

COMING TOGETHER IN TIMES OF CRISIS HARVEST RESPONDS TO COVID-19 WITH HUGE SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY



Support quickly came in all shapes and sizes, from food drives and donations, to monetary donations and fundraisers, to groups of volunteers like teachers and students out of school, including Arkansas' PRIDE program. "Harvest has been an essential partner with the TAPD Pride Program since its inception in August of 2012," says Sergeant Kristi Bennett with the Texarkana Arkansas Police Department. This support was crucial in the first few weeks of the "COVID Crisis" to help Harvest ensure increased demand was being met and those in need were still being served safely and efficiently.

Felicia Horn, Assistant Principal with Texarkana Arkansas School District and Harvest Board Member, understands the impact the lack of adequate nutrition can have on a child's life. "Nutrition fuels the brain and body. A hungry child will never be focused on learning if they are focused on this fundamental need."

“... it is beautiful to see the compassion of our neighbors coming together to take care of one another.”

An assistant principal at North Heights Junior High, Horn is helping distribute "grab & go" breakfasts and lunches for TASD's district-wide meal program, and Harvest supplements this and other similar school district meal programs with the backpacks, as well as family food boxes. "Without Harvest's dependable food assistance, many families would struggle to provide regular meals," says Horn. "During these times of uncertainty and need, it is beautiful to see the compassion of our neighbors coming together to take care of one another."

There are a lot of sayings out there about friends ... and here at Harvest, while spring of 2020 will certainly be remembered for a lot of things, our biggest takeaway is this: **friends make the good times better, and the hard times easier.**

Our community answered the call in force as the reality of the coronavirus set in at the food bank. "With the first announcement of school closings, we quickly began increasing our distribution of food, especially food for hungry children," says Camille Coker Wrinkle, CEO/Executive Director. "With so many food insecure children at home, entire families were now struggling to provide more meals at home, which led us to increase our delivery of family food boxes. These extra deliveries, like COVID-19, were not 'planned' or 'budgeted,' and we weren't sure how we would be able to take on the additional need."



LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friends,

What a couple of months it has been! The past several weeks have honestly been some of the longest, and maybe the hardest, in my seven years at Harvest Regional Food Bank. Things began changing drastically with the announcement of school closures, and by the next afternoon, as food was

quickly leaving the warehouse, I said, “Ok, this is why we’re here!” but in the back of my mind, I was thinking, “How are we ever going to have enough?”

That’s where heroes come in...

By the next day, we had an outpouring of support. People showed up to pack family food boxes and bags for our Backpack Food for Kids program. We received a flood of calls and emails asking how to help. People set up Facebook fundraisers and Go Fund Me pages. And by that Friday, we had received thousands of dollars in individual gifts, logged hundreds of volunteer hours, and moved thousands of pounds of food where it was needed most.

If there has been one silver lining to the cloud of uncertainty we’re under, it would be the way people have found new ways to help one another, despite social distancing, curfews and shelter in place orders. We’ve had to be creative and this has led us to form new partnerships and strengthen our existing ones. We have worked with schools to distribute pantry boxes to families

of low-income students as they picked up their meals, regardless of being pre-qualified. We have provided meals and kid friendly food bags to our church pantries for those children who aren’t able to access school meals. And, we’ve implemented drive-through pantries to continue providing hunger relief while protecting the health of our volunteers and those we serve.

Now, we are continuing to fill the need by increasing the food we give through our Mobile Pantry program, and delivering food to seniors who are unable to access a pantry in their community. And we could not do any of it, without hundreds, if not thousands of helping hands.

Our community is full of HEROES!

But with every day of continued school closings, and each new announcement about business closing, the need keeps growing.

We still need heroes...

Feeding people in 10 counties will be a leap of faith for the next several weeks, or even months. I cannot say enough about our team and the amount of time they have put into making sure our food insecure neighbors are served. **I have never been prouder to be a part of Harvest Regional Food Bank, and proud to say I am part of a community of heroes!**

Camille Coker Wrinkle
CEO/Executive Director

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COMING TOGETHER IN TIMES OF CRISIS

Sgt. Bennett is no stranger to the first responders in our community, and she is a crucial resource to ensure we are getting connected to the people who are providing services to individuals who need food assistance, especially in times of crisis. “The Miller County Volunteer Fire (MCFV) contacted me after getting several calls in their communities of the elderly not able to go out for supplies during this time of uncertainty,” says Bennett. “At that point I knew that Harvest Regional Food Bank



would be a valuable partnership in the MCFV efforts. The next day 100 boxes of much needed food was picked up. Who better knows the needs of this community than the nine local Volunteer Fire Departments.”

While we still have a long road ahead, and the effects of our current crisis will likely be felt for several months, we are amazed at how communities have come together to answer the call for help and support. We hope this issue recognizes some of those efforts while shedding light on the need for hunger relief going forward. **We believe more than ever, that together, we will get through this and come out even stronger.**

HUNGER HEROES

We are deeply grateful to the many HUNGER HEROES who have helped us continue providing hunger relief to Southwest Arkansas and Northeast Texas with their time, funds, food and talent. Here are just a few:



AEP SWEPCO FOUNDATION

148,000 meals

AEP/SWEPCO Foundation was one of the first to respond with a strong commitment to help meet the rising need for hunger relief in our region.



FRIENDS FOR A CAUSE

Senior Care Packages

Friends for a Cause, a volunteer organization, has partnered with Harvest to provide over 300 care packages, including food and household items, to seniors who are unable to access other community pantries at this time.



HIGHLAND DAIRY

36,000 servings of milk for children

Highland Dairy found a way to repurpose thousands of servings of fresh milk, when schools were shut down and the company had a surplus of product.



TYSON FOODS, INC

40,000 pounds of frozen poultry

TYSON came to the aid of food banks across the state with truckloads of frozen Tyson poultry products, which will help food insecure individuals feed their families in the weeks and months ahead.



FEEDING AMERICA

220,000 meals for Southwest Arkansas and Northeast Texas

Harvest Regional Food Bank was included in phase one of a multi-phase series of funding, based on the pre-COVID-19 needs of our region, and the new rise in food insecure families. Their support ensures that our fleet, staff, and facilities are equipped to meet the new challenges ahead.



ALBERTSON'S

20,000 meals for families through Super Bowl of Caring

Albertson's annual Super Bowl Event was instrumental in providing staple pantry items like peanut butter, canned vegetables, and pasta to include in family food boxes that are distributed through pantries and delivered food programs.



MILLER COUNTY VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENTS

Emergency Food Boxes for seniors

While responding to emergency calls, Volunteer Fire Fighters across Miller County saw the need for hunger relief, especially among seniors. They began carrying emergency food boxes and have already delivered over 100 emergency food boxes to seniors in need.



FARM BUREAU OF ARKANSAS

330,000 Meals for Southwest Arkansas and Northeast Texas

Farm Bureau of Arkansas made a record donation of \$500,000 to statewide hunger relief, with each food bank in the state receiving a portion to aid in their delivery of food to hungry families in their service area.



ARVEST BANK

41,250 Meals for Miller, Little River, Pike, and Howard Counties

Arvest Bank is supporting hunger relief with a donation to be directed to Little River, Miller, Pike, and Howard Counties in Arkansas. The funds were used to support partnering pantries in their distribution of food to hungry families in those counties.



BankOZK

BankOZK

41,250 Meals for Harvest Regional Food Bank's ten county area

BankOZK is combining two efforts to support Harvest Regional Food Bank. They made a generous financial donation, along with becoming the sponsor of our upcoming radiothon with Townsquare Media, planned for Summer 2020.



CENTERPOINT ENERGY

55,000 Meals for hungry families throughout Southwest

Arkansas and Northeast Texas

Centerpoint Energy came to the aid of hungry families with a donation to support hunger relief throughout Southwest Arkansas and Northeast Texas.



BROOKSHIRE GROCERY COMPANY

62,500 meals provided to families struggling with hunger throughout ten counties

Brookshire's made a generous donation to food banks throughout Northeast Texas, Southwest Arkansas and Northwest Louisiana to fight hunger during this current crisis.



Fringe Boutique Food Drive for emergency food boxes



Volunteers packing family boxes and backpack food for kids



Texarkana Water Utilities providing food for emergency boxes

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With the purchase of this tee, \$10 will be go to all food banks in Arkansas

rockcityoutfitters.com/collections/fundraiser-tees

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To find out how you or your business can become part of the Harvester's Club, please call us at 870-774-1398.

Harvester's Club Partners support Harvest Regional Food Bank's two signature events, as well as provide vital program support each year.



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