

SPECIAL INGREDIENTS

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more about
VIP Veteran
Packs
on Page 4

Teresa, who served for more than a decade, receives a VIP Veteran Pack.

Helping Our Heroes in Need

Teresa comes to First Christian Food Pantry in Jefferson City off and on to supplement what she can afford on a fixed income. Last month, she was thrilled to receive a VIP Veteran Pack in addition to groceries.

Teresa joined the Marine Corps in 1987 and remained in the service until leaving the Army National Guard more than a decade later. The military, she says, gave her something she had lacked in childhood. "Structure and stability," she says. "I grew up poor and in foster homes."

Life after the military, however, would come with new challenges. She was diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorder and suffered from agoraphobia.

That is a common issue for a lot of Veterans returning from service, says Cindy Leveron, director of First Christian Food Pantry. "Many of them don't like to be in public. They may look healthy but are not able

to cope with day-to-day issues. Many are homeless, have limited transportation, are limited financially and are limited emotionally," says Leveron, a retired mental health care worker whose family and friends served in the military.

The VIP Veteran Pack Program, she says, is critical not only because it provides extra nutrition, but also because it shows that others care. "We need to be doing as much for Veterans as possible."

Today, Teresa is disabled but doing better. Her dream is to own land that would allow her to work with homeless Veterans to learn self-sustainability: farming, hunting and building shelters. Until then, however, she understands the importance of getting a little help from the community. "Military people know how to work hard, and it would be great to teach them how to be self-sufficient," she says. "But for right now, it's awesome to have this program."



Ending summer hunger...together

Thousands of children across central and northeast Missouri rely on free or reduced-price lunches at school. Many of these children do not have regular access to food at home.

To help ensure local students continue to have access to a mid-day meal, The Food Bank has teamed up with the Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services Department to cross-promote two longtime summer lunch programs.

The department hosts lunch in downtown Columbia while The Food Bank has six locations across the Columbia community.

The Food Bank's summer lunch program in Columbia begins July 2 and runs through Aug. 10. Between noon and 1 p.m., children 18 and under may stop by a site and eat lunch at no charge, with meals prepared by Columbia Public Schools.

Lunch in the Park, coordinated by Public Health and Human Services, began June 4 and continues

through Aug. 3 at Douglass Park.

The two entities, along with representatives from the community, have been meeting to discuss ways to partner and encourage participation. At The Food Bank's locations this year, children will enjoy activities such as basketball, a mini library, crafts and a week of farm-to-table fun in addition to the meal.

"We appreciate the Columbia/Boone County Public Health and Human Services Department for collaborating with us this year to ensure children can find a lunch spot convenient for them," says Lindsay Young Lopez, executive director of The Food Bank. "We know summer can be tough for families that rely on school meals to help fill the gap. It is important for everyone to work together to ensure children continue to have access to lunch."

The Food Bank has summer feeding locations in Adair and Cole counties, as well.

For times and locations, visit sharefoodbringhope.org.

On the Front Lines

Veterans United Home Loans and Veterans United Foundation are on the front lines of The Food Bank's fight against hunger among our heroes in need.

The VIP Veteran Pack Program began in 2016 with a grant from Veterans United Foundation. Since then, the foundation has given more than \$76,000 to help fund it.

Now, Veterans United Home Loans and Veterans United Foundation are exclusive title sponsors of Hope for Heroes, which will help The Food Bank continue to expand the program.

"We so appreciate the company and foundation for presenting our first 5k to encourage others to join the fight against hunger among Veterans," says Lindsay Young Lopez, executive director of The Food Bank.

Dr. Amanda Andrade, chief people officer at Veterans



Veterans United®
Home Loans

United, says the VIP Veteran Pack Program strikes at the core of the values employees there live by.

"Without this program, some of our most vulnerable Veterans would not have access to the essential nutrition most of us take for granted," says Andrade, who is also a member of The Food Bank's Board of Directors. "We are excited to support a program that has such a significant impact on our community."

Veterans' Program begins in Cole, Benton counties

They sacrificed years with family and friends, the comforts of home and the pursuit of personal interests. Yet many of those heading to the battlefield return home only to face hunger. In fact, according to a study published by the journal *Public Health Nutrition*, Veterans of recent wars suffer from food insecurity at double the national rate.

"As the daughter and granddaughter of Veterans, it breaks my heart to think of anyone who served our country going without proper nutrition," says Lindsay Young Lopez, executive director.

The Food Bank serves Veterans at food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and Veterans' shelters. In 2016, The Food Bank launched the VIP Veteran Pack

Program to provide extra nutrition to heroes in need. VIP Veteran Packs are boxes of ready-to-eat entrées, canned foods, snacks and personal care items distributed to Veterans living at or below poverty.

VIP Veteran Packs began as a pilot program in Boone County. This year, The Food Bank expanded the program to Benton and Cole counties.

"This is very important," says Jeannie Arnold of the Benton County Food Pantry. "The more we can do for Veterans, the better off they are."

Paul Haynes, who served in the Army during the Vietnam War, was the first to receive a VIP Veteran Pack in Cole County. Now retired, he and his wife are on a fixed



Paul Haynes, an Army Veteran, picks up a VIP Veteran Pack in Cole County.

income. "I think it's very nice," he says. "It's nice of people to do this for Veterans."

Teaming up to help area Veterans

Michele Spry and Jacki Swank share a passion for a few things: running, Veterans' interests and making a difference. That is why they have teamed up to help organize the inaugural Hope for Heroes 5k event benefiting The Food Bank's Veterans' programs.

"There's absolutely no reason those men and women who fought for our freedom should ever go without food," Spry says.

In addition to providing food to Veterans at pantries, soup kitchens and shelters, The Food Bank also provides VIP Veteran Packs to Veterans living at or below poverty.

Swank understands the importance of the program. Her husband, Craig, served in Iraq and Afghanistan. "Veterans are near and dear to my heart," she says. "Anything we can do to help we should do."



Jacki Swank and Michele Spry.

Swank and Spry first held a 5k in Columbia to benefit Welcome Home, a homeless shelter for Veterans that receives food at no charge from The Food Bank. When deciding which charity to support this year, they said they knew The Food Bank could use the proceeds to help even more area Veterans.

"It's exciting for us," Spry says. "The Food Bank is a great, well-run organization. We knew by partnering with The Food Bank, we would get the most bang for our buck to reach Veterans across the community and the communities The Food Bank serves."

HOPE FOR HEROES 5k | 7:45 A.M. | SATURDAY, JUNE 23 | COSMO PARK, COLUMBIA

Summers ready to tackle first 5k

After having a knee replaced last year, Jan Summers was looking for a new challenge.

She had lost 75 pounds and needed motivation to continue her journey. When a nutritionist suggested she sign up for a 5k, she scoffed. "Not in this lifetime," she recalls thinking.

Then she read about Hope for Heroes, a run/walk 5k that benefits The Food Bank's Veterans programming.



"I like The Food Bank, and the Veterans' component piqued my interest," she says. "As a country, we don't do enough for those who served, so it's nice to

see something like this happen."

Hope for Heroes 5k will allow anyone to run, walk or use a wheelchair to complete the Cosmo Park route for a medal, T-shirt and bragging rights. The event will begin at 7:45 a.m. Saturday, June 23, with opening remarks and recognition of service men and women.

Summers began preparing for her first 5k by walking in her

neighborhood this spring. "It feels good doing it, and if I cannot make the entire 5k route, that's OK, too," she says. "I will do what I can."

That said, Summers says the purpose of the 5k keeps her going. Whenever she thinks about giving up, she says she will remember the sacrifices service men and women make. "This is such a good cause," she says. "When I'm out there walking, I'll think about that."



Buddy Packs make a difference

Buddy Packs help mid-Missouri children for a variety of reasons. For some recipients, it is the only food they have to eat when they are not in school. Other students have big families, and food is limited.

Buddy Packs are bags of kid-friendly nutrition sent home on Fridays with students who rely on free or reduced-price lunch during the school week. They contain ready-to-eat entrées such as canned ravioli, cereal with shelf-stable milk, fruit cups and nutritional bars. Peanut butter is provided monthly.

Every semester, recipients and teachers are asked to complete surveys sharing how Buddy Packs help them and their students.

One teacher said a student asks if there are extra Buddy Packs he can have. “The parents are usually gone, and the student fend for himself at a young age,” this teacher wrote. “It’s not fair.”

Another child says getting a Buddy Pack makes him want to come to school. “We don’t always have enough food,” another wrote. And one child said he and all of his cousins live with their grandmother, “so it helps her have food for us.”

“The comments we receive from these children are often hard to read,” says Lindsay Young Lopez, The Food Bank’s executive director. “But it is also so rewarding to know we can help. The Buddy Pack Program provides a way to give these children a little extra support as they navigate less-than-ideal circumstances.”

Having food on the weekend also impacts a child’s ability to learn at school. Teachers report improved grades and behavior when children have enough to eat. “This is a brilliant child,” one teacher wrote about a Buddy Pack recipient. “She just has a very unstable home life. Buddy Packs give her food.”

While The Food Bank enjoys tremendous purchasing power, the Buddy Pack Program is the organization’s most expensive program. We work hard to ensure each bag is consistent from weekend to weekend and across The Food Bank’s service area.

We are currently raising money to provide Buddy Pack food to 7,500 children a week during the 2018-19 academic year. A \$180 donation—just \$15 a month—allows The Food Bank to provide one Buddy Pack to a child every weekend during the school year.

“It gives me food. I really need food.” - 2017-18 Buddy Pack Recipient



A Partnership The Food Bank CAN COUNT ON

When The Food Bank needed help spreading the word about the Buddy Pack Program, KOMU 8 was there. When The Food Bank asked for sponsors for Float Your Boat, KOMU 8 came aboard.

When asked to be part of expanding the Partnership Against Hunger food drive last year, KOMU 8 said “yes.” Then again when we needed help with the first Taste of the Tigers tailgate event.

“KOMU 8 Cares is more than a tag line,” says Lindsay Young Lopez, executive director of The Food Bank. “The station goes above and beyond to help us raise awareness, share food and ultimately bring hope to neighbors in need.”

KOMU 8 runs public service announcements throughout the year that benefit The Food Bank in various ways, promoting events and asking viewers to support key programs. The NBC affiliate also lends its on-air talent to help out at events and food drives. And KOMU 8 Production Manager Scott Maledy is a longtime member of the Board of Directors.

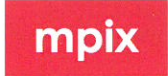
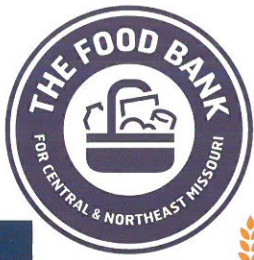
KOMU 8 is proud to call The Food Bank a partner, Interim General Manager Matt Garrett says.

“Our coverage area matches up so well with The Food Bank’s footprint, so this partnership is a natural fit to help improve the lives of the people and communities we serve,” he said. “Hunger is a very real issue for many people in our community, and we want to use our platforms and resources to do our part to help solve it. We firmly believe nobody should



Top: Marketing Specialist Kendra Christians, Interim General Manager Matt Garrett and Production Manager Scott Maledy. Middle: Chris Gervino provides an update on Missouri Football during Taste of the Tigers. Above: Tori Stepanek helps judge boats during the 2018 Float Your Boat.

go hungry – no child should go hungry, no mom should go hungry, no Veteran should go hungry, no senior citizen should go hungry. But the reality is there are people, from all walks of life, struggling to make ends meet. The money The Food Bank raises stays here in central and northeast Missouri to help people, right here at home, free of charge.”



Taste of the TIGERS

eat. drink. sack hunger.

**5 - 8 P.M.
THURSDAY, OCT. 4
MEMORIAL STADIUM**

Food and beverages, photos from the 50-yard line, one-on-one time with Truman the Tiger, signed sports memorabilia, unique auction items and much more! It is all up for grabs at the Taste of the Tigers tailgate event.

Presented by Mpix, Taste of the Tigers is Columbia's only event to take place under the east concourse of Memorial Stadium. Guests enjoy tailgate-inspired bites, wine and beer, a live and silent auction, remarks from Missouri's Head Football Coach Barry Odom and activities on Faurot Field.

All-inclusive tickets are \$50 per person and will be on sale starting July 2.

Read the latest information about auction items and vendors, and watch a video from last year's event at ScoreAgainstHunger.org.

