

# SEEDS OF HOPE

*Fall 2021*

*kansasfoodbank.org*



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**Brian Walker**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

# YOUR GIFTS IN ACTION THIS FALL

Dear Friend,

This past year and a half has been an enormous challenge, to say the very least. The Kansas Food Bank is more grateful than ever for your continued generosity that helps meet the increased need for healthy food in our community every day.

We are so lucky to be able to rely on someone as committed to fighting hunger as you are, especially now that children are heading back to school in the wake of a global pandemic.

This fall issue of *Seeds of Hope* contains stories from community members whose lives have been deeply impacted by your kindness, like Alicia, Glenda and Kirsten. With your help, these families have the resources they need to prepare their kids for success this school year – despite the hardship they face as a result of COVID-19.

Remember, you make healthy food more accessible to families in need across 85 counties with support from the Kansas Food Bank’s 700-plus hunger-relief partners. This help is vital as our most vulnerable neighbors will be feeling the pandemic’s shockwaves for years to come.

It might take some time before we feel like some sense of “normal” is returning to our everyday lives, as we are still undoubtedly experiencing times of crisis. The need for healthy food remains as high as ever.

Together, we are helping families get back on their feet. You support the people in our community who need it most – thank you for all that you do.

Gratefully,

  
**Brian Walker**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

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Alicia and her family wait safely in line for fresh food.

## ALICIA RECEIVES HELP AT A MOBILE FOOD PANTRY

Alicia loves telling others about the Kansas Food Bank's mobile food distribution site in northeast Wichita. The distribution has been a vital line of support for her in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and now she spreads the word to anyone else she thinks might benefit from it.

Before the pandemic, Alicia was running a daycare in her home. But once people started losing their jobs, they either no longer needed daycare or could not afford it. Alicia lost a huge amount of her income.

Mobile pantries helped her family survive. She and her kids were

always excited when they received lettuce to make salad. They also loved to get cheese and sour cream. Nothing went to waste. In the rare case of having leftovers, Alicia made sure to share what was extra with her family and friends.

Alicia recently visited the distribution because her nephew has been short on money. To help him out, she collected a box of food for him.

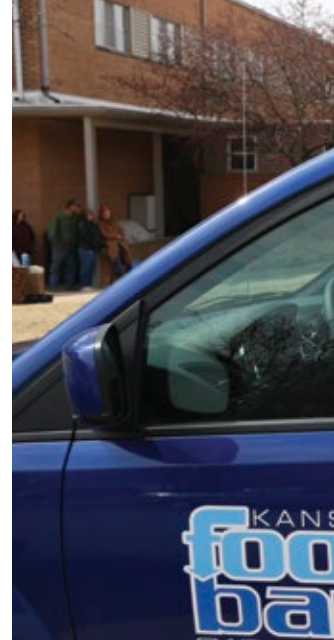
"He's been working but had some extra expenses with his car," Alicia shares. "He's having a hard time making ends meet. I know so many people in need right now. The distributions mean a lot."

Thanks to generosity from friends like you, neighbors like Alicia can access healthy food to keep their families from going hungry. Your gifts are a far-reaching lifeline for neighbors all across Kansas.

Thank you so much for your support.

*"I know so many people in need right now."*

# PROGRAMS AND UPCOMING EVENTS DEDICATED TO FIGHTING HUNGER!



## TYSON SUPPORTS MOBILE FOOD PANTRIES



Tyson Foods recently awarded the [Kansas Food Bank](#) with a grant of \$91,634 to support two mobile pantry distributions per month, one in Emporia and one in Garden City. The mobiles kicked off in May serving 250 households at each distribution.

“We’re proud to support the Kansas Food Bank and its mission to end hunger,” said Dennis Jones, complex manager, at Tyson Foods, Finney County facility. “Enabling our partners to address food insecurity by supporting the mobile pantry program is a critical part of our hunger relief strategy.”

The grant runs for a period of one year.

## KANSAS HEALTH FOUNDATION COOLERS



The Kansas Food Bank, along with Harvesters and Second Harvest of St Joseph, Missouri, have collectively been awarded a \$250,000 grant to increase cooler capacity throughout our network of pantry agencies. We received \$127,000 and have placed a walk-in cooler in Southeast Kansas along with 30 commercial two-door coolers at partner agencies. These coolers will help tremendously as we are increasing the amount of fresh, healthy produce that is so important to the Kansans we serve.

## HUNGER STUDY 2021

This summer we embarked on a hunger study along with Harvesters and Second Harvest of St Joe. The data collected will help us design and implement the most effective and efficient programs. It will also help us most efficiently utilize our resources. The Hunger Study will provide us with up-to-date knowledge of food insecurity and hunger in local regions and statewide.



## HUNGER ACTION MONTH

### Hunger Action Month



September is [Hunger Action Month](#). This month is dedicated to inspiring people all over the United States to stand together to fight hunger. It's a month to spread the word and take action on the hunger crisis — and dedicate ourselves to a solution. So, take part: donate, advocate or volunteer. Every action is a solution!

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## PHA PRODUCE



At the end of July, the [Kansas Food Bank](#), the YMCA, First MCC Table of Hope and the Health & Wellness Coalition of Wichita joined forces with the Partnership for a Healthier America to participate in their COVID-19 Fresh Produce Program. The program runs for 12 weeks, and 1,020 households receive a box containing 20 pounds of fresh produce each week. Distribution locations include the YMCA south location and the WSU Metroplex.



# EACH NEW TEAM MEMBER STRENGTHENS OUR IMPACT!

Chelsie began volunteering at the [Kansas Food Bank](#) during her year of service with AmeriCorps Vista, a program that serves organizations fighting poverty. For six months, she worked as a nutrition specialist at the Greater Wichita YMCA until it shut down due to COVID-19. The YMCA called the Food Bank and asked if we could take on a full-time Americorp volunteer. The answer was absolutely yes.

At the time, Chelsie's husband Nate, who is on active duty in the Air Force, was deployed. When he returned, he got involved with the Food Bank, too.

"With little to eat in my house while growing up, I wanted to help an organization that helped kids," Nate says.

"[It has] opened my eyes, knowing what food resources are available," Chelsie adds. "It is also sad knowing how many neighbors need our help."

*“The Kansas Food Bank are great stewards of your time and donations.”*

Chelsie and Nate help package food products for the Food Bank's

Food 4 Kids program as well as the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and Bob Boxes for seniors.

"To see the true impact that we are making means a lot to me," Nate shares. "I know that my efforts are helping so many local families and children."

And Chelsie's hard work throughout the pandemic didn't go unrecognized. Once her year of service ended with AmeriCorps, the Food Bank asked Chelsie to join forces as a full-time employee. She accepted the offer last October and will be with us until the fall when she starts a new internship with Sodexo as a dietician.

To encourage others to become involved in the same way, Nate says, "An hour of your time makes a big difference. Every little bit helps."

Chelsie adds, "The Kansas Food Bank are great stewards of your time and donations."

We are thrilled to have such committed and talented individuals serving the community every day. Thank you, Chelsie and Nate, for everything you and your family have done. And to you who always give what you can – money or time – thank you. We are so grateful.

Chelsie and Nate



# LOCAL PANTRY PROVIDES CRUCIAL SUPPORT

In October, Glenda's husband was hospitalized. He had COVID-19.

He couldn't work, and Glenda was retired. She is also arthritic and has undergone surgeries on her knees, hips and back. Her family needed help.

That was when Glenda first found out about the Cheyenne County Food Pantry in St. Francis, but it wasn't the only time the pantry proved to be a lifeline for her family.

More recently, Glenda's household went from just three – herself, her husband and their

adult son – to nine. Her grandson and his girlfriend, Taylr, moved in with their four children, tripling the amount of people under Glenda's roof overnight.

Word gets around fast in a small town. Pam, a pantry worker, called and reminded Glenda they were still there to help provide her family with food items and the support they needed.

"It was definitely a godsend," Glenda says. "It's so needed. People you don't expect need help."

Glenda shares they regularly get potatoes, milk, eggs,

produce and canned goods from the pantry. "We [also] get chicken, hamburger...that's very important," Glenda explains.

These lifesaving resources would not be available without help from you, our donors. Thank you so much for coming to the aid of families facing hardship. You are helping Kansans access the food they need to survive and thrive.

*“ People you don't expect need help. ”*



Taylr and her four boys are all smiles at St. Francis

# YOU HELP FAMILIES GET BACK ON THEIR FEET



Choosing between buying food and paying the household bills is an impossible choice, but that is what Kirsten and her fiancé have been dealing with for months.

“Food or electricity? Which ones are we going to pay?”

Faced with a difficult decision and three children, Jada in the 8th grade, Eli in first grade and Ethan in Pre-K, the family had to do what it took to survive. “I’ll go without eating to make sure the kids have food to eat,” says Kirsten.

She and her fiancé, Clint, found themselves having to make a

partial payment to keep the electricity on so they would have enough money to put food on the table. The family relied on the school lunches the children received during the week, but she wasn’t expecting the food packets they brought home from the [Food 4 Kids](#) program. It made a huge difference for her family.

She said the bags are “amazing” because they provide breakfast and lunch along with snacks for the weekend. And by not having to buy as much food, that money can go toward other bills.

“It means the world to us.”

The family is still trying to catch up from the financial toll COVID took on their finances. Clint is an over-the-road truck driver and his hours and pay were cut in half. And then everything seemed to snowball – the refrigerator quit, the car broke down and they quickly fell behind on their bills.

This extra food “means the world to us because we are still struggling and it’s nice to know that when the kids are home, they will have something to eat,” Kirsten says with relief in her voice. It takes a huge weight off her shoulders.

Your generosity has helped Kirsten’s family tremendously during a very difficult year – and Clint now has a new job. Things are starting to look up. Together, we are helping neighbors across Kansas access the support they need to get back on their feet.

**KANSAS**  
**food bank**  
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