



Giving Back and *Receiving Help*



Brenda has deep roots in Doniphan. She lives in a home that has been in her family for 95 years. She gives back to her community, volunteering at Lean on Me food pantry twice a month.

Over the last year, she said rising food costs have brought more people to the pantry looking for help.

"Everything was raised at least 50 cents to a dollar; it is truly unbelievable," she said of prices at the only grocery store in town. "I save money going for my eggs and produce in Poplar Bluff."

And though she volunteers at a food pantry, Brenda, who lives on a fixed income, said she also needs food assistance. She receives

a Commodity Supplemental Food Program senior box through the food bank once a month. The box supplements the groceries she buys with things like canned fruits and vegetables, juice and cereal.

Food costs aren't her only challenge. Brenda's brother is diabetic, and she provides transportation for his treatments; she also has some health issues herself. But being able to visit a pantry keeps her from making tough choices when it comes to paying bills.

"Taking him back and forth is hard," she said. "I've got some hospital bills, but the senior box and pantry visits help save extra money."

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Mission

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



Making Healthy Food More Accessible

Since we were children, we've been taught the importance of eating healthy. We learned the food pyramid and drank our milk for healthy bones. An apple a day keeps the doctor away, right?

The problem is as adults — who also have to think about things like rent, medication and bills — those healthy foods usually aren't the most affordable. And less so over the last year or so as food prices continued rising.



Still, we know what we eat has a direct impact on our overall health. With that in mind, I'm proud that this year one of the food bank's focuses is increasing access to nutritious food.

In 2022, 72 percent of the food we distributed fell into Feeding America's Foods 2 Encourage category, which includes healthy items such as fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy. This year we're aiming to expand on that with programs that will focus on increasing access to nutritious food. One of these is our Produce Prescription Program with two new partners in Cape Girardeau and Poplar Bluff. Participants in

the program will receive a monthly or bi-weekly box of produce.

In some ways, the program will be similar to the Veterans Healthy Food Surplus boxes we distribute monthly through a partnership with the John J. Pershing VA Medical Center in Poplar Bluff. In 2021, 88 percent of veterans who received a monthly produce box reported better health.

In Pemiscot County, our partner Faith Temple Complex is leading efforts to increase access to healthy foods through the Food Security Equity Impact Fund. Funding will support the development of a community garden and the construction of a pavilion for a local farmers market.

Our mission is to end hunger in southeast Missouri, but it is also to leverage the power of food to build stronger communities. That is exactly what we're doing by increasing access to healthier foods to our neighbors facing hunger.

Joseph Keys

CEO of Southeast Missouri Food Bank

"These are those tough times when you have to swallow your pride and do what you have to do, but these food (distributions) are extremely helpful."

~ Rosetta



Rising Prices Cast Shadow on *Golden Years*



Margaret and Darryl raised a family in southeast Missouri, but over the last year or so, higher prices have made it harder for them to enjoy their later years.

"I'll be honest with you, we spend more now with just the two of us than we did when our four kids were living at home," Margaret said. "That's how crazy prices have increased."

The retired couple lives on a fixed income, so as prices increased, they cut back where they could, buying less meat, eggs and produce. Then, about a year ago, they started visiting a local food pantry and the food bank's mobile distributions to supplement their groceries.

"We appreciate everything, we do," Margaret said of the food they receive. "We say a blessing over it and thank God for it. The first time my husband came with me to the pantry, he cried he was so grateful."

Earn Tax Credits and Help Neighbors Facing Hunger



If you are a qualified donor, you may be able to receive tax credits for your gift to the food bank.

Southeast Missouri Food Bank has Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) tax credits available.

NAP allows business owners/principals, farmers and rental property owners who donate \$1,000 or more to the food bank to receive a 50 percent credit on their Missouri taxes. So, for example, a \$5,000 donation results in a \$2,500 credit that can be used over five years.

"I know there are people out there, especially in the country, who need the help. I also know there are senior citizens who are trying to decide whether they can buy food or whether they buy their medicine for the month," said Joe Tidwell, a farmer in Pemiscot County and longtime NAP donor. "I like the NAP program

because I can make a donation that supports the food bank and helps those who need it, and at the same time it helps me save on my farm taxes."

The food bank uses proceeds from NAP donations to purchase Foods 2 Encourage products, which include healthy items such as fruits, vegetables, protein and dairy. In 2022, 72 percent of all items distributed by the food bank were in the Foods 2 Encourage category.

For more information about NAP credits, call Heather or Sarah at 573-471-1818.



Turning to the Food Bank When Times Get Tough

Jamie and her husband have five children, ranging from 1½ to 13 years old. She said rising prices have made keeping her family clothed and fed even more difficult over the last year.

"We are not homeless or anything, but we do struggle," Jamie said. "When you are struggling trying to budget everything for your kids, you're racking your brain trying to figure out what store has the cheapest things ... and you worry if you miss sales, you will not be able to get the things you need."



Jamie's family has seen its share of struggles over the last year or so. Her husband, who serves in the Missouri National Guard, had his hours cut. And one of her children has autism and doesn't always adapt easily to change, including the food she eats.

Jamie has adjusted to these challenges by budgeting her family's money, spending less where she can and cutting out some items. For example, she said, she buys clothes for the children less often.

When things get really hard, Jamie said she visits mobile distributions provided by the food bank.

"Some months, we do not have to come," she said. "But times like this month, I do not think we could have made it through the month without the food bank."

Save the Date

**12th Annual
SEMO Food Bank
Golf Classic**
Mon., Sept. 18, 2023

Make plans now to join us for the 12th annual Southeast Missouri Food Bank Golf Classic on September 18 at Dalhousie Golf Club in Cape Girardeau. This four-person scramble has a 12:30 p.m. shotgun start and includes lunch and refreshments on the course. Contact Heather at hcollier@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! Priority will be given to sponsor teams. **All proceeds benefit the food bank'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 Sarah Garner at 573-471-1818.