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**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

# SPECIAL INGREDIENTS

A Publication of The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri

**SPRING 2020**

## AmeriCorps *Makes a Difference* at Central Pantry

TEAM HELPS PATRONS AND IMPROVES FACILITY

For 10 weeks, the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps Water Team 2 became an integral part of The Food Bank family. They worked at Central Pantry daily and helped in the Volunteer Room before their time in Mid-Missouri ended early in March after the program was suspended due to precautions against COVID-19.

The tight-knit group with members aging 18-23 years came from across the nation. Signing up for the program is a 10-month commitment to service work, and The Food Bank was the team's second assignment. **Their time here was short, but their impact will prove lasting.**

At Central Pantry, the team made significant improvements to the facility, clearing outside brush, deep cleaning, and repainting and rearranging parts of the pantry. When not working on the store itself, they helped with daily operations, assisting patrons at counters, helping in the sorting room, or restocking shelves.

Allison Magoulas, the team leader, said the group was glad to have direct interaction with the community through Central Pantry, leading to a change in perspective.

"Some people, you know, when we're kind to them they just open up about all the other things in their

life. All of the layers of 'yes, I've experienced food insecurity, but I also am homeless,' or 'I also am taking people into my home that aren't my relatives because their parents have abandoned them,'" Magoulas said.

The team learned to let go of the preconceived ideas they had of what someone facing food insecurity looks like. Magoulas added, "We don't know — people go through so much that we can't even begin to know about."

In addition to The Food Bank, the group helped the Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture and Karis Church, which provided housing for the team. They also completed multiple projects with other non-profits in the community during their time in central Missouri.

Water Team 2 marked a full year of service by AmeriCorps NCCC at The Food Bank, and another team will be coming to help again soon through CCUA.



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The stories for this newsletter were prepared in March. For the latest information on how The Food Bank for Central & Northeast Missouri is responding to the effects of COVID-19, please visit [ShareFoodBringHope.org](http://ShareFoodBringHope.org).



# Appreciating the Value of Time Given

## HOW MUCH VOLUNTEERS MEAN TO US

The Food Bank is a massive undertaking every day. Our work involves many moving parts functioning together to serve the community best, and **volunteers are a mainspring of that operation of giving. We can never appropriately thank them for everything they do.** During our initial response to COVID-19, volunteers were vital in keeping our operation running. In an uncertain time, they showed an unwavering commitment to helping neighbors.



**When someone volunteers with us, it means more than simply giving their time.**

Thousands of pounds pass through The Food Bank daily. Our success comes through bulk-purchasing power, meaning we can stretch each dollar into more food than any one person can purchase. But, once we get those items in bulk, it needs to be broken down to individual portions. That is where volunteers come in, repacking food and assembling Buddy Packs, Senior Boxes, and VIP Veteran Packs. **They essentially double our workforce, and without them, our mission of feeding neighbors would grind to a halt.**

Volunteers also help us distribute food directly, lending their time at Central Pantry and through Mobile Pantries. Often, those who help us form a connection to the work and the people they're helping, regularly coming back to volunteer.

In Adair County, one remarkable group of volunteers took their passion for helping and found a new organization to feed neighbors — the Pantry for Adair County. They are a new partner agency, and I am proud to say we sent them 347,000 pounds of food in 2019.

On the front page, you read about the fantastic Americorps NCCC team that served with us. **They're a dedicated group of volunteers, helping increase the impact The Food Bank and other organizations have in the community.** We appreciate their help and were glad to have them as part of our team.

When someone volunteers with us, it means more than simply giving their time. Similar to a donor making a gift, they are choosing to become involved in our mission — to be a part of a communal effort to end hunger. I can never say it often enough; **thank you to all of our donors and volunteers. You make this work possible and help so many through your efforts.**

Gratefully,

Lindsay Young Lopez  
President and CEO

# Focused on Foods to Encourage

FOOD BANK PRIORITIZES HEALTHIER FOOD TO HELP FAMILIES



Many families struggle to afford fresh fruits and vegetables. For those balancing a grocery budget with other essentials such as rent or utilities, fresh produce can be hard to obtain.

To help people facing food insecurity get the nutrition they need, The Food Bank adopted its Foods to Encourage initiative several years ago — focusing on increasing the distribution of fruits, vegetables, dairy, whole grain, and protein. **Now, 60% of the foods we distribute are those healthier items.**

At Central Pantry and other partner agencies, people can regularly receive fruits, vegetables, and other nutritional foods. This feat is only possible through several programs and partnerships, chief among them being food rescue. The Food Bank works with local grocers to pick up food that would otherwise go to waste and get it to those who need it, reducing food insecurity and keeping more out of landfills.

Columbia Center for Urban Agriculture has also partnered with The Food Bank, donating much of its fresh, locally grown produce to Central Pantry. With spring approaching, that dedication serves as an inspiration to all. You can give vegetables grown in your garden to the Central Pantry or reach out to a local partner agency and see if they will accept donations. Healthier items are among the most difficult for The Food Bank to procure. **By providing produce, you help more families get the nutrition they need.**

## Another Year of Incredible Volunteers

THE FOOD BANK TOTALS HOURS GIVEN IN 2019

There's no doubt — volunteers are crucial to The Food Bank's success, with thousands giving time every year to help end hunger. We see all types of groups come to help, from students to retirees. Our Volunteer Room is known as an excellent place for team building, with companies, youth groups, religious organizations, and others coming back year after year. **The Food Bank thanks all who join us to feed the community.** Here are the volunteer totals for last year.

Thank You  
Volunteers



**15,120**  
Volunteers



**106,260**  
Hours Donated



**\$2.6M**  
Value



# Bringing Hope During the COVID-19 Pandemic

## HOW THE FOOD BANK IS CONTINUING ITS MISSION THROUGH THE CRISIS

We began writing the stories for this newsletter in the first week of March. This page was going to be a highlight of the upcoming Float Your Boat event, The Food Bank's largest spring fundraiser. By the end of the month, we canceled the event, schools shuttered, and the nation declared a state of emergency in reaction to the spread of COVID-19. Seemingly overnight, the world changed, and our work rapidly became more critical and challenging.

The future of the COVID-19 situation is uncertain. We cannot know what will happen in the coming months, and changes will occur by the time you read this newsletter. Still, **The Food Bank is committed to helping people who need food while protecting the safety of its volunteers, staff, and those we serve.**

One of The Food Bank's primary responsibilities is to respond in times of disaster. In those moments, we work with Feeding America and the national network of food banks to get food to people where a crisis occurs. But, unlike a flood or tornado, the spread of COVID-19 has affected communities everywhere, putting a strain on supply lines nationwide. The crisis also affects how we share food, requiring new distribution methods to practice proper social distancing.

As families face losses in income and more people find themselves food insecure, the importance of our work will grow. In the last weeks of March, our partner agencies saw an increase in the number of families coming for assistance. Some had a few extra families visit; others had over 100 more people than usual.

**Only you, our donors and volunteers, enable us to continue our mission in this challenging time.** The community response in support of The Food Bank from the beginning of this crisis and continuing to today has been overwhelming.



**From the entire Food Bank staff, thank you for believing in our mission now more than ever.**