

harvest

A NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE RIDGE AREA FOOD BANK

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Blue Ridge Area
FOOD BANK

Everyone should have enough to eat.

A member of
FEEDING AMERICA





THE Kids OF Summer

When hunger doesn't take a summer break



What do you remember about your childhood summers? Perhaps it was the long break from school, your eagerness for summer camp, or maybe a special family vacation. For you, summer days may have been filled with trips to the pool, ice cream treats, and fun.

But for many kids today, summer days tell a different story. For these kids, the days feel long because of hunger pains. They lose access to school breakfasts and lunches, meals they count on during the school year. When school is closed, so is a main source of food.

Meet Nateil and Quenton

We recently met Nateil Lee at Compassion Church of the Nazarene Food Pantry in Lynchburg. She visited with her five-year-old son, Quenton, who was out of school with a cough due to asthma.

Children facing hunger are more likely to be hospitalized and cope with higher risks of health conditions like anemia and asthma. They are more likely to repeat a grade in elementary school, face possible shortfalls in language and motor skills development, and have more social and behavioral problems.

Nateil had a job in the school system before it was wiped away by the pandemic. She's trying hard to get back into the



workforce, armed with an associate degree and computer skills. But without a car of her own it's tough; she borrows one to pick up groceries at the pantry.

Nateil explained how challenging summer is when her four kids, ranging in age from 5 to 15, aren't in school. "We have to stretch," she said. "It's harder to provide."

One in 12 children, locally, face hunger. Fewer than 1 in 5 kids who receive free or reduced-price lunch during the school year can or do access a food service program in the summer. The reasons are many—lack of transportation and proximity to home are two of the barriers.

Your generous gifts help ensure kids have enough to eat when school is closed.

Nateil commented on the food she got for her family that day, "So this, along with the other help I'm getting, is good for me."

The Blue Ridge Area Food Bank supports a network of more than 200 food pantries as well as 63 diverse child hunger-relief programs, serving an average of 33,800 kids and youth monthly last year.

In the summer, specifically, the Food Bank distributes food through:

- **Summer Food Service**, prepared meals for children gathered at summer enrichment programs
- **Summer Kid Packs**, monthly bags full of food distributed to households with kids
- **Mobile Food Pantries**, which regularly visit rural areas to distribute food to families
- **Neighborhood Produce Markets**, which bring fresh produce to underserved urban neighborhoods; set up like small, outdoor farmer's markets, where kids and families can choose the fruits and vegetables they want to take home

Most of these initiatives are possible because of donors who help fuel kids in the summer and year-round, helping them thrive and stay on track for healthy development.

Hunger doesn't take summer off. With your support, neither do we.

You can help ensure local children have enough to eat. Donate at www.brafb.org/give-now.



SCAN TO DONATE!



Back to School

During the school year, the Food Bank works with community partners to supplement school meals to help ensure children have enough to eat:

- The **Good Food School Market** has reimagined food assistance for teens. Middle and high school students can shop for food for themselves and their families. A typical haul includes 25-30 pounds of food, like fresh fruits and vegetables, breakfast items, proteins, pasta, rice, and peanut butter. We partner with three schools currently, with more to follow soon.
- The **Family Backpack program** sends home bags full of nutritious food to children at risk of hunger on weekends and school holidays. We currently partner with 13 elementary schools, plus organizations supporting another 11 schools and sites across the region.
- **Kids Café** supplies healthy, free meals and snacks at after-school sites (such as Boys & Girls Clubs, churches, or public schools) to children in underserved communities.



A Warm Welcome to New Donors

A vast number of friends made their first gift to the Food Bank during the pandemic. Thank you!

Motivations to act through philanthropy are as varied as each individual, but donors have told us they gave because of:

- a compassionate response to scenes on the nightly news of Americans standing in very long lines for food
- a desire to share an unexpected government stimulus check with neighbors who needed it more
- a new awareness that food insecurity can happen suddenly, and can happen to anyone

We put out our welcome mat to thank these new friends, and we've done our best to keep all our new *and* loyal supporters informed and aware of the impact of their generosity since their first gift.

What should new donors know?

We want all members of our Food Bank donor family to know that **your gift makes a difference**. For every \$1 you contribute we can provide approximately 4 meals.

We want you to know that **neighbors of all ages are benefitting from your generosity**. Read their stories on our Facebook or Instagram page, or on our blog (www.brafb.org/blog-chew-on-this/).

We want you to know that **you are supporting a regional charity with a local impact**.

The Food Bank operates four distribution centers (in Charlottesville, Lynchburg, Winchester,



Neighbors of all ages are benefitting from your generosity.



SCAN FOR MORE INFO

To learn more about the work of the Food Bank over the past two years, visit www.brafb.org/ceo-forums/





and Verona), and we partner with hundreds of community organizations that distribute food to people in your neighborhood.

We want you to know that **your satisfaction matters**. If you hear from us too often or too little, if you'd like to start receiving our email newsletters, if we have jumbled your name in mailings, or if you have a suggestion to improve your experience with us, please reach out.

We want you to know that **we don't take you or your trust for granted**. We strive to be transparent and authentic. If we fail in that regard, let us know.

Please stand by us

Unfortunately, the pandemic isn't done with us yet. The economic impact triggered by the 2020 public health crisis will linger for some time to come. We expect to see the need for food assistance continue at high levels, especially while inflation rates are soaring and the cost of living is challenging for so many.

Even beyond *this* crisis, there will be neighbors who will need our help when life takes an unexpected turn. We'll be here to help, with you by our side. Thank you!



Contact Karen Ratzlaff, chief philanthropy officer, at kratzlaff@brafb.org or (540) 213-8404.



HUNGER HURTS, BUT WE'RE HERE TO HELP

A Story of Abundance

"I need food, but there are others who need it more."

We often hear versions of this statement from people seeking help. In truth, there is *more than enough food* to go around. Thanks to your generosity and support, the Food Bank can source an abundance of nutritious food to ensure that *everyone* gets enough.

Virginia knows this firsthand. In addition to receiving food as a guest, she volunteers monthly at the Mobile Food Pantry in Nelson County.

"This food helps out a lot, especially when you're on a fixed income," she told us.

Virginia is a grandmother to five and a retired school bus driver with 28 years of service. A self-professed "people person" and a natural caregiver, she enjoys volunteering because she loves spreading hope and sharing the abundance with others.

"No matter what is put in the box or car, every little bit helps," she said. "Thank you so much."



New Community Partnerships: Showing Up for Our Guests,

WHERE THEY ARE

While the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank and its network are serving nutritious food to more than 100,000 people every month, there are more neighbors who don't have a reliable and regular source of food.

To realize our vision that everyone has enough to eat, the Food Bank aims to show up in new ways and in new places. "Innovation" may not be the first word that comes to mind when you think of food banking but, here, we share examples of creative thinking and collaboration happening in our community.

"Food banking is changing," notes Chief Executive Officer Michael McKee.

We are meeting guests where they are—in schools, in health care clinics, and in community centers, as well as in traditional pantries.



AT SCHOOLS

When he learned of the success of Good Food School Markets (GFSM) operating in two Harrisonburg area high schools, teacher Chris Kaznosky knew that the program could thrive at Central High School (CHS) in Woodstock, too.

Chris coordinates CHS's clothes and toiletries closet, which was already helping more than 100 students. Members of the senior class expressed the desire to expand the closet to feature a food pantry.

Nine weeks after contacting the Food Bank, the first food distribution event took place in May. Students chose the food, selected recipes to share, and staffed the tables to serve 107 households that day—including 189 children and teens!

Afterward, Chris said, "I heard many good things today from students and staff, as well as from a few parents who went through the line. **Together, what we did was truly meaningful.**"

When school re-opens in late summer, CHS and the Food Bank will continue operating a Good Food School Market so that all students can access food when they need it.

What YOU can do

FIND HELP: If you or someone you know needs food assistance, visit www.brafb.org/find-help.

LEARN MORE: Read more about Food Pharmacy at www.brafb.org/blog-chew-on-this/. Learn more about our network at www.brafb.org/partners/.

OFFER HELP: If you would like to donate, visit www.brafb.org/give-now. Or, flip to page 10 for other ways to get involved.



IN HEALTH CARE CLINICS

Because access to nutritious food is one social determinant of health, partnerships with health care organizations are a natural fit for the Food Bank.

Through the Food Pharmacy program, launched in 2020, the Food Bank now works with health care partners in 22 locations, from Harrisonburg to Fishersville and Orange to Lynchburg. Patients are screened and those who identify as food insecure receive 10-15 pounds of medically tailored food at each visit.

“When they come in for an appointment and are able to get a bag of fresh vegetables, it provides not just food, but also recipe cards, and access to diabetes educators and nutritionists who can guide them in this often complicated process,” said Nelly Maybee, MD, a physician with the Augusta Health Diabetes and Endocrinology Clinic in Fishersville. **“I tell a lot of my diabetic patients to treat food as medicine, because it is as important in managing their disease process as prescription medications.** (The) food pantry is an essential part of this process, especially for patients in lower socioeconomic brackets, who are more vulnerable and more affected by chronic diseases such as obesity and diabetes.”



DR. MAYBEE

What began with one dialysis clinic has expanded to other medical care settings. The rapid expansion with Augusta Health—from its first site to 17 participating clinics in just one year—and the addition of partnerships at UVA Health and the Harrisonburg Free Clinic suggest this model of collaboration is working.



IN COMMUNITY CENTERS

“Gardens ... are the first sign of commitment to a community. When people plant (food) they are saying, let's stay here. And by their connection to the land, they are connected to one another.”

— Embrace Waynesboro

Embrace is a new food pantry partner in the Food Bank network, one that reaches deep into an underserved community where language barriers and low income are challenges to overcome.

But the gardens came first.

Managed by Kay Shaner of the Virginia Cooperative Extension office and a team of volunteers, the gardens surround the Embrace Waynesboro Community Center, which is located across the street from the city's preschool. Services to the community include new clothing, school supplies, and haircuts for kids; a teen tutoring center; laundry facilities; public meeting space; community meals; support groups; and much more. Sin Barreras is on site as well, offering social services and legal support for the Latino community.

Seeing the need to do more, Kay and Embrace's director, Jenell Watson, reached out to the Food Bank to set up a food pantry with shelf-stable food, culturally familiar food, and fresh or frozen proteins. To further support this vision, grants from the Food Bank's Agency Capacity Fund provided the pantry with a new refrigerator and the gardens with a new greenhouse.



Passionate public support from our donors makes it possible for us to serve those experiencing hunger in our communities. From gifts of their time, food, funds, and voices, Food Bank donors help ensure that everyone has enough to eat.

Across our 25-county service area, thousands of financial donors, volunteers, advocates, and friends actively support the work of the Food Bank and have a positive impact in the Blue Ridge area. We appreciate every one of you! Here we highlight a few examples of the many ways our community stepped up in recent months.

We offer a special shout-out to all the **Community Foundations** that bridge relationships between their local donors and the Food Bank!



Through grants, donor-advised fund awards, and events like the recent *Great Community Give* (Harrisonburg and Rockingham County) that helped provide more than 103,000 meals, these important philanthropic organizations are making a difference throughout our region, every day:

- Charlottesville Area Community Foundation
- Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties
- The Community Foundation of Harrisonburg and Rockingham County
- Community Foundation for Northern Virginia
- Community Foundation of the Northern Shenandoah Valley
- Community Foundation of the Central Blue Ridge
- Community Foundation for Rockbridge, Bath, & Alleghany
- Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation
- Northern Piedmont Community Foundation
- Shenandoah Community Foundation

Students and alumni who are members of the **Raven Society**, UVA's "oldest and most prestigious honorary society," came together and hosted an online fund drive that raised enough funds to help provide more than 68,000 meals for the community.



Brooklyn, who holds the title of "Tiny Miss Spirit of Virginia," recently donated 160 pounds of food collected through a food drive organized as a community service project. Brooklyn's donation will help provide 133 meals to families experiencing food insecurity in the Blue Ridge area.

Jubilee Family Chiropractic, along with 38 participating businesses and organizations, collected enough food and funds to provide 3,403 meals during their annual food drive. Check out their website to see all of the community partners who came together, feeding their neighbors and providing hope.



Stamp Out Hunger is our largest food drive of the year—a feat that would be impossible to achieve without the hard-working letter carriers. Because of their essential partnership and a generous community, 114,196 pounds of food were donated and collected on May 14 to provide more than 95,000 meals to individuals across the Blue Ridge area.



Many thanks to everyone who bought a *Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet* at **GiantFood**. Your love of flowers has resulted in 61,720 meals for children, seniors, and families experiencing hunger.

THANK YOU, Generous Corporate, Foundation, and Event Partners

AEO

AMERICAN EAGLE

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CENTRA

CATHERINE J. MCGINNIS
FAMILY FOUNDATION



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FOUNDATION



OAKWOOD FOUNDATION



PACIFIC LIFE
FOUNDATION



*REFLECTS SIGNIFICANT GIFTS RECEIVED DECEMBER 1, 2021 – MAY 31, 2022



Your Legacy Ensures Hope and Nourishment

Yes! It is possible to provide food for neighbors who need help, beyond your lifetime.

Some legacy gifts can be planned without an attorney or changing your will. A simple change to a form directs your assets where you wish them to go, including the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank.

These gift options are easy to set up and easy to reverse if your situation changes:

- Life insurance
- IRA and retirement accounts
- Financial account transfers

Learn more at www.brafb.org/plannedgift or email Karen at kratzlaff@brafb.org.

Have you already made plans to leave a future gift to the Food Bank? Please let us know and join others in **The Will to End Hunger Society** so we can thank you, now.



SCAN TO JOIN!

Get Involved

EVENTS AROUND THE REGION

SEPTEMBER

Hunger Action Month

One in every 12 people in the Blue Ridge area experiences hunger, but together, we can make a real difference. Participate in this national movement to raise awareness about food insecurity.



SEPTEMBER 1, 10:00 A.M., ONLINE CEO Forum

Join us for a virtual event, where CEO Michael McKee will share important updates about the Food Bank and answer your questions. Register to attend: www.brafb.org/ceo-forums.

OCTOBER 27

Empty Bowl Dinner

Join Blue Ridge Community College leaders, faculty, and students for this event, part of the annual Hunger Symposium that promotes hunger awareness in local communities.

OCTOBER 20 and 27

Shop to Stop Hunger

(Harrisonburg, Charlottesville)

On your mark, get ready, shop!

Local celebrities will run the aisles of Kroger to shop for our neighbors experiencing hunger. Vote for your favorite local celebrity by making a donation in their name.



OCTOBER 28

LIVE2LEAD

Hosted by Dove Development & Consulting at Blue Ridge Community College, LIVE2LEAD is a professional-development opportunity designed to equip attendees with new perspectives, practical tools, and key takeaways.



NOVEMBER 12

Make Every Rep Count

Athletes raise funds and awareness for local nonprofits, including the Food Bank, with every rep they log during this weight-lifting competition at Shenandoah Powerhouse Gym in Waynesboro.

NOVEMBER

Scouting for Food

Local Boy Scouts will sweep neighborhoods for food donations for our largest fall food drive. Simply leave your bag of canned food at your doorstep.



NOVEMBER 29

Giving Tuesday

On this global day of giving, anyone anywhere can support the causes they care about. Remember to go online and make your contribution to the Food Bank, alongside many other caring individuals.



For details on these and other events, visit our website at www.brafb.org/events or call 540-248-3663.

How Your Organization Can Make a Difference, Together

Our staff stands ready to visit your business or organization to share information on food insecurity and ways for your team to engage in local hunger-relief efforts. Send an email to solvehunger@brafb.org to coordinate with a member of our Speakers Bureau!

Many teams like to give back together. "This is a great community function and a great team-building opportunity," Patti Koogler, owner of Koogler Financial Group (KFG), told us recently. A private wealth advisory practice of Ameriprise Financial



Services, KFG has been volunteering twice a year for more than 12 years. Patti often brings clients as well as staff. Her advice to others: "Volunteering at the Food Bank helps with the culture of your business and what you're all about; giving back is something we're all about. And it's fun. We love it." For more information, visit www.brafb.org/volunteer.

We're Seeking New Partners to Bolster Our Network

Our network is very efficient in distributing food, moving nearly 29 million pounds of food last year to help 1.18 million people each month.

To reach everyone that experiences hunger, we aim to grow our outreach by sparking new partnerships and further enhancing existing services in our network. A 2022 Food Bank needs assessment study will help us understand assets, needs, and barriers to access across our service area.

New partners will be existing community-based food assistance organizations who are not Food Bank partners and other groups who

may be able to offer food as part of their programming. (See page 6 for examples of new partnerships.)

When partners join the network, they gain:

- Access to nutritious food
- A network to collaborate with
- A food-assistance mentor
- The ability to apply for capacity and capability development grants
- The power to strengthen their impact

If the organization that you work or volunteer for might be a good match, please contact Tyler at therman@brafb.org.

Want to hear more stories of impact, more often? Subscribe to our *Come to the Table* e-newsletter and we will email occasional updates throughout the year: www.brafb.org/subscribe



Scan to subscribe!

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When We Care for Kids, We Care for Moms, Dads, and Grandparents, too

When we imagine a child facing hunger, we often imagine a child who is alone, maybe even neglected.

In reality, the vast majority of children who are food-insecure live with loving parents, grandparents, and guardians who do their best to make sure their little ones have enough to eat. With very rare exception, adults in a food-insecure family will miss meals so their children won't have to.

That's because food insecurity among children isn't about good parenting or bad parenting. It's about math.

Today, a single mother with two children earning \$20 per hour is hard pressed to make ends meet. Think about it:

TAKE HOME PAY: \$2,500/MONTH

EXPENSES:	-\$1,200	rent
	-\$100	utilities
	-\$100	phone and internet
	-\$250	car payment
	-\$250	gas and car insurance
	-\$300	health care insurance premiums
	-\$300	for everything else, including food and household items, clothing, and unexpected expenses like car repair

And that's if her children are enrolled in a free or subsidized after-school program and don't need expensive childcare.

So, when we partner with schools to provide children with backpacks filled with nutritious food for the weekends, or make sure food pantries have plenty of kid-pleasing peanut butter, jam, cereal, and pasta on their shelves, we have parents in mind, too.

Hungry kids live with hungry families. And with your help, we are privileged to ensure they all have enough to eat.

Gratefully,



Michael McKee
Chief Executive Officer





Blue Ridge Area

FOOD BANK

Everyone should have enough to eat.

A member of
FEEDING
AMERICA

NON-PROFIT ORG
POSTAGE & FEES

PAID

BLUE RIDGE AREA
FOOD BANK

P.O. Box 937
Verona, VA 24482



OUR MISSION is to provide nourishing food to our neighbors in need through vibrant community partnerships and passionate public support.

BRANCH LOCATIONS

We serve your community through one of four distribution centers:

Shenandoah Valley Area Branch & Headquarters

P.O. Box 937
96 Laurel Hill Road
Verona, VA 24482-0937
P: 540.248.3663
F: 540.248.6410

Thomas Jefferson Area Branch

1207 Harris Street
Charlottesville, VA 22903-5319
P: 434.296.3663
F: 434.296.9621

Lynchburg Area Branch

501 12th Street, Suite B
Lynchburg, VA 24504-2527
P: 434.845.4099
F: 434.845.6153

Lord Fairfax Area Branch

1802 Roberts Street
Winchester, VA 22601-6312
P: 540.665.0770
F: 540.722.4217

CHEW ON THIS

Not every child living in a food-insecure household in this country qualifies for federal nutrition assistance like WIC, SNAP (formerly Food Stamps), School Breakfast or Lunch program, etc.

36%
may not
qualify for
assistance



249,170
children in
Virginia are
food insecure

In Virginia, 1/3 of food-insecure children are **unlikely to qualify** for federal nutrition assistance—that's 89,701 ineligible children.

Thank you for helping us fill that gap!