



Food For Thought



Central Pennsylvania Food Bank
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November | 2022

FROM FARM TO FOOD BANK TO NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Each September we join 200 other Feeding America Food Banks to honor Hunger Action Month — a month dedicated to raising awareness and critical funds to support hunger fighting initiatives. This year we introduced Crunch, the unofficial Food Bank mascot! Crunch and the other Produce Pals journeyed from farm to food bank to our neighbors in need, and we offered an inside peek at the adventure with a weekly installment highlighting another stop on the way to a family.

We could not get Crunch to the Food Bank without the work of our 20 dedicated drivers. Each week, they traverse 27 counties in central Pennsylvania delivering and picking up more than 1 million pounds of food from nearly 800 manufacturers, farmers, and retailers. This includes nearly 300,000 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables.

So, where do we get 2,000 fully-stocked grocery shelves worth of food each week? Seventy percent of the food we distribute is donated from local farmers and retailers. The remaining 30% of our food is purchased. For example, we participate in an innovative cooperative purchasing the freshest produce (like Crunch!) straight from the port of Philadelphia.

We want our neighbors' pantries to be full of staples, and their refrigerators full of veggies, fruit, eggs, milk, and

more. There is dignity in having food that is good for you and that your family likes to eat.

Our next stop was the Healthy Food Hubs in both Williamsport and Harrisburg. Getting food from the farm to the table requires the help of a team of volunteers, donors, and employees! After being picked up at a farm, manufacturer, or retailer, Crunch and the Pals need a cool place to rest before they are delivered to the Food Bank's nearly 1,000 program partner agencies.

Along with our Healthy Food Hubs, we have an off-site location that stores shelf-stable food and hosts our volunteer department.

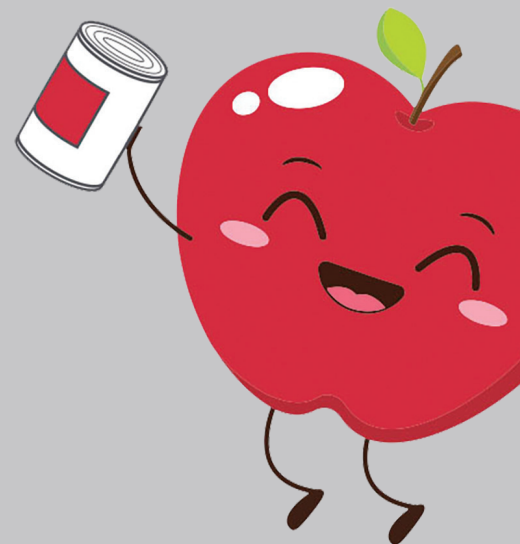
Altogether, our facilities are roughly the same size as two and a half professional football fields. To maximize every square inch, we use racking and stacking to store products up to thirty feet high — imagine grabbing something off that top shelf!

The Healthy Food Hubs contain five industrial coolers and freezers that chill at a frigid -5 degrees Fahrenheit! One of those industrial deep freezers highlights the partnership between the Food Bank and The GIANT Company called "Meat the Needs." To date, thousands of pounds of fresh meat have been rescued through this program. It has saved literally tons of high-quality protein from being thrown in landfills!

**Thank you to our 2022
Hunger Action Month Sponsor**



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(Continued on page 3)

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JAVA WITH JOE

Dear Friends of the Food Bank,

It is hard to believe the 2022 holiday season is almost upon us. It feels like only days ago that we were engaged in September Hunger Action Month and gathering in the harvest-season bounty provided by our wonderful farmers and other food providers.

Swiftly the days have gone by, but for many of our neighbors in central Pennsylvania, 2022 has been a long and difficult year. Household budgets have been strained since the middle of 2021 with rapidly increasing costs for just about everything. Actually, I can't think of any household staple that has not gone up significantly in price. And with each passing month, many more families and individuals are reaching out for our help. Thankfully, through the generosity of our donors and volunteers, our Food Bank is keeping pace despite continued supply chain challenges and cost inflation throughout our mission. We are being innovative in our sourcing and our operations, intensive in our cost control, and we are reaching deeper and farther to serve communities that are the most food insecure. Rapidly building local farm relationships, expanding home-delivery partnerships, mapping hunger in our communities — these aren't just good ideas. They are examples of intensive actions we are taking right now to stretch donor dollars farther.

That brings me back to the upcoming holiday season. Many of us will be startled when we see how much our favorite holiday meals will cost this year, but we will manage. But for far too many of our neighbors, this will not be possible. Please help us ensure that all of our neighbors in need have nutritious meals throughout this holiday season, and the cold winter months that will follow.

Our Food Bank Family wishes you, your loved ones, and all of our neighbors the warmth and joy of a wonderful holiday season!

MAKE AN EVERLASTING IMPACT

In the future, the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank must be well positioned financially to support the 27 counties in our footprint. Providing support to individuals who are food insecure is becoming more and more challenging because the Food Bank is also combating inflation, fuel increases, and managing countless supply chain issues. Additionally, the complexities of climate change and agriculture, the price of groceries, and social determinants of health upon underserved populations make food insecurity even more challenging. No one can predict what is to come, but the Food Bank must be prepared to help, and we can, with your support. You do not need a huge income to help, just a huge heart!

One of the most meaningful ways to help is by remembering the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank in your will. As a result, individuals and families will continue to be served, thoughtfully and with dignity, in collaboration with more than 1,100 partner agencies and programs.



For information about legacy gifts and alternative giving opportunities that provide exceptional tax savings, please contact Julie Kramer, Senior Development Manager, Individual Giving at jkramer@centralpafoodbank.org. The process is not lengthy, but your impact is everlasting.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: BECCA RALEY



Becca Raley, who serves on the Food Bank's all-volunteer Board of Directors, grew up in a frugal family that really knew how to stretch a penny. These useful lessons were passed on to her early, yet there were many times as a young adult and then as a new parent, when one unexpected expense could send her fragile finances into disarray. Becca remembers going to the grocery store plenty of times and not being able to afford basic food items. She explained, "It wasn't a matter of budgeting better, it was a problem of barely earning enough money for a basic household budget."

Knowing first-hand how hard it can be to make ends meet, one of Becca's greatest joys today is assisting others who face similar challenges. This past year, she had the honor of joining a volunteer team in support of her community's historic resettlement of new Afghan families. As trusted allies who served shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. troops, she found it heartbreaking to learn the extent to which her new neighbors were fleeing the serious risks of persecution in their homeland.

"Many arrived without a single travel bag to claim as their own," Becca said. "As I reflected on the incredible abundance of our community resources and the many helping hands in the resettlement process, I tried to imagine who assisted my great-great-great-grandparents when they first arrived here from Ireland. The experience of walking alongside newcomers made me proud of our rich history as a nation of immigrants."

The Central Pennsylvania Food Bank and its partner agencies turn no one away. Whether we are helping a new refugee who's awaiting their first job or a senior citizen living on a tight fixed income, the Food Bank always ensures there's nutritious food for their cupboards. **Becca said she is a "champion of the Food Bank because it's making a positive difference today and it's committed to advancing long-term solutions to ending hunger. In the year ahead, we'll be deepening our work to ensure that everyone has the ability to thrive."**

FROM FARM TO FOOD BANK TO NEIGHBORS IN NEED

(Continued from page 1)



*CPFB staff member
Loyna DeJesus*

Our friends at Weis Markets, with 80 stores in our service territory, contribute vast amounts of food to our mission. Many of our local grocers provide generous donations of funds and engage their customers through "round up" and other giving programs to help support our mission.

Teamwork is essential to the success of the Food Bank. Ensuring our neighbors facing hunger receive the highest quality, wholesome foods is an undertaking that requires many to give of their time, talent, and treasure.

Our third week in September had Crunch rolling over to our volunteer packing center. Six days a week, awesome volunteers sort hundreds of thousands of pounds of food. Sorting through the food ensures every box will be filled with only the most wholesome, healthy, and safe foods. Once sorted, the volunteers pack 2,000 shelf stable boxes each week! These boxes are full of cereal, canned goods, rice, pasta, and other pantry staples.

Our partner agencies (food pantries, youth programs, senior programs and more) order the food items — nonperishables, dairy, meat, produce, and frozen items — that best meet their community's needs. Our staff and volunteer teams pack these partner orders to go back out onto the trucks.

Crunch and the Produce Pals began the journey with our drivers on the truck, and they are now back in the truck on the way to our local communities.

Week 4, the final stop, at one of our partner pantries is the most important — local families pick up the food they need. We shared all September, Hunger Action Month, the journey from farm to table which requires the help of us all! With your donations and the help of volunteers and partner pantries, healthy, wholesome foods make their way to the tables of thousands of central Pennsylvanians.

Anna and her children, Mary Jane and Malachai visit our partner, New Hope Ministries, each month.

Anna says her family is like any other, busy raising young kids.

"I'd say we are the average family; Dad works 2 jobs, one full-time and one part-time and I work a part-time job. Our kids are involved in activities and hang out with friends and family," Anna said. For Anna's family, the Food Bank helps them to stretch their budget a little further every month.

"The Food Bank means being able to get through the month without stressing about where we are getting money to get our meals. It means being able to pay an entire bill instead of needing some of that for food."

Ensuring our neighbors have enough food requires all of us — donors, volunteers, staff, partner organizations, and government officials — to work together for the greater good. By supporting the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, you join the team helping Crunch and other food items into the homes of more than 400,000 central Pennsylvanians each year! **Thank you for your continued investment. Together we can end hunger.**

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SACA



The Spanish American Civic Association (SACA) has been dedicated to the needs of the Latino community in Lancaster for more than 40 years. SACA has an expanding scope of services to provide pride and comfort to individuals and families when they need it most. Services include bilingual information and referral, employment, translation, drug & alcohol prevention, treatment programs, and so much more. Through a partnership with the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, SACA also provides two hot, nutritious meals a day, six days a week, to the homeless population as well as families facing food insecurity. They also make sure vulnerable seniors receive fresh fruits and vegetables.

For Sandra, who works as SACA's chief operating officer, motivation to help others comes from her childhood. She grew up one of six children of a single mother who depended on churches and community organizations to provide food for families in need.

"My mother, just like many families nowadays, struggled to put nutritious food on the table," said Sandra.

"Families worry about having food on the table today or paying their rent to keep a roof over their heads. Partnering with community food hubs such as the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank provides me with great satisfaction in knowing the families will not go hungry."

For SACA, a partnership with the CPFEB is a collaboration in which they tailor the food received to the needs of the community.

"The Food Bank goes above and beyond to recognize the special needs across south-central PA. They are not about checking a box that they provided X amount of food, rather, they are true partner who understands the uniqueness of each community and allows their partners to advise them of any community trends. Lancaster County is so diverse, and partnering with the CPFEB requires an array of planning to ensure the families have three nutritious meals a day."

Over the years, the Food Bank has provided SACA with kitchen equipment to help them continue their community meal programs through its Bold Goal Grants.

"Without our partnership with CPFEB, it would be impossible to support our community with daily hot meals," said Sandra.

