



Food For Thought



Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
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April | 2021

THE RISING COST OF KEEPING UP

500,000 individuals helped. 50 million meals provided. Elevated food insecurity in central Pennsylvania can be calculated with these staggering statistics. The true impact of the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's mission during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, is measured by looks on the grateful faces of the people we serve, the simple comfort a box of fresh food provides, and the glimmer of hope that keeps families going in the face of uncertainty.

The 40 percent increase in demand, disruption in the food supply chain, and safety protocols for volunteers posed challenges to the Food Bank's mission. The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank launched a significant crisis response, but not without cost.

Supermarket shortages left little behind for the usual level of food donations. Food is more expensive, especially fresh healthy items. Grocery dollars do not go as far as they used to for clients or the Food Bank.

Our expenses to maintain our operation are up more than 35%. It cost about \$500,000 more per month in 2020 for the warehousing, freezers and refrigeration, transportation, and distribution as well as increased cost to acquire fresh, healthy food to keep up with demand. In addition to purchasing millions of extra pounds of increasingly expensive staple foods, we had to implement a night shift, Saturday receiving and distribution, and expand to an offsite packing operation.

The Food Bank's service territory is more than twice the size of New Jersey. When the economy shifted overnight, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank leaned into it.

As a central healthy food hub for our network of nearly 1,000 local agencies, the Food Bank invests in these critical partners with infrastructure like refrigeration, shelving, or trucks; and during the pandemic the Food Bank waived the usual modest cost sharing for 335,000 Crisis Response Boxes of healthy, shelf-stable food. We also delivered 22 million pounds of no-cost USDA fruits, vegetables, dairy, and protein. In 2020, we awarded grant money to hundreds of our partner organizations to supply, support, and sustain them. These grants and donations allowed partners to improve their capacity, provide more refrigerator and freezer space, expand their selection of food items, and set up safe distribution methods.

The generosity of central Pennsylvanians has allowed the Food Bank to keep up with the need in our community through the duration of the COVID crisis and continue to support food insecure neighbors during the prolonged recovery period. Higher levels of need and elevated costs are expected to continue for perhaps more than two years. We will manage our resources wisely so no one in central Pennsylvania will go hungry.



Over the holidays, we joined with several community organizations and businesses, including Penn National Insurance and the Harrisburg School District to distribute food to thousands of families in need.



Thank YOU for everything you've done to help us reach our neighbors in need.

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JAVA WITH JOE

Dear Friends of the Food Bank,

First the bad news: COVID-19 is still with us and it is still harming folks medically and financially, keeping food assistance demand very high. The good news: people like you are providing the Food Bank with the resources we need to ensure central Pennsylvanians have enough nutritious food now and in the coming months. We are geared up for a long haul and we truly cannot thank you enough.

Some additional good news: the virus hasn't stopped the arrival of spring, which we love here at the Food Bank. We honor Earth Day on April 22, which reminds us of our success in preventing food waste, an important part of stewarding our natural resources and preserving our planet. We celebrate our partnerships in this work with our grocers and food industry partners, and we applaud our Pennsylvania farmers as they begin the critically important planting season. We've spent enough time with our friends in agriculture to appreciate the immense amount of work, resources, stewardship, skill, and persistence required to grow and raise our food. And one of the best ways we can honor their efforts is to work intentionally and vigorously to ensure this bounty reaches kitchen tables instead of landfills.

I hope you enjoy the inspiring stories of our clients, partners, and friends that highlight the immensity of our work during the pandemic. We hope in the coming months, with continued following of COVID-19 safety protocol and the vaccines, we can return to gathering freely, rebuilding our economy, and helping many thousands of our neighbors attain food security.

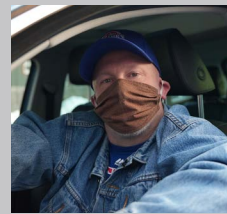
Thank you for playing a vital role in this awesome, life-sustaining mission!

HUNGER ISN'T SELECTIVE: MEET JAMMIE AND GREG

It's been one year since we first mentioned "COVID-19" in this newsletter. Since then, the pandemic has upended all of our lives, and many continue to deal with COVID-19 related job losses and other financial concerns. All year, we've had thousands of first-time visitors to our partner food pantries and other organizations. Our demand has increased more than 40 percent and we expect that demand to remain high for as many as two years.



Jammie was laid off from her housekeeping job in 2020. The Food Bank has helped her get the food she needs so she can keep paying her bills; and her four children love the food they receive. **"I'm actually so proud to come here and get food for my family,"** Jammie told us, adding that she knows if she didn't have access to the fresh food provided by the Food Bank, she wouldn't have anything.



Greg had some medical issues and had been out of work since March 2020. He was cleared to return to work in July, but by September, his

employer announced they would be closing the business. Without work, Greg wasn't sure how he would provide for his family. He turned to the Food Bank, which he sees as a "great blessing."

"I'm here to get help for my family," Greg says. "We've been through rough times and we thank the Food Bank. They go out of their way for everyone here and it's more than enough. I know we are going to make it through."

To hear more from Jammie, Greg, and other clients we serve, visit our YouTube channel where we have a video library of clients telling their stories, in their own words.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: BOLD GOAL GRANTS HELP PARTNERS LIKE HANNA'S PANTRY

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank's Bold Goal Grants program awards money to our partners to improve their capacity to provide more healthy, nutritious food to our neighbors in need. One partner who recently benefited from this program was HANNA's Pantry, which is located in the Susquehanna Township High School near Harrisburg. The pantry serves 300 families a month and is administered by the HANNA Foundation. They also provide weekend "HANNA Packs" for middle school students in the district.

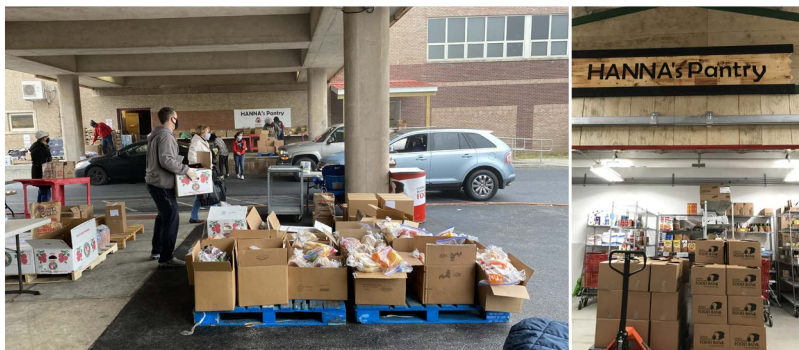
The first Bold Goal Grant HANNA's Pantry received from the Food Bank in 2019 allowed them to evolve from a "small closet at the elementary school," to the program they are today, which is a choice school pantry, built by volunteers, and affectionately called "the barn."

As the pantry expanded its membership, additional shelves were purchased, through a second Bold Goal Grant, to continue choice options that accommodate members' diverse cultural needs. Susquehanna Township is the most diverse school district in Pennsylvania and the 15th most diverse in the nation.

Like many pantries, COVID-19 caused HANNA's Pantry to pivot from an indoor choice pantry to an outdoor drive through pickup. To support that change in operation and increased food demands, the pantry doubled in size in the summer of 2020. The increased size enables volunteers to pre-pack up to eight different bags that consider family size and offer vegetarian, protein, gluten-free, low salt/sugar options. "Choice carts" enhance pre-packaged bags by offering additional choice of a few items. This hybrid model requires pallets, carts, and shelves of food to be moved outdoors.

HANNA's Pantry was awarded a third Bold Goal Grant in the fall of 2020 to purchase materials to construct an awning, built by students from Dauphin County Technical School, to cover the pantry entrance, providing the needed cover for volunteers and the food they moved outside. Thanks to the Bold Goal Grant, the awning will prevent dirt, moisture, and other items from being transported into the pantry, and help to keep volunteers, guests, and partners safe.

"The Bold Goal Grants have been instrumental to our operations," said Lori Shienvold, executive director of HANNA's Pantry. We thank the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank for all they do to help us feed families in the Susquehanna Township."



An inside look at HANNA's Pantry, located in the Susquehanna Township High School, and one of their recent drive-thru distributions.



KEN ADAMS (LEFT) VOLUNTEERS WITH HIS TEAM FROM MEMBERS 1ST FEDERAL CREDIT UNION.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH

Volunteering opens so many doors for so many people, something Ken Adams, a regular Food Bank volunteer, has witnessed firsthand.

"Volunteering is important on so many levels," Ken explains. "On a large scale, it's about helping others and working to build a better community. **It brings people together in ways that doesn't happen normally.**"

It also opens people's eyes to the poverty and the need that exists among their neighbors. **"We tend to think hunger does not exist in our communities, especially because we live in America ... this is far from the truth," Ken said.** "Having volunteered with different community organizations, access to food is almost always a topic of discussion. The Food Bank is a first lifeline for so many families from every demographic."

Ken encourages the volunteers at the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank by saying, "Keep up the great work!" April is National Volunteer Month and we wanted to take time to thank Ken and the thousands of volunteers who keep our operation running, especially with the increased demand caused by the pandemic. **We couldn't do the work we do without our dedicated volunteers and we thank each and every one of them from the bottom of our hearts.**

If you would like to learn more about volunteer opportunities, please visit the Give Time section of our website, www.centralpafoodbank.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)

Tax Credits Are Available for Donations in FY 2021-22



Did you know?

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank is an approved Charitable Food Program (CFP) of the Pennsylvania Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) administered by the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED). Under the NAP, **corporate donors** may be eligible to receive a 55 percent state tax credit for their gift.

Why is this important?

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank utilizes Pennsylvania's NAP tax credits to encourage food and financial donors to make generous gifts to the Food Bank. Donations through this program enhance the Food Bank's ability to serve our neighbors who are facing hunger. This special partnership is critical to the Food Bank as the pandemic and economic crisis continue.

How can my company participate?

Donors are eligible to receive this tax credit for gifts received by the Food Bank during the fiscal year, defined as July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. There are a few simple steps to participate in this program. The donor completes a "Letter of Commitment," files a "Tax Compliance Form" online and ensures the Food Bank receives their gift no later than June 30, 2022.

How can I learn more?

Our Development Team is happy to answer any questions you may have. To learn more, please email development@centralpafoodbank.org or call 717-564-1700.

HOST A VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE

In 2020, we had to make a lot of changes to our operations due to the pandemic and the importance of ensuring the utmost safety. This included discontinuing traditional food drives. Food Drives have been a part of the history of the Food Bank from the beginning. Unfortunately, for a large, regional food bank like ours, food drives can actually cost us money (disposal of inedible items, sorting, transportation, storage, etc) and provide less than one percent of the food we distribute.



This was the time to find an innovative solution -- Virtual Food Drives! Our new Virtual Food Drive platform allows the community (individuals, businesses, groups and others) to support the Food Bank from the comfort of home. More importantly, we are able to leverage those donations to provide even more healthy food to those facing hunger.

Anyone interested in starting a Virtual Food Drive on behalf of the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank is encouraged to visit www.centralpafoodbank.org. Instructions for setting up a drive can be found under the Ways to Give tab. Additional questions can also be emailed to vfd@centralpafoodbank.org or by calling 717-564-1700.

LOCAL FOUNDATION CELEBRATES 100 YEARS WITH "MATCH" CAMPAIGN

In celebration of their centennial year, The Foundation for Enhancing Communities (TFEC) has created a match campaign to help grow our endowment fund! TFEC is the local community foundation serving Dauphin, Cumberland, Perry, Lebanon and Franklin Counties, as well as the Dillsburg area.



Our endowment fund is a critical tool for helping us serve local families who are experiencing hunger. A portion of the income in our fund is available to us each year, giving us a reliable income stream so we can continue to reach those who need support and provide them with fresh, nutritious food. We also use the income to invest in our partner agencies through our Bold Goal Grant program.

Help us grow this fund by using the envelope in this newsletter to make a donation. We will do the rest, and your gift will be eligible for a match by TFEC.

Make a gift today and help us receive a match gift from TFEC's Centennial Fund.