

SEEDS OF

HOPE

Summer 2022

kansasfoodbank.org



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KANSAS
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HELPING THE HUNGRY • SINCE 1984

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Brian Walker
PRESIDENT & CEO

YOU MAKE SUMMER SO MUCH BRIGHTER

Dear Friend,

Now that summer is here, children are away from the school meals that families rely on for a consistent source of nutrition. Without this resource, parents and caregivers have to come up with an extra 10 meals each week *per child*.

As the cost of living continues to rise, more families, individuals and seniors are unable to afford food for the entire month. The past two years have had a long-lasting impact on our community, and many of our Kansas neighbors are reaching a critical point where your support means the difference between going hungry and having enough to eat.

The mission of the **Kansas Food Bank** is to provide comprehensive and compassionate HungerCare whenever and wherever needed. Right now, families urgently need help providing enough food while children are on summer vacation.

With your generosity, our community's kids will have access to nourishing food from the stocked shelves of partner agencies and through mobile pantries. Your support makes healthy food available for our neighbors who need it most.

In this issue of *Seeds of Hope*, you will find stories from community members like Stacy, Amy and Belynda – just a few of our neighbors who are very grateful for your kindness. Read on to see their words of thanks and know you are helping countless more community members with your generosity this summer.

Thank you for giving to provide support for children who would otherwise face hunger.

Gratefully,

Brian Walker
PRESIDENT & CEO

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Stacy and her children give you big smiles in thanks for your generous support.

YOU MAKE CRITICAL RESOURCES AVAILABLE

In the past, Stacy and her family were fortunate enough to be able to donate to local causes. She loves to do whatever she can to make a difference in her community, and it made her really happy to give back.

Back then, Stacy worked at a nursing home, and before that she worked at Boeing. Her family also collected scrap metal from time to time to help with monthly expenses, but that stopped because of the pandemic. Now, Stacy is out of work altogether.

Stacy's mom had to retire for medical reasons and receives monthly disability assistance.

She lives with Stacy and her children, and for the time being, hers is the family's only income. Stacy does receive SNAP benefits, but they usually only provide enough food for half the month.

The other half, Stacy is relieved to say, comes from Kansas Food Bank programs and Partner Agencies like Bread of Life in Wichita. "This is a big help," Stacy says. "We've received meat, vegetables, fruit and more! I don't know what many would do without you."

And this summer, Stacy's kids will have healthy meals during the week thanks to your support of the

Kansas Food Bank. When schools close, kids lose access to school-provided meals and parents like Stacy need extra help to make up the difference.

Thank you for giving so generously to help Kansas families make ends meet. Because of you, Stacy, her mom and her children will have enough to eat all summer long.

“ I don't know what many would do without you. ”

KANSAS FOOD BANK JOINS FORCES WITH THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER OF SOUTHEAST KANSAS

The Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas in Pittsburg is a proud Kansas Food Bank partner agency and patient-centered health center. Dedicated to providing quality health care to everyone regardless of an individual's ability to pay, no one is refused service – utilizing a service like One Care, which allows a patient to get one plan, one card, and one person who coordinates the care, creating simpler engagement and follow-up for a patient.

The Community Health Center is one of the largest Federally Qualified Health Centers in the

nation, and the fifteenth largest all rural community health center. Annually, the center cares for around 70,000 patients with about 275,000 visits per year while only continuing to grow.

This organization has always had food pantries in its system, but they were small and inconsistent. Joining forces with a network like the Kansas Food Bank's has allowed the Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas to grow into an even stronger program for their pantries in Arma, Baxter Springs, Coffeyville, Columbus, Fort Scott, Iola,



Mound City, Parsons, Pittsburg, and Pleasanton.

Hunger can impact many areas of life – especially a person's health. Knowing this, the Community Health Center sought to ensure comprehensive care for their patients who are food insecure. By working with the Kansas Food Bank, patients receive critical healthcare services and nutritious food during the same visit.

The Kansas Food Bank is thrilled to help such an outstanding group make a real difference in Southeast Kansas.



From left to right, Kayla, Stephen's Patient Engagement Specialist, Stephen, and Laura – a Community Health Worker



STEPHEN LOVES THE HELP HE GETS FROM THE COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Stephen has been a resident of Pittsburg, Kansas since June 2015. As a retired nurse of 20 years and former welder, Stephen was also a musician. He loves playing rock and roll rhythm and blues with his service dog Lucy by his side.

"I loved taking care of people, loved helping people," he says. "[Now,] I'm a retired everything, but I'm not a retired activist."

Several years ago, his former doctor connected him with the Community Health Center so he could see doctors and counselors, get blood work done, receive

food pantry items and get medicine – all without the worry of medical bills piling up.

Stephen is living on a fixed income (disability benefits). Because fixed incomes fail to consider inflation rates, anywhere he can save money makes a world of a difference.

Stephen is on the Board of Directors for Southeast Kansas Independent Living and Resources. He loves giving back to his community that provides him with so much support and care.

"All you need to say is 'Steve, we need you,' and I'll help," he says generously.

To the donors who make the pantry possible, Stephen says, "What you donate [really] helps me out with receiving the healthy food I need."

Thank you for giving so generously to help neighbors like Stephen have the healthy food and community support he needs.

GRIDLEY LIBRARY

PROVIDES SUMMER MEALS

Passionate staff at the Gridley Library in Gridley have been dedicated to helping local community members for decades. Janet Birk, the library director, and Michelle De Anda, assistant director, both love how their work helps children and families, especially during the summer.

Gridley Library has been a Summer Food Program partner for the last five years. Staff and volunteers provide a location where kids can get a lunch every week day during the summer, a time when family budgets are stretched especially thin.

Without access to the meals kids typically eat at school, households are left to make up the difference in June, July and August. But an extra 10 meals each week per child is difficult for families that are already facing hunger throughout the school year.

Because of the Summer Food Program in Gridley, traveling far to find help for kids is not necessary. Instead, families can just visit the local library.

“People are so appreciative,” Janet says.

The food even helps Michelle, who has four children. Her kids, between ages 6 and 17, all have unique tastes, so the variety of food provided is a real benefit for her family.

“People are so appreciative.”

Gridley is a town with less than 400 people, so its residents are extra thankful for the help from the Kansas Food Bank. Thank you for your support of the Food Bank that helps neighbors all over Kansas.



Children and families can get bags of healthy food at Gridley Library in the summer!

YOU SECURE MEALS FOR NEIGHBORS LIKE BELYNDA

Belynda's family loves to be outdoors in the summer. Fly fishing is one of her kids' favorite activities, as well as anything else they can do as a family outside. Everyone really loves crafts, too.

Belynda has always enjoyed cooking. She has worked in food prep and loves preparing meals for her family. She grew up cooking with her grandmother, and making food for her own husband and children makes Belynda feel closer to her.

The Beacon, a partner agency of the Kansas Food Bank in Fort Scott, has been there for Belynda's family on several occasions in her life. Her mother and grandmother before her both used the Beacon when bills became urgent and there was no other way to put food on the table.

“ [The Beacon’s] always been a place my family could come to get help. ”

“I’ve always known The Beacon,” Belynda says of the community resource. “It’s always been a place my family could come to get help. If they can help, they will.”

Recently, with the price of gas and everything else soaring to new heights, Belynda's job at a convenience store and her husband's as a mechanic haven't been enough to consistently make ends meet each month.

“When I don't know where our next meal is coming from, I know I can go to The Beacon,” she says. “I never feel like a burden.”

To friends like you who give to support places like this, Belynda says, “People (donors) need to know how much they are helping... They are amazing. They don't realize how much they help. So many people are helped here.”

Belynda knows she can always rely on The Beacon, a Kansas Food Bank partner agency.



AMY SAYS THANK YOU FOR HELPING HER FAMILY

Last summer, Amy was having trouble with a tooth. The mother of three went to see the dentist who ordered a CT scan. The scan showed that her lymph nodes had been growing, and further tests revealed a shocking diagnosis – lymphoma.

In the same week, Amy’s husband lost his job when his company made cutbacks. She didn’t know what they were going to do. Amy and her husband had been able to easily get by on their own and didn’t even know where to look for help to support their children, ages 6, 4 and 1.

After talking to her father, Amy’s dad shared that he receives support from Open Door, a Kansas Food Bank partner agency in Wichita. As a senior living on a fixed income, making ends meet gets harder and harder each year because of inflation. This past year has been especially difficult. Amy’s father recommended she check out Open Door, too, because it has helped him more than he could have imagined.

Amy had never been to the food pantry before. She was amazed at the amount of food and support she received.

“Your generosity is literally feeding my family right now,” Amy says gratefully to donors like you.

Your support is providing nutritious food for Amy’s family at a truly challenging time in their lives. Thank you for giving Amy one less thing to worry about as she and her husband figure out what comes next.

“I’m open minded about the future” Amy concludes. “I’m trying to keep a positive outlook and be optimistic, but it’s scary.”



Amy has been going through a tough time, but is optimistic about the future thanks to you.

“*Your generosity is literally feeding my family right now.*”

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