



The Story:

Solving hunger today for a hunger free tomorrow.

Fall 2023



**You Feed
The Future**

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Theresa Mangapora

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Dear Friend,

As back-to-school season begins, getting into the rhythm of a regular schedule can be difficult for families — for both the kids and the adults. The transition takes planning, with everything from sleep, transportation and after school activity schedules, to grocery shopping and daily student lunch prep.

For some families, ensuring enough variety in a child's daily lunch box is the challenge. For others, having enough nutritious food at all for most meals, let alone daily lunch at school, is an unthinkable challenge.

The good news is that back-to-school means regular access to supplemental food for children again. School meals, [Brazos Valley Food Bank's \(BVFB\) BackPacks](#) in most Brazos Valley public elementary schools, and School Based Food Pantries in over a dozen Brazos Valley middle and high schools, mean every child, regardless of their socioeconomic status, can focus on learning instead of an empty stomach.

And while each of these safety net programs is crucial, stories like those of Nathaniel and Emily, as well as that of Susan, show just how important the BVFB and our partners are for supplementing monthly food budgets, keeping children nourished and reducing daily stress.

And let's not forget the Solstandt Family. Volunteering with BVFB - giving their time and talents as a family to ensure other local families facing a rough patch can share a meal together - is truly inspiring.

I hope that these local stories capture your heart and inspire you to act. We need you.

Gratefully,

Theresa Mangapora
Executive Director

You Ease Susan's Worries

Like so many parents, Susan works hard each day to make sure her children have what they need to thrive in school and in life. Thanks to friends like you, she has help this fall providing nutritious food to fuel their days.

Over the past year, Susan and her family faced several major life obstacles, but Susan has remained laser-focused on providing for her kids, who range in age from kindergarten to college.

"If I didn't have something like this to count on, I don't know what we'd do," Susan shares on a visit to a Brazos Valley Food Bank's supported Grimes County Mobile Food Pantry.

Susan works as a meal delivery driver to support the family, but she says it's often difficult to find consistent work. She does receive SNAP benefits, but SNAP has never covered all of her monthly food costs. In fact, with higher-than-normal food prices, SNAP dollars are not going very far at all.

Thankfully, Susan can visit the Grimes County Mobile Food Pantry to pick up fresh, frozen and



Susan shares a smile of appreciation for the food she's receiving for her family as her son accompanies her.

additional food that helps provide enough groceries for her kids.

"This (Grimes County Mobile Food Pantry) eases my mind," Susan says. "I've got to try everything I can to provide for my kids."

"If I didn't have something like this to count on, I don't know what we'd do."

Thanks to friends like you, Susan and many more Brazos Valley neighbors can keep nutritious food on the table. Thank you for being a vital part of a community that cares.

Sostandt Family Lends a Helping Hand



The Sostandt family makes time every weekend for a morning volunteer shift together at BVFB.

After several years of his wife volunteering at the [Brazos Valley Food Bank \(BVFB\)](#), and then his childhood friend Roy Ellis began working there, Jason knew it was time to join in service.

Together, Jason and his wife bring along their daughters and son every weekend for a morning volunteer shift at (BVFB). Currently, the Sostandt family uses the time spent volunteering with BVFB as a bonding experience.

"We do it as a family to make sure they understand these are our core family values."

Jason says he wants his kids to see firsthand that volunteer work can spark tremendous change.

"My oldest daughter has her own business," Jason shares. "We're trying to show her — once you get to where you want to be in life, you can always give back."

Wanting his kids to carry on the goodwill of volunteerism long into the future, Jason shares, "My son loves it and always makes a friend" as his young son helps another volunteer weigh cans of vegetables for distribution.

To fellow community members interested in giving back, the family encourages anyone interested to join them.

"When you give back, you get blessings," Jason says.



Emily holds her son, Nathaniel, on a recent visit to Madison Mobile Food Pantry.



Helping Here:

H-E-B's HELP END HUNGER CAMPAIGN

September 13 – October 24

Visit your local H-E-B to participate in this tear pad campaign at store registers. Donations directly benefit the mission of BVFB.

TEXAS STATE EMPLOYEE CHARITABLE CAMPAIGN

Fall 2023

Are you a State employee? If so, did you know you are able to make sustaining donations to the BVFB by enrolling in payroll deductions?

BVFB SECC number: 250005

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

Fall 2023

Federal, postal, and military employees can make sustaining donations to the BVFB by enrolling in payroll deductions.

BVFB CDC number: 24637

You're Helping Emily Get Back on Her Feet

Emily has supported her family with a career in the healthcare industry, but when a knee injury temporarily halted her ability to work, friends like you stepped up to help.

Emily lives with extended family right now while she can't work, to help offset the costs of caring for her four children. Thankfully, she can also visit the Madison County Mobile Food Pantry to pick up healthy food for the whole household.

"This Mobile and other pantries help in the meantime," Emily says on a recent visit.

Emily has visited Madison Mobile Pantry over the past two months. She says she feels a sense of relief knowing her kids have access to nutritious food until she's able to return to work. She applied for SNAP benefits but is waiting for approval.

"We are adults, we can handle skipping a meal, but I would never put that on my children," she says.

"This mobile and other pantries help."

Thanks to donors like you, Emily had nutritious food for her family during this setback.

Emily is healed now enough to apply for healthcare work again and feels optimistic about her possibilities. She's thankful for the food you help provide for her family in the meantime, saying, "...it sure does help."

Thank you for helping ensure every Brazos Valley child, family and senior has access to healthy food this fall and beyond!



1501 Independence Avenue
Bryan, TX 77803
(979) 779-3663
www.bvfb.org