

BRAZOS VALLEY FOOD BANK

The Story:

*Solving hunger today for
a hunger free tomorrow.*

SUMMER NEWSLETTER 2020

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*You Give Your
Neighbors the Food
They Need to Thrive*



Theresa Mangapora
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Dear Friend,

COVID-19 has inspired the Brazos Valley Food Bank (BVFB) staff, board of directors, volunteers and partner agencies to do what we do — feed people — as efficiently, safely and creatively as possible. But, just as all of us, [BVFB](#) has been operating in uncharted territory since March.

- BVFB has never before COVID-19:
- Depleted our donated food supply;
 - Pre-assembled food pallets of disaster food;
 - Authorized remote workers and limited facility access;
 - Implemented stringent sanitation protocols;
 - Limited volunteers to groups of 10.

But we have now. And we're making it work. Food is a basic need, but in a time of crisis, not all people are treated equally. Not all employees can work from home or continue to draw a paycheck while not physically at work. A large volume of our calls, walk-ins and partner pantry visitors are reaching out for help for the first time. They, too, are in uncharted territory, trying to maneuver through the helping system during a time of great uncertainty

To provide for the newly food-insecure, as well as children, hardworking families and seniors who need food assistance from time to time throughout the year, BVFB has to continue its work and mission: striving for a hunger-free Brazos Valley.

Very few of BVFB's partner agencies have closed their doors — commitment worth noting. Teachers and other school personnel are picking up children's BackPacks and delivering them to homes.

These concrete acts at this daunting time are truly inspiring, and your generosity is among them.

Gratefully,

Theresa Mangapora
Executive Director

You're Changing LaFreya's Life

"As a single parent, when May comes, I think 'How am I going to feed them?'" LaFreya says about the typically hungry months of summer. "The summertime is very, very hard."

But this year, that struggle came early when the COVID-19 pandemic shut down schools months early. LaFreya's raising Joslyn, Jonah, and Joshua on her own, and providing for their needs is often a challenge on her limited disability assistance.

But that's about to change — thanks to friends like you. LaFreya enrolled in [BVFB's](#) Together We Grow (TWG) program. This initiative provides case management, career coaching and other important services to help neighbors in need accomplish personal and professional goals.

LaFreya learned about TWG through a flyer at a BVFB partner food pantry. She says the program has helped her learn, grow and understand her true potential.

"My life is changing," she says. "[Together We Grow] helped me realize the greatness that's me!"

Thanks to OnRamp, a generous TWG partner, LaFreya received her very own car! She also landed a job interview and has plans to go back to school to study social work.

LaFreya couldn't be more grateful for your encouragement and compassion. "[Your] generosity means so much to people who have nothing," she says.



Pauline Gives Back

Pauline was born and raised in Madison County. She and her late husband, Irvin, brought up their five children in the area and loved being a part of this caring community.

"I know if I break down in the middle of the road, someone is going to stop and help me," Pauline says. "This community helps each other."

At 71, when she's not spending time with

her children and five grandchildren, Pauline gives tirelessly to her hometown. She's been volunteering with the Madison County Mobile Food Pantry every month for the past 10 years. And, in that time, Pauline has gotten to better know so many of her neighbors facing hunger. Her understanding of their hardships and the reality of hunger in the region is unquestionable.

"[Food is] essential for the health of individuals," she says. "Kids get sick more often without it."

Because volunteering has enriched her life so much, Pauline hopes others will get involved.

"I love to get a chance to be a blessing to the community," she says. "Come and give it a try, and I guarantee you'll enjoy it."

We are grateful for Pauline's dedication, commitment and heartwarming smile. She is a true asset to the Mobile Food Pantry.





RICARDO, JR. AND AMERICA'S MOM, MIRIAM, SHARES A GRATEFUL SMILE AT HER LOCAL WIC OFFICE.

Thank You for Bringing Families Hope

Little Ricardo, Jr., 5, and his big sister, America, 7, are bright, energetic and happy kids. America loves to dance, and Ricardo recently taught himself to ride a bike. You'd never guess from their wide smiles that their family faces hunger.

Their dad, Ricardo, Sr., was working 60-hour weeks at his construction job, which got the family by, but his schedule was recently reduced. Like so many local parents, he and his wife, Miriam, are having a hard time providing food for their kids with the long break from school.

"Whenever they're at home, they're opening the fridge looking for food," Miriam says.

She used to work in retail and has

been actively searching for a job that will accommodate the kids' school schedule when they return. Miriam loves her children and does her best to provide for them. That's why she's so grateful you give.

Friends like you help make sure [BVFB](#) can provide fresh produce at Miriam's local WIC office. Miriam knows good, nutritious food is vital for Ricardo, Jr. and America's healthy development. She was excited to pick up a bag full of poblano peppers recently to make chiles rellenos, one of her kids' favorite dishes.

"[You] help a lot of families!" she says.

Thank you for feeding the future of our Brazos Valley community!

BVFB's Response to COVID-19

Thanks to the generosity of our caring community, BVFB has modified our food distribution efforts in response to the COVID-19 crisis. As of April 13:

- [Emergency Food Boxes to Supplement Grab n Go School Meals](#): BVFB mobilized as soon as schools closed and has provided nearly 3,000 boxes to families whose children rely on school meals;
- [BackPacks to Children at Home](#): Our Backpack program has reached hungry children with nearly 10,000 bags of healthy food, 38 percent more than usual for this time period;
- [Home Delivered Meals to Seniors](#): Through a partnership with several food pantries and Crowdsourc Rescue, food boxes have been delivered to the doorstep of seniors who are most vulnerable;
- [Safer Food Distributions at Pantries](#): BVFB staff have weekly conference calls with our partner agencies to discuss mobile and curbside delivery, best safety practices, and help limit service interruptions.



BRAZOS VALLEY
foodbank

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