

BRAZOS VALLEY FOOD BANK

The Story:

Solving hunger today for a hunger free tomorrow.

FALL NEWSLETTER 2021



Page 3 TOGETHER, WE'RE BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES

Page 3 BECKY AND DON RUSSELL SHARE THEIR BLESSINGS

Page 4 BACKPACKS: A VITAL BRAZOS VALLEY RESOURCE

*You're
Healing the
Brazos Valley*



Theresa Mangapora
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

President

John Cowan, City Bank

Vice President

Robert Kimmel, Fujifilm
Diosynth Biotechnologies

Treasurer

Deborah Wright, Budget & Planning, Texas A&M University

Secretary

Meagan Brown, Bryan Texas Utilities (BTU)

Immediate Past President

Rich White, H-E-B, Bryan

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

Jimmy Byrd, Blinn College, Bryan Campus

Diana Clendenin, City of College Station, HR

Stacy Colvin, KBTX-TV3

Joni Cook, Retired Community Volunteer, Burleson County

Jason Cornelius, Frost Bank

Scott Delucia, Bryan Broadcasting

Brenda Grays, Cyber Security Administration, Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service

Lindsey Guindi, City of Bryan

Pat Patrick, Bryan Coca Cola

Carl Pihoda, Citizens State Bank, Brenham

Philip Rodriguez V, Attorney, Youngkin & Doss, P.L.L.C.

Gus Roman, City of College Station Community Services

Kayla Sanders, Navasota Valley Electric

Liz Shimshack, Wells Fargo Bank

Tammi Warford, Brazos Valley Fair & Rodeo

Dear Friend,

I sincerely hope you, your family and friends had a great summer. As we move into the fall season, things begin to change. The weather switches from sweltering temperatures to cooler mornings and evenings. Summer activities, like camps, vacations and swimming get replaced by football games and school.

One thing is for certain — school year 2021 should bring some sense of normalcy back to children who attend school.

Schools are much more than a place of learning. They provide structure and rules, engagement opportunities for children to find their place among their peers, and a reprieve from homes that may not be as supportive as the ones we have. And lastly, schools feed and nourish children whose families' incomes are lower than most.

That is why the [Brazos Valley Food Bank](#) (BVFB) deems it imperative that we partner with schools to ensure students still have that lifeline when class isn't in session. Let me explain. Families whose children receive free and/or reduced-priced breakfast and lunch at school may struggle with securing nutritious, reliable food in the evenings and on the weekends.

BVFB is only as effective as our partnerships. Because of your commitment to fighting hunger, the relationships we've established with our schools back in 2005 remain strong to this day. Your support means better outcomes for students. To learn more about how you help our community fight back against hunger, enjoy the stories in this edition of *The Story*.

Gratefully,

Theresa Mangapora
Executive Director

Together, We're Building Stronger Communities

Vera has been the sole provider for her four children since 2011. She moved to Southgate Village, subsidized low-income housing in College Station, with her kids in 2012. But raising four children, each of whom has their own disability, is hard.

Focusing on her children's growth and development and ensuring their needs are met makes juggling life and finances challenging. Trips to the grocery store are few and far between. Sometimes families like Vera's must make tough choices about how to spend their money.

"The end of the month is hard," Vera explains.

COVID-19 made things much worse. Despite tough times, Vera has a goal to own a home to provide a positive example for her children.

Currently, Vera is taking an IBM course and expects to find a good job once she finishes. For now, her family gets healthy food every Friday from the Lincoln Center, a [BVFB](#) partner pantry.

"It's a blessing," Vera says, with gratitude.

You're helping provide needed, nutritious food to families right here in the Brazos Valley. When basic needs are met, and stress and worries tabled, goals are much more achievable. Thank you.



Becky and Don Russell Share Their Blessings

Becky and Don Russell don't even remember when they gave their first gift, but the couple has been regularly donating to charities for the last several decades.

Becky says, "At some point, you have to look back on your life and say, 'What did I do besides serve myself?'"

Both Becky and Don have worked as teachers within our community. Becky has taught first grade and piano while Don is a professor of electrical

engineering at Texas A&M. They are involved in a multitude of nonprofits and sacrifice their time to volunteer often.

Don carries his favorite Mahatma Gandhi quote in his billfold to remind him why they do what they do...

"There are people in the world so hungry that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread."

Don explains, "Giving bread to someone who is hungry is the closest thing you can do to giving them God."

To others who are not yet involved, Don urges, "You don't have to give a huge donation...a lot of little things add up. When you're blessed, you have an obligation to bless others."

On behalf of all the Brazos Valley community members we are proud to serve, thank you, Becky and Don, for your incredible legacy of generosity!





BackPacks: A Vital Brazos Valley Resource

“The kids need everything here. Food. Love. Everything,” says Sarah D’Olivera, a counselor who’s worked at Neal Elementary School in Bryan for eight years.

To address its students’ need for food, Neal Elementary School participates in BVFB’s Backpack Program, which aims to alleviate childhood hunger by providing food-insecure children with shelf-stable, low preparation, healthy food over the weekend and during school breaks.

“A lot of the times, the Backpack is [a child’s] saving grace,” says Sarah. “When they go on breaks, it’s hard... We have no clue what they go home to.”

Sarah says since COVID-19 hit, she has noticed a dramatic increase in the need for food. And children without enough to eat can’t concentrate or engage in learning.

“It makes it way harder to focus on schoolwork when I’m hungry,” says Valeria, age 9. She’s very thankful for her Backpack and says she shares it with her two siblings.

Getting his weekly Backpack makes Rafael, also age 9, “feel like someone cares about me,” he says. He’s proud that he can make his own meals from the food in the Backpacks and especially likes when there’s macaroni and cheese.

“I want you to know the profound difference you’re making in these kids’ lives. You’re saving their lives,” Sarah says. “Some don’t know where their next meal is coming from, but they have this bag.”

It’s hard to express just how much your support is feeding the future of our community. Thank you isn’t enough!

Upcoming Events

H-E-B’S HELP END HUNGER CAMPAIGN

August 18 – October 26
Visit your local H-E-B to participate in this tear pad campaign at store registers.

TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEE CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN

Fall 2021
Brazos Valley Food Bank’s SECC number is 250005. Annual enrollment for State agency employees to give through payroll deductions.

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

Fall 2021
Brazos Valley Food Bank’s CFC number is 24637. Annual enrollment for federal, postal, and military employees to give through payroll deductions.

MINGLE FOR MEALS

Date TBD
Three stages, nine speakers giving brief, inspirational talks about success stories from services and programs of the BVFB.



BRAZOS VALLEY
foodbank

Contact Us:
(979) 779-3663
www.bvfb.org

Physical:
1501 Independence Avenue
Bryan, TX 77803

Mailing:
PO Box 74
Bryan, TX 77806

