



A Quarterly Publication from the
Food Bank of Northwest
Louisiana

FOOD FOR *Thought*

Spring 2021 Newsletter



Families Continue to Struggle with Food Insecurity During Pandemic

A MESSAGE FROM DAWN

I am a single mother of 3 children. I lost my job with the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, I work when I can at cleaning jobs on the weekends. With the COVID-19 pandemic I have struggled to find cleaning jobs. I didn't know what to do.



How would I pay my rent, keep gas in the car, pay for food or anything else we needed? I heard about the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana's food distributions at different places around the city. We didn't go at first, but then things got so bad I called the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. The receptionist Lucy, told me about a distribution for cars so I could stay safe. We went to a food distribution at Fairgrounds Field on a Saturday. It

was such a blessing in our lives. I didn't know what to expect. I waited in line for a short time and received so much food—chicken, apples, oranges, pasta, rice, beans, eggs, milk and much more.

The most important thing I learned is that you just never know where life will take you! I never thought I'd be a single mom trying to make ends meet in a pandemic. Things can change in a moment, and it can happen to anyone. Even a business can close down – it can happen to anyone at any time. We have been so blessed by the generosity from the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. "I just can't tell you how much the Food Bank means to me and my children."



***Thank you to
SWEPCO for
their generous
support to the
Food Bank of
Northwest***

Dining by Design Empty Bowls 2021

Dining by Design: Empty Bowls 2021 is a new look for the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana's annual main fundraiser and hunger awareness event. The event has been transformed thanks to Bonne' Summers of Apex Communications and Events. Over 20 area wide designers and creative people will decorate tables with various themes and local chefs will prepare special designed meals. The event will be held at Sci-port Discovery Center on Thursday, September 16, 2021. In past years, the event has generated funds to provide food for 325,000 meals in Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Claiborne, Bienville, Red River and DeSoto Parishes. The decorated tables will be on display for public viewing from September 1 – 15 at Sci-port Discovery Center.

At Dining by Design: Empty Bowls 2021, attendees will enjoy dinner along with donated goods and services to be available in a silent auction. At the end of the event, everyone attending will choose a ceramic bowl (crafted by artists and the community) to take home. These bowls remind us of all the empty bowls in our community that do not get filled each day.

For tickets and event sponsorship please contact Auburn Brasher at 318.675.2400 ext.111 or development@foodbanknla.org.



Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana



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Martha Marak

You can visit the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana online anytime at:

www.foodbanknla.org

Check out our website to learn more about events, volunteer opportunities, to make safe, secure online donations and to learn more about the Food Bank.



Letter

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



As we complete a year of the coronavirus pandemic, I am reflective and reminded of one thing above all — hope.

Looking back at this past year, all of our lives have been changed in one way or another: the loss of jobs and businesses, the struggle of virtual education, the need for grandparents to step in and care for children, the front-line dangers and long hours faced by our health care and essential workers, and the loss of loved ones. The list goes on.

But we see hope for our community. Hundreds of volunteers have stepped up to provide food to our neighbors in need. Individuals, businesses, organizations and churches have all provided hope through generous donations. Children have hope as they are provided meals when schools are closed. Millions of pounds of food have been distributed across our Northwest Louisiana community.

We cannot do this work without you and we are so grateful for the gifts already shared with us. It has been beautiful to witness the community coming together to offer hope to thousands in our community. Together, we can solve hunger.

With gratitude,

Martha Marak



The Kroger Co. Zero Hunger Zero Waste Foundation unveiled the record-breaking success of its Community Care Hunger Program in January 2021. Kroger associates and Kroger customers showed their unprecedented support of the Community Care Campaign by providing food for over 100,000 meals to neighbors in need in Northwest Louisiana.

**USDA Nondiscrimination Statement
Civil Rights Requirements**

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the **USDA Program Discrimination**

Complaint Form, (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

2021 Fight Hunger. Spark Change Campaign

April 13 – May 11, 2021

Product Purchase: Each participating item purchased at Walmart or Sam's Club will unlock a donation to the Food Bank of NWLA.



Register Giving: Customers can donate to the Food Bank of NWLA at the registers of Walmart and Sam's Club stores.

Give For Good Day

Tuesday, May 4, 2021

May 4, 2021 is Give for Good Day, the 24 hours of online giving that is sponsored by the Community Foundation of North Louisiana. Remember, for every \$10 donated, the Food Bank will provide \$100 in food to the community. Donate at: <https://www.giveforgoodnla.org/foodbank>



Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive

Saturday, May 8, 2021

We are hoping the National Association of Letter Carrier's 27th Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive benefitting the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana will take place in 2021.



If confirmed, you can donate by leaving non-perishable food donations in a bag near your mailbox on Saturday, May 9. We are hopeful the food drive will resume this year.

AmazonSmile

Choose the Food Bank of NWLA when using AmazonSmile! It's a simple and automatic way for you to support the FoodBank every time you shop, at no cost to you.



When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices AND vast selection as Amazon.com, with Amazon donating a portion of the purchase to the Food Bank. On your first visit to Smile.Amazon.com, please select the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana as your charity of choice.

Yoplait Lids to Feed America

Through April 30, 2021

Yoplait is helping families have access to nutritious food through the Lids to Feed America campaign. From now through April 30 January 1, 2021, consumers can look for specially marked Yoplait products at their local retailer, scan and submit their receipt at YoplaitLids.com and Yoplait will donate 9 cents to the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana through Feeding America.



Designing by Design: Empty Bowls 2021



Thursday, September 16, 2021, at 6pm

Designer Tables, Dinner and Silent Auction

We are giving our Empty Bowls a new look this year. The event will include a professional designed and decorated tables, new menu and location—SciPort Discovery Center.

Sponsorships and Tickets available. Call Auburn at 318.675.2400 ext. 111 or development@foodbanknla.org for more information.

Red Nose Day

Coming together to end child poverty one nose at a time!



Support the Food Bank through Red Nose Day, a mission to end child poverty.

Through the power of entertainment, Red Nose Day raises awareness and money to help the kids who need us most, both at home and around the world.

Kroger Community Rewards

The Food Bank of NWLA is a member of the Kroger Community Rewards program, a program that donates \$1.5 million to local churches, schools and community organizations yearly. Link your Kroger Plus card to the Food Bank and each time you swipe you will accumulate rewards to support our organization. To register your card, please visit www.KrogerCommunityRewards.com or your Kroger store Service Desk.



New Facility Nearing Completion



The new home of the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana is nearing completion. Located at 285 Mt. Zion Road in Shreveport, the facility is a total of 71,080 square feet of combined warehouse space, refrigeration and freezer space, volunteer room, and office area. We are excited to expand our refrigeration and freezer space to over 7,000 square feet – more than 7 times our existing size. This expansion will allow us to acquire and distribute more fresh produce. We will move to our new facility by early summer 2021. We are very grateful for all of the donors to our project that have made our goal a reality.



We are grateful for the **Darden Restaurants, Inc. Foundation** — the charitable arm of Darden Restaurants — **Lineage Logistics**, and **Penske** for their donation of a 2018 refrigerated box truck.

During this time of heightened need, the addition to our Food Bank's fleet of vehicles is welcomed and appreciated.

“Families face hunger in every community across the country; your neighbor, child's classmate or even co-worker may be struggling to get enough to eat. Darden and the Darden Restaurants Foundation are proud to partner with Feeding America member food banks to address the significant issue of hunger in a tangible and meaningful way,” says Stephanie Ghertner, Director of the Darden Restaurants Foundation.

Food Bank Facts

As a hunger-relief organization, the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana acquires, stores, and distributes food and other essential items to low income children and individuals through 150 community non-profit and faith-based organizations within Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Bienville, Claiborne, Red River and DeSoto Parishes. These organizations consist of homeless shelters, soup kitchens, residential centers, churches, pantry programs, and schools. We save these agencies millions each year by providing free and low cost food and products.

OUR PROGRAMS INCLUDE

Food and Emergency Distribution:

In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, we distributed 13.5 million pounds of food with a value of \$18,880,000 to more than 75,000 children, women, men, seniors, veterans, homeless, disabled, unemployed and underemployed individuals living below the federal poverty level in the seven parishes of northwest Louisiana.

Disaster Relief:

As a disaster responder we provide immediate assistance to our partner organizations, sister food banks and individuals. We distributed \$250,000 of water and food during the 2015 and 2016 spring flood disaster victims. In 2017 - 2020 we provided over \$400,000 in food and water to the Food Banks in Beaumont Texas, Puerto Rico, South Carolina and South Louisiana for hurricane victims. Most recently we provided water and food in the February 2021 Winter Storm.

Senior Box Program:

Each month we deliver a box of pantry staple foods to over 1,000 low income seniors throughout our seven parishes.

Mobile Pantry:

Perishable and non-perishable food are distributed to rural clients on a monthly basis.

Kids Cafe® After School Meals:

The Food Banks provides meals for the Volunteers of America's Lighthouse Program, Caddo Parish Libraries, FDDOC Winner's Circle, Youth Enrichment Program, and David Raines Health Center for hungry children in after-school programs.

BackPack™ Program:

Chronically hungry children are provided with a weekly backpack of food to take home for the weekend and holidays. Each 7-10 pound bag includes items such as cereal, milk, fruit juice, and pop-top canned food.

Summer Food Service Program:

Nutritional breakfasts and lunches are provided for hungry children during the summer months. Food is provided at summer programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs and faith-based summer programs.

Delivering Goods:

A national program and partnership that provides new clothing, toys and household items to individuals and children in need.