

Holiday 2024 Newsletter

seeds of Hope



PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**



Brian Walker
PRESIDENT & CEO

THANKS FOR A HEALTHY, HAPPY HOLIDAY SEASON

Dear Friend,

This holiday season, I am reflecting on the Kansas Food Bank’s 40 years of partnership with this incredible community which has provided much needed food across Kansas. Friends like you have shown up, time and again, ready to lend a hand and share hope, health and *food* with fellow Kansans.

Over the past 40 years there have been many challenges along the way. We have weathered the storm through natural disasters such as floods and tornados. We have persevered through tough economic times with business closures and layoffs. We have even stayed strong – not closing one day – due to a pandemic. Today is no different. The continued high cost of living right now makes it increasingly difficult for our community members to afford nutritious food.

But with the help of supporters like you, we continue to work together to discover innovative ways to ensure that every Kansan has plenty of healthy food on the table.

This past summer, we had a ribbon cutting ceremony for our new warehouse in Garden City, which serves as our base of operations for the 31 westernmost counties in Kansas and helps us provide even more fresh food to our neighbors. Thank you for partnering with us for our ***Building a Healthier Tomorrow*** campaign to bring this critical vision to life!

It is encouraging to know that we are surrounded by a generous community of friends like you. I look forward to our continued partnership in the days, months and years ahead.

In this holiday edition of *Seeds of Hope*, I hope you’ll enjoy reading stories of just a few of the amazing neighbors you helped, like Ola (page 8) who is a reflection of the care you give to so many in our communities.

For the past 40 years, we have made real, lasting change for Kansans. And together, I know we will continue to do so. Thank you. We could not do this important work without you.

Happy Holidays,

Brian Walker
PRESIDENT & CEO

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YOUR GENEROSITY CHANGES LIVES

Michael and Teresa visit the Burrton Food Pantry, a Kansas Food Bank Partner Agency.

Teresa still vividly recalls the day 10 years ago when she first met her partner, Michael. She describes her relationship with him as “constant laughter” ever since.

Despite being able to look on the bright side, the couple has had their share of difficult times and are grateful for friends like you who help lighten the load.

Teresa previously worked as a certified nursing assistant, but she recently applied for Social Security disability assistance after being diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

“I have always worked and not working now doesn’t feel right,” Teresa says.

Michael worked on cattle ranches before having to stop due to his own heart condition. Now, he has a limited fixed income from Social Security disability assistance and SNAP benefits.

That’s why the couple is grateful to visit the Burrton Food Pantry, a Kansas Food Bank partner agency.

“ We rely on [Burrton Food Pantry] twice a month. ”

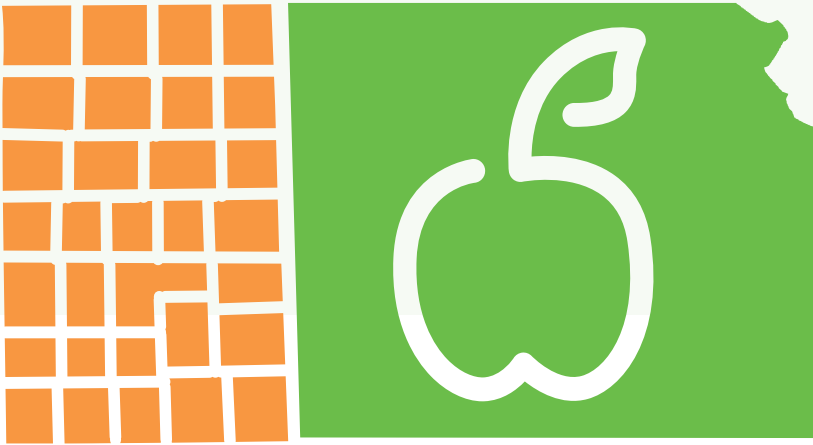
After paying rent, gas and electric bills, Michael shares that there is very little left over for

food let alone anything extra, including Teresa’s medical bills. On top of her chronic health condition, she recently had a bad fall while exercising.

Thankfully, the couple can turn to the Burrton Food Pantry for healthy food and even household supplies this holiday season.

“We love the sausage we receive and are happy to get laundry soap and other hygiene products,” Teresa says.

Thank you for making a real, lasting impact for so many Kansans just like Michael and Teresa this holiday season!



UPDATE: BUIL

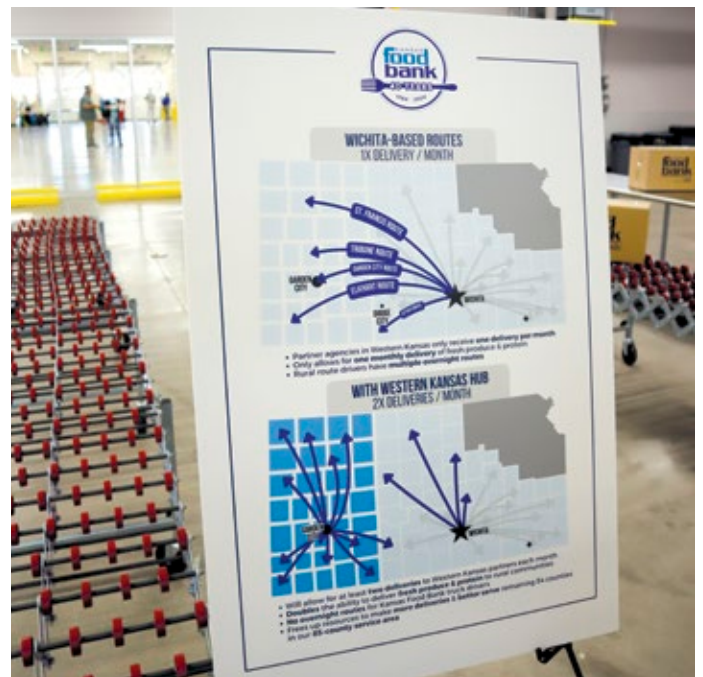
In July, the Kansas Food Bank celebrated the Grand Opening of the new warehouse in Garden City. This new facility is the base of operations for the 31 westernmost counties in Kansas and helps provide even more fresh food to Kansans.

Following the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Kansas Food Bank's Garden City facility, a learning collaborative sponsored by Sunflower Foundation was held for partner agencies in Western Kansas. For the next phase of the *Building a Healthier Tomorrow* project, the learning collaborative was marked by sessions to begin the process of planning potential upgrades at the pantry level. The campaign's focus is now on providing grants to our western Kansas partner agencies who identify capacity building improvements needed in order to better serve our neighbors through the Western Hub.

A partner agency summit was held in May 2023 for 31 western counties to begin gathering data and interest for participation in this expansion.



ING A HEALTHIER TOMORROW



RUSTY CARES FOR HIS COMMUNITY

After more than 38 years at Spirit AeroSystems, Rusty Slusser is happily settling into retirement — but he’s far from slowing down. With plans to eventually find a part-time job, Rusty also volunteers with the Kansas Food Bank.

“I’ve always had a heart for [volunteering],” Rusty says.

Rusty shares that, when he was in high school, his family began receiving SNAP benefits, and that experience serves as inspiration for him to help the Kansas Food Bank today.

“It was just an eye-opener for me,” he says. “There [were] probably a lot of [kids] like me.”

One of the ways that Rusty helps at the Kansas Food Bank is by packaging healthy food through the Food Bank’s *Food 4 Kids* program that provides weekend nutrition for kids during the school year.

Through Rusty’s position on the school board in Cheney, he has the opportunity to hear about the impact of the Food Bank’s *Food 4 Kids* program.

“It’s really powerful to hear from families and [the food] is definitely making a difference.”

Rusty really appreciates that the Kansas Food Bank covers 85 counties and ensures nutritious food reaches everywhere.

“They do really good work,” he says of the Kansas Food Bank.

For neighbors thinking of lending a helping hand, Rusty encourages “Look at [your] own blessings and say, ‘Wow I do have something to give’ and go do it because it takes a community.”

Thank you, Rusty, and all our caring volunteers who partner with us, to help ensure every Kansan has access to nutritious food!

“ *It’s really powerful to hear from families and [the food] is definitely making a difference.* ”

Rusty prepares a package of food for the Food Bank’s *Food 4 Kids* program.



STEPHANIE SHARES THANKS FOR YOU

Six years ago, Stephanie moved with her son, Michael, from Wichita to Newton, knowing little more than a handful of people in what would become her new home.

She fell in love with the people and atmosphere in Newton, especially for her now 18-year-old son who has autism. The support system of quality doctors and teachers, and the caring community of neighbors, made a world of difference for Stephanie and Michael.

Stephanie says that when she and Michael moved to Newton, she was in a tight financial situation and it was The Salvation Army, a Kansas Food Bank partner agency, that helped her family by providing nutritious food and other essentials.

“Sometimes you need school supplies, [but] you need help in other departments to make that happen,” she says.

Stephanie remains so grateful that Michael has everything he needs to thrive — including nutritious food.

“I don’t know what we would have done if not for The Salvation Army,” she says.

Today, Stephanie works full-time at a local market, but says her income is still not always enough. Thanks to partners like you,



Stephanie shares her love of her community and the resources she has for her family through The Salvation Army, a Kansas Food Bank partner agency, in Newton.

she can continue to turn to The Salvation Army to supplement her grocery budget.

With your support, we are providing vital help and support systems for our neighbors just like Stephanie and Michael. Thank you for being a bright

light of hope across Kansas this holiday season!

“ *I don’t know what we would have done if not for The Salvation Army.* ”



YOU SUPPORT CAREGIVERS

Ola expresses her gratitude for the Madison Avenue Fresh Start Pantry, a Kansas Food Bank partner agency.

From lovingly caring for her mother until she passed away from Alzheimer’s disease, to daily supporting her five adult siblings, Ola is a caretaker at heart.

With her own health challenges including a previous battle with breast cancer, heart surgery, diabetes and more, Ola makes sure to take care of herself so she can continue to help her family as well as her fellow community members.

No longer able to work, Ola is grateful she can rely on visits to the Madison Avenue Fresh Start Pantry, a Kansas Food Bank Partner Agency, to supplement her limited food budget.

“If I need something, I’m on fixed income, [but] I can come down here on that third Wednesday,” she says.

Despite owning her home, Ola says some months bills pile up and make it difficult to keep up with grocery costs — especially healthier food like fresh produce.

Because of her diabetes, Ola pays close attention to the food she eats. She really enjoys the fruits, veggies, canned chicken and tuna that she receives from the pantry and prepares meals with at home.

“Everybody needs something, whether it’s a lot or a little,” Ola says.

With the help of friends like you, our neighbors can keep plenty of healthy food on the table. Thank you for ensuring Kansans of all ages have access to healthy meals this holiday season and beyond!

“Everybody needs something, whether it’s a lot or a little.”



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