



'You've Got to Have Help'

Randy and Linda made good money while working and raising their children. They had a nest egg saved for emergencies.

But then Linda was diagnosed with lung cancer and a liver ailment. Randy suffered a stroke and couldn't return to work. Now, he receives disability benefits, and Linda is on social security. Their nest egg was scrambled by medical bills.

"When you are younger, you never think things like that could happen to you," Randy said. "I never did."

They moved from Indiana to Bertrand, Mo., to cut their cost of living and be closer to family.

"By the time you pay your medications and bills, you don't have the money you used to have," Linda said.

The couple wasn't used to turning to someone else for help.

"I've always had a good job that took us all over the United States," Randy said. "I never thought

about using a food pantry. Then I had the stroke and couldn't work anymore, and I had a hard time coping with that. I know at one time I thought, 'Life's over,' but then you realize that you've got to have help, even though you aren't used to somebody helping you."

A neighbor told Randy about Southeast Missouri Food Bank and a mobile food pantry that was scheduled in Bertrand.

"At first it doesn't feel good, especially when you haven't had to do it before," Linda said. "But Randy came in and talked to me about it, and it's really nothing to be ashamed of."

The couple had a positive experience receiving food and appreciated the donors' generosity.

"Thank God for places like this because there are some people that truly need it," Linda said.

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Mission

To end hunger and leverage
the power of food to build
healthy communities.



/SoutheastMOFoodBank



@semofoodbank

A Renewed Hope Amid a Continuing Need

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on our lives for over a year, and we continue to see the effects every day in the communities we serve.

Many people, like Randy and Linda, never needed help before and never expected to be in a situation where they would. The challenges of COVID-19 and health issues proved too much, and they were grateful to receive assistance to put food on their table.

We live in a vulnerable area. Southeast Missouri has some of the highest rates in the state for senior, child and overall hunger. Many of us probably have savings, but a lot of people — people you may least expect — live paycheck to paycheck. Grocery prices are at near all-time highs, and prices at the gas pump have risen. It is getting more expensive to take care of a family and even commute to work. Stagnant income levels make it a challenge for many families to provide adequate food, healthcare and other basic needs.

Whether it is COVID-19, job loss or other mitigating factors that drive our neighbors to seek food assistance, we are here. Without our dedicated volunteers and generous donors, many neighbors in our communities would go hungry.

As the economy improves, more people are returning to work, and more people are getting vaccinated. We look forward with renewed hope as we join forces with our partners and donors to help more families get back on their feet.

We're all in this together — to move forward, help those in need and make southeast Missouri a better place to live.

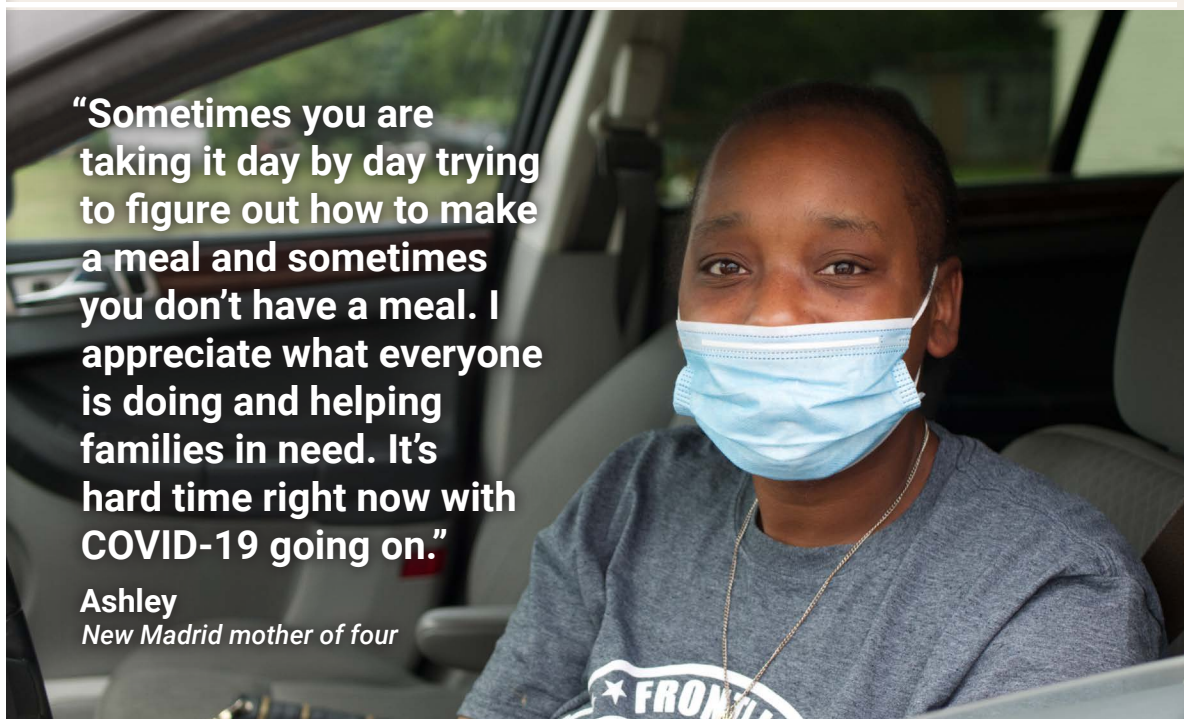
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Joseph Keys".

Joseph Keys
CEO of Southeast
Missouri Food Bank



"Sometimes you are taking it day by day trying to figure out how to make a meal and sometimes you don't have a meal. I appreciate what everyone is doing and helping families in need. It's hard time right now with COVID-19 going on."

Ashley
New Madrid mother of four





Fighting Childhood Hunger *One Backpack at a Time*

Julia, a mother of five, lost her job when the Head Start program where she worked had to close due to the pandemic. When schools closed, she was spending more on groceries to feed her kids at home.

“We were going through an extra \$200 a week feeding the kids breakfast and lunch,” Julia said.

Things are still tough, but she’s back at work, and her children are back in school. Two of them bring home weekend packs of food through the food bank’s Backpacks for Fridays program.

“Because of our family size, this program really helps us, and I greatly appreciate it,” she said.

Southeast Missouri has some of the highest rates of childhood hunger in the state. Before the pandemic, one in five children lived in a home that didn’t have enough healthy food to support the family. Today, 20 percent of children in our area are considered food insecure.

That’s why our Backpacks for Fridays program is so important. We partner with 32 school districts to provide weekend backpacks of food to more than 1,100 students who are selected by teachers and counselors.

Backpacks by the Numbers

32 school districts participated in Backpacks for Fridays during the 2020-2021 school year.

1,167 students received packs of food for the weekend.

\$175 provides weekend meals for one student during the school year; that’s 36 weeks.

64% of children in our 16-county service area are enrolled in federal school lunch & breakfast programs.

For less than \$5 a week, each student in the program receives a package of kid-friendly meals with fruits, vegetables and snacks. All of the items are in pop-top containers that require no cooking. We’re in the process of signing up schools for the 2021-2022 school year.

We believe no child should go hungry. If you’d like to join us in the fight against hunger, donate online at semofoodbank.org. Your donation of \$175 sponsors a child for an entire school year.

Donation Saves Food, *Feeds Neighbors*

Tyler Kemplin got into personal training and nutrition after his mother and a close friend both passed away due to health issues. He posted some photos of his meal prepping on social media, and people began asking about purchasing meals from him. From that, Pulse Fitness & Nutrition in Cape Girardeau was formed.

"I wanted to help others get their eating and fitness on track," Tyler said.

Looking for an option other than throwing away his extra meals, Kemplin found Southeast Missouri Food Bank through a Google search and reached out about donating.

"I'd rather give what I had before I throw it away," he said.

Tara Guzman, Resource Acquisition Specialist at the food bank, put Kemplin in touch with member food pantries in the Cape Girardeau area.

"Tara is really nice. She told me about the places (in Cape Girardeau) that I could donate to," Kemplin said. "I called (Salvation Army) and went down the next day to donate."

Guzman said food rescue is an important part of the food bank's mission, but it's one people don't always think of.

"We love that Tyler reached out, and we really appreciate his generous spirit," she said. "We don't want food to go to waste when we know we have so many families facing hunger in southeast Missouri."

Donating excess meals or packaged foods is easy, Guzman said.

"Businesses that want to donate just need to contact me at the food bank. They can let me know what they have to donate, and I can put them in touch with a pantry or soup kitchen in their area," she said. "The food bank has more than 140 agencies in the 16 counties of southeast Missouri that we serve, so we have plenty to choose from."

For more information about food rescue service, contact Guzman at 573-471-1818 or tmcguire@semofoodbank.org.



Save the Date

10th Annual Golf Classic

Monday, August 30, 2021

Make plans now to join us for the 10th annual golf tournament August 30 at Dalhousie Golf Club in Cape Girardeau. This four-person scramble has a 12:30 p.m. shotgun start and includes lunch and refreshments. Contact Lisa Church at lchurch@semofoodbank.org or 573-471-1818 to sign up or discuss sponsorship opportunities. Hurry — the roster is limited to 25 teams and fills up fast! Proceeds benefit children's hunger relief programs.



Leave a legacy that makes a difference for families facing hunger. Ask us how to include Southeast Missouri Food Bank in your estate planning. Contact Lisa Church at 573-471-1818.