

Fall 2023 Newsletter

# seeds of Hope



KANSAS  
**food  
bank**  
HELPING THE HUNGRY • SINCE 1984

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**





**Brian Walker**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

## YOUR IMPACT THIS FALL

Dear Friend,

Healthy food should be accessible for *every* Kansan. This fundamental belief is put into practice when partners like you give generously to support the mission of the Kansas Food Bank.

While the cost of living remains high, many of our neighbors are challenged to keep enough food on the table. Your support helps fill the gap at such a critical time.

Thanks to you, we have provided nutritious meals to countless Kansas neighbors this summer — enriching the lives of families and seniors and building kids up for a better start to the school year this fall.

Our Food 4 Kids program has already begun providing meals for school-aged children who are facing hunger. Your gifts help give kids the nutrition needed for a successful academic year and futures full of hope and promise.

In this fall issue of *Seeds of Hope*, I hope you'll enjoy reading a few stories from neighbors you have helped with your kindness, like Kassi and her family.

Please be sure to read Patricia's story on the back cover to see how your generosity is setting her kids up for success in the school year ahead.

Thank you for being a key partner in our shared mission of hunger-relief for Kansans. Your partnership is essential for our community's bright future.

Gratefully,  
  
**Brian Walker**  
PRESIDENT & CEO

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# KIDS ARE SUCCEEDING WITH YOUR HELP

**K**assi cares for her three sons and daughter full-time while her husband, Patrick works as a mechanic. This fall, the whole family is thankful for donors like you who help fill their table with healthy food!

The couple's school-aged children receive packets full of nutritious, kid-friendly food through Kansas Food Bank's Food 4 Kids program. Kassi says a teacher at the kids' school first told her about the program.

"It means a lot that he cared enough to let us know," she says.

Kassi says her husband's income is typically enough to cover the family's expenses, but the packets help the couple keep up with additional bills, especially during the school year.

Patrick and Kassi's children range in age from 13 to just 2 years old. Kassi says her three boys' appetites are growing by the day and little Ainslie is not far behind. As a mom, Kassi is grateful not only for the Food 4 Kids program, but that she can also visit nearby Food Bank partner agencies when her family's resources run low.

“ It means a lot. ”

"Take advantage of the resources that are there," she encourages "but only when you must. Don't take from someone who just might need it more than you."

Your support makes help available for Kassi's family and so many more neighbors in need of good, healthy food. Thank you for giving so generously to make a difference here in Kansas.



Kassi's three sons share smiles while holding Food 4 Kids packets of nutritious food.



# ENRICHING THE COMMUNITY: FROM HUNGER TO HOPE

## HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

A new partnership has been announced between Wichita Habitat for Humanity and the Kansas Food Bank in an effort to help qualifying homeowners.

New homeowners will have a full pantry and fridge of nutritious meals at their fingertips with the help of the Kansas Food Bank. Non-perishable foods, dry goods and frozen items are provided to help ensure everyone has access to healthy groceries.

“Helping the new homeowner with a stocked pantry will allow them to immediately be able to start using their new kitchen as the heart of their home,” said Brian Walker, President & CEO of the Kansas Food Bank.

Going forward, future Habitat home dedications will include having their pantry stocked by the Kansas Food Bank, stretching the project’s impact even further. Now that households have a safe home *and* nutritious food, our neighbors can afford additional basic essentials to help create a brighter future.



Valerie from the Kansas Food Bank stocks the pantry in a Habitat for Humanity home.



Patrick, Tobie, Jacob and Jackie represented the Kansas Food Bank at the Feed Nourish Connect conference.

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY

Three of our staff members — Patrick Hutchison, Tobie Plett & Jake Enz along with a representative from one of our partner agencies – Jackie Carter, MCC Table of Hope, recently attended the Feed Nourish Connect conference held by Feeding America.

The conference highlighted how the Feeding America Network engages in deep community building and centers equity, diversity, and inclusion as we stand closer together than ever before with people facing hunger.

This year’s conference had sessions touching on timely topics, emerging practices and connecting with colleagues from across the United States. Both Tobie and Jackie served as presenters and we are very proud of them for representing Kansas.

## CELEBRATE TWO GIVING HEARTS

Volunteerism is an integral part of every company culture, and that includes the Kansas Food Bank.

We are honored to announce that two of our volunteers, Bob and Lila Keefer, were awarded the Terry Brewster Community Volunteer Award during the 89th Annual National Baseball Congress Tournament held here in Wichita.

Bob and Lila have been volunteering faithfully with us three days a week since 2019. They are not only dedicated to their service to us, but they bring humor and good cheer to other volunteers and Food Bank staff.



Bob and Lila sorting food for their Kansas neighbors.

Bob and Lila have become Food Bank “Family” and were instrumental in helping us to keep things rolling throughout the pandemic shutdowns.

Many thanks to Bob and Lila for their continuous support in ensuring food keeps moving and getting to our hungry Kansas neighbors.

## SEPTEMBER IS HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Hunger Action Month | FEEDING AMERICA

Join the Kansas Food Bank for Hunger Action Month, a month where people all over the United States 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. Will you take action with us?



**Fill a Bag, Feed a Family** — We invite you to stop in and pick up a special bag to take and fill with our most needed items. Bags will be available starting September 1st. We have a lofty goal to fill 5,000 bags and anyone can participate and fill a bag. This is a great opportunity to challenge your friends, neighbors, coworkers, etc. to help fill a bag.

**Open Streets Produce Packing Event** — Sunday, September 17th, 12 pm to 4 pm, in our parking lot at 1919 E Douglas. Join our staff and Dillons as we pack produce bags for distribution across our 85-county service area.

Check out our website [www.kansasfoodbank.org](http://www.kansasfoodbank.org) for more activities and ways that you can help during Hunger Action Month and be our Hunger Hero!



# KEVIN'S ACTS OF KINDNESS GO A LONG WAY

Following his retirement from a 35-year career at Arctic Glacier, Kevin's passion for helping his community is still going strong.

As a volunteer with Kansas Food Bank, Kevin particularly enjoys packaging kid-friendly food for Food 4 Kids packets. He volunteers about four hours each week and knows it is time well-spent.

"There shouldn't be anybody going hungry, especially kids," Kevin says.

Each packet contains healthy, non-perishable food items for students facing hunger.

"It's become a part of my schedule and I enjoy doing that," Kevin says, noting the natural joy and fulfillment volunteering brings him.

Kevin says he was initially encouraged to volunteer after learning about the deep need

*"There shouldn't be anybody going hungry, especially kids."*

for food right here in his own community where 1 in 7 children experience hunger. With more time on his hands after retirement, he looked for a way to get involved in giving back.

"I wanted to help where I could," Kevin says.

Thank you, Kevin, for helping prepare packets of food for chronically hungry children in Kansas. Your kindness has a ripple effect and makes a world of difference in the lives of children.



## YOU HELP NEIGHBORS IN TRANSITION

James and Delonda share words of thanks for Kansas Food Bank donors like you.



Kevin helps prepare Food 4 Kids packets on a recent volunteer shift.

James fondly remembers volunteering with his family at Emmaus House as a child. He recalls seeing the impact it made in the community then, and he is grateful for the impact it is making in his life today.

James worked several years in construction – sometimes up to five jobs at a time – before the work took a toll on his body. Now, he relies on income from Social Security disability and his wife, Delonda's income as a caretaker at a local care facility for people with developmental disabilities.

But the couple's budget became critically strained after a main water pipe break at their home, which

ultimately led to the home being condemned. James and Delonda were left homeless.

*"We're so appreciative of all the support we received."*

Thankfully the couple remembered Emmaus House, a long-time partner agency of the Kansas Food Bank.

"This place has been a staple in this community," James says.

Emmaus House serves the community in multiple ways: as a pantry, a shelter and a congregate meal setting.

James and Delonda are so grateful to have a place to stay and to not have to worry where their next meal comes from while they work to get back on their feet.

"We're so appreciative of all the support we received and thankful for this place," James says.



Emmaus House



# YOU GIVE PATRICIA'S FAMILY FUEL TO THRIVE

Patricia enjoys being involved at her kids' school and is eager for her children to begin a new year of learning. Thanks to partners like you, she can send them off with fuel to succeed.

We met Patricia on a recent visit at the Kansas Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry in Lakin where she was picking up food for her family.

"There are weeks where I just have enough for bills and a little bit of food," Patricia shares.

The Mobile Food Pantry has been a lifeline for Patricia and her family. She shares how thankful

she is for the program, especially because it helps give her kids the nourishment needed to learn, grow and thrive.

"It would be hard without this," Patricia says. "This program helps."

Since 2019, the Kansas Food Bank has been providing the Mobile Food Pantry in Lakin. On average, 90 households are served per month where they receive a substantial box filled with fresh fruits and vegetables.

To generous donors like you, Patricia says, "Thank you! I am very grateful. You guys are

out here helping no matter the weather."

The Kansas Food Bank is committed to caring for Kansans experiencing hunger, delivering healthy food every month to the 85 counties we serve.

Thank you for giving so generously to ensure neighbors facing hunger have healthy food on the table this fall.

*"This program helps."*

Patricia shares her gratitude for the Mobile Food Pantry at Lakin.



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