!



THANK YOU FROM ALL OF US

Since the beginning of the pandemic, our #1 priority has been getting food assistance to people in need. We have seen a significant increase in need, and our partner agencies across our 85-county service area stepped up to the challenge. Thank you to each pantry for working tirelessly to provide resources to those who need assistance. From our “super pantries” to new partnerships, everyone has come together with the focus of getting immediate food assistance to those who need it, many for the first time ever. It has been quite an undertaking, and we couldn’t do it without help from our partners across the state.

Throughout all this, we have heard some stories that touched our hearts. A woman called needing food for the first time in her life. She and her husband were both out of work and had depleted their resources. We directed her to visit one of our hunger relief partners closest to their home where they could get help immediately. She called back to thank us and said she was eating a fresh plum for the first time in months as fresh produce was something she could not afford. She said she let the juice run down her chin and cried while she enjoyed this “luxury.”



It is stories like this, when we hear the happiness and thankfulness in a neighbor’s voice, that make us appreciate what everyone has done to help during these unprecedented times.

To the donors who answered the call and gave generously, you have changed so many lives and

given people hope when they so desperately needed it. As Brian, our CEO, shares, “We started this pandemic in a sprint and we are now in marathon mode.” Thank you for running this marathon with us.

—Your Kansas Food Bank Team

A HEALTHIER, HAPPIER HOLIDAY SEASON!

Mobile Food Pantries are a welcome sight when they come to town loaded with fruit and vegetables, lean meats and other healthy foods to help struggling families and individuals put balanced meals on the table.

Kalyn was there with her husband and their children, Payten, 5, and Branden, 8 — when the mobile food pantry rolled into La Crosse, Kansas on a Tuesday afternoon.

They have received boxes of food from the mobile food pantry on several occasions and it's a huge comfort to know they can count on a little extra help when it is needed most — especially with the holidays fast approaching.

*“You are amazing ...
you have a big heart
[for] helping those
in need. ”*

“Without the mobile pantry, we would have to worry about buying the essentials,” Kalyn says.

Good nutrition is very important since Kalyn was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The disease has

also made it difficult for her to work, so the family is often juggling a single income to pay bills and feed their growing children.

“Holidays [are] tough to provide,” Kalyn says. But, she adds, “Finding food has really helped the family.”

Your support is the reason our Mobile Food Pantries are on the

road, delivering meals and hope to people who can't afford, or have limited access to nutritious food.

Thank you for your continued generosity to provide meals and bags full of nutritious food to Kansas families through the Food Bank's network of partners and programs this holiday season!

Kalyn with her daughter Payten at La Crosse Mobile Food Pantry.



YOUR NEIGHBORS ARE GIVING THANKS FOR YOU

Like so many Kansans, Vickie and her husband are struggling to find work right now. She is hoping to find a job as a personal care attendant, and he is part of the local Boilermakers union. The couple is having a hard time providing for their two growing boys — Michael, 9, and Douglas, 14.

Unfortunately, because Vickie's husband has annuity benefits through the union, their family does not qualify for government assistance. But he cannot access this income until he is of retirement age.

This is a big problem. Without help, they are having a hard time affording even basic expenses.

That is, until Vickie reached out for help. She went online and found out about the Gleanings Pantry at First Baptist Church Mulvane, which partners with the Kansas Food Bank to provide food assistance in her community.

“Without the pantry, it would be hard for sure,” Vickie says, with tears pooling in her eyes. “Being able to come [to the pantry] has been a huge blessing for my family.”

You are changing lives for the better — and paving the way toward a brighter tomorrow. Thank you for your partnership!



Vickie shares a grateful smile during a visit to the Gleanings Pantry at First Baptist Church Mulvane.



1919 E. Douglas
Wichita, KS 67211
316.265.FOOD (3663)
www.kansasfoodbank.org