Some say that fall isn’t really a season in Florida. Leaves don’t change color and fall off trees. The air is warm, not crisp. Palm trees rustle in the breeze. Yet there are signs: The gradual return of our friends from up north, the calendars full of holiday events, the welcome end of hurricane season.

It also means that another season is upon us – the giving season. We thank YOU, with our deepest appreciation, for believing in our mission and vision at the Harry Chapin Food Bank. You are the reason we are able to lead our community in the fight to end hunger.

Because of you, we distributed 24 million pounds of food throughout Southwest Florida in the last fiscal year, serving more than 150 partner agencies. You also help us provide food for 30 mobile pantries per month, our Care & Share: Senior Feeding Campaign, our new Coastal Relief Campaign, and other programs.

Now comes a critical time. In the three months between Nov. 1 and the end of January, the Harry Chapin Food Bank will receive about 50 percent of the total monetary donations it collects for the fiscal year. These donations not only meet the heightened need of the holidays, but provide the means to carry on the food bank’s mission throughout the year.

Your support this time of year will help help clients like Rebecca, who is in her early 70s, resides in subsidized housing and lives on Social Security. She recently went to a food pantry for the first time for help. “I came here out of necessity,” she said. “I’ve worked all my life. This is my first time in this situation.” Rebecca lost her pension when the hospital she worked at in another state was sold. “I thank God for Harry Chapin,” she said of the food bank. “Just think – without them, what would we do?”

You make it possible for Rebecca and many other seniors, families and children to have food when they most need it, be it during the holidays or at any other time of year.

Thank you again for fighting hunger and feeding hope in our community.

How to donate:

Make a gift online.
Mail a gift using the enclosed envelope.
See Thanksgiving turkey tallies on page 3.
Our mission is to lead our community in the fight to end hunger.

“Every day, we build bridges to unite our community in the fight to end hunger”

Richard LeBer
Harry Chapin Food Bank
President & CEO

Putting Empathy Into Action

Recent events have reinforced to me the importance of demonstrating empathy and putting it into action. Since August, the food bank has been conducting Coastal Relief Campaign food distributions to help families along the coast affected by poor water quality. About 83 percent of the working families there say that this crisis has greatly reduced their income. We’ve heard from housekeepers who haven’t had any work in three weeks, waitresses making less than $10 a day in tips, and fishing guides with no bookings. These people have families and bills to pay. They’re struggling. We have distributed about 32,000 pounds of food to help 1,246 families. This came about because our staff realized that water quality isn’t just an environmental issue, it is an economic hardship for many. That spurred us to take action to help. Sometimes taking action isn’t easy. It requires committing your time, energy and money. Often, it requires asking, “Who can we partner with?” Those partnerships require compromise: finding common ground and overcoming differences in perspectives and priorities. Believe me, that isn’t always easy in today’s polarized environment.

I am proud of our impact. Every day, we build bridges to unite our community in the fight to end hunger. Thank you for bringing your passion and energy to our cause.

See Coastal Relief Campaign on page 3.

When hunger happens outside of 9 to 5

The 24-hour EbenEzer Church Food Pantry in Charlotte County is a success! The pantry at 18305 Wintergarden Ave., Port Charlotte, is a Harry Chapin Food Bank partner agency. It was previously open two days a week, serving about 450 people. In June, the pantry started staying open around the clock, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The idea was to give people access to food when they need it, outside of working hours and on weekends. As of the end of September, the pantry has served 15,871 clients, including 655 in the overnight hours of 8 p.m. to 8 a.m. Clearly, the pantry is filling a need, and there may be more on the horizon.

“Let’s Feed Lee”

The first-ever Let’s Feed Lee food drive, held at 35 Publix Super Markets in Lee County, brought in 47,488 pounds of food and $10,733 in donations to support the Harry Chapin Food Bank!

The Sept. 29 food drive was a partnership among the food bank, Publix and the United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee Counties. Customers bought and donated needed items for the food bank and its partner agencies.

“This event was another inspiring example of what makes our community so wonderful,” said Richard LeBer, food bank president and CEO. “Hundreds of volunteers, about 20 organizations, our good friends at Publix, and thousands of Publix customers all came together to take care of their neighbors. How great!”

Charlotte County

Mariola J. Simon volunteers at the 24-hour pantry.

Monthly giving is a great way to support the food bank!
Turning the tide with the new Coastal Relief Campaign

The last few months have shown, once again, that the community can count on Harry Chapin Food Bank in a crisis, whether it’s the devastation of a hurricane or toxic red tide. During summer and into the fall, red tide in salt water and blue-green algae in fresh water have clogged our beaches, killed sea life, assaulted our senses and hurt the bottom lines and budgets of businesses and residents alike.

Enter the new Coastal Relief Campaign. In August, the food bank began holding weekly emergency mobile food pantries on Fort Myers Beach for those in the tourism and hospitality industries suffering the economic impact. Another pantry began in late September on Pine Island.

By the end of September, about 32,000 pounds of food were distributed to 1,246 families.

Fort Myers Beach businesses were losing $2.6 million a week on average, and employees were losing about $1 million a week in income, said Jacki Liszak, president of the Fort Myers Beach Chamber of Commerce. “It’s making a difference,” she said of the pantries.

They helped workers like Jeff, who came to the beach pantry with his daughter, Gina, 3. “I work in a restaurant. Our business right now is down. Everything happened from the water and killing all the fish. This is a tourist place. If there are no tourists, no business. No business, no money. No money, no food.”

The beach pantry continued through October. The Pine Island pantry was to continue as necessary.

Residents in need can also get help at one of the 30 mobile pantries the food bank holds monthly or one of the more than 150 partner agencies the food bank provides food to across Southwest Florida.

For a calendar listing of mobile pantries and a listing of partner agencies, visit harrychapinfoodbank.org.

Talking turkey tallies

The Harry Chapin Food Bank continues the tradition of helping families put a Thanksgiving bird on the table. The food bank has purchased $35,000 in gift cards, at $10 each, to distribute to families via our partner agencies. The cards are designated for the purchase of food at local supermarkets for holiday meals.

These gift cards are often more economical and efficient for clients, because they can purchase their turkeys, chickens or other Thanksgiving food at the sale prices offered by the stores, making their dollar stretch further.

We also are asking the community to help by donating 3,000 turkeys that the food bank can give to partner agencies, in addition to the gift cards.

Those who wish to donate turkeys or chickens can drop them off at the food bank’s Fort Myers Distribution Center or the new Collier County Center in Naples.

Here are the addresses and drop-off hours.

**Hours:** 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**Phone:** 239-334-7007

Closed Thanksgiving Day.

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<td>Fort Myers, FL</td>
<td>#101, Naples, FL</td>
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The McGregor Baptist Church Food Pantry has a new location, and a 40 percent increase in the number of clients.

The pantry, a Harry Chapin Food Bank partner agency, opened its new location at 3341 Fowler St., Fort Myers, in early August. The previous location was 3131 E. Riverside Drive, about three miles away. The pantry had to move because the property it occupied had been put up for sale by its owner, said Bob Fain, pantry director. The Harry Chapin Food Bank sent one of its trucks to help them move.

About one-third of the clients the pantry served previously are now coming to the new location, Fain said. But the pantry has seen many new clients. Part of the reason may be that the new location is easier to find, and there is a bus stop in front of the new site, he said. The clients come in cars, car pools, on bicycles or on foot. They come from a variety of backgrounds.

“A lot of grandmothers taking care of grandkids, trying to do it on Social Security alone,” Fain said. Other clients have part-time jobs, may be disabled or are underemployed. “They can’t make ends meet,” he said. “There’s a broad need out there.”

Jessica stood outside the storefront pantry in a line of clients, waiting for the doors to open. She had lost her job just five days before, and was coming to the food pantry for the first time. She is married and has three kids. Her husband works, but without her salary, “it’s kind of hard already,” Jessica said. She had already sent out 30 resumes or applications. “I’m hoping someone will give me a call,” she said.

Hannah was also in the line of clients. “I’m on disability, so this helps a lot,” she said. Sometimes she’s faced with the choice of paying a bill or buying food, she said. “The cost of living is going up. You can’t survive.”

Inside the 4,500-square-foot storefront, food is stacked in neat categories. There are potatoes, ramen noodles, peanut butter, canned green beans and corn, among other items.

About 35 volunteers help operate the pantry. They include Dana Dames, who has helped for almost six years. “I really enjoy seeing people come in, and if we can help them, it’s good,” he said. “I always think that, with good fortune in life, you should give back to the community.”

McGregor Baptist Church pantry moves to new place, sees more faces

Food bank staff got together this summer for a party to celebrate our 35th anniversary of leading the fight against hunger in Southwest Florida. We began as a small grassroots food cooperative in Lee County in 1983. Now we are the largest hunger-relief agency serving Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades and Hendry counties. The fact that we provided 24 million pounds of food during the last fiscal year through more than 150 partner agencies, plus our mobile pantry program and other activities, is truly something to shout about. We are proud, happy, committed, and looking forward to the next 35 years!

Find out how you can partner with Harry Chapin Food Bank at harrychapinfoodbank.org.
Doreen Sasso volunteers at the Pine Island Coastal Relief Campaign mobile pantry.

Volunteers from Under Armour pose for a photo after sorting cucumbers.

Brianna and Migdalia color Care & Share: Senior Feeding Campaign bags at Family Volunteer Day.

A client stands in line at the Fort Myers Beach Coastal Relief Campaign mobile pantry.

Volunteers and staff prepare for the Pine Island Coastal Relief Campaign mobile pantry.

Dana Dames, a volunteer at McGregor Baptist Church Food Pantry, sorts food.

We had a great time with the members of the Leadership Bonita team, who toured and volunteered at the food bank.

Doreen Sasso volunteers at the Pine Island Coastal Relief Campaign mobile pantry.

Young volunteers pack Care & Share: Senior Feeding Campaign bags at Naples Family Volunteer Day.

Our staff marks Hunger Action Month in September in orange T-shirts.

Share your photo with us on Facebook: facebook.com/harrychapinfoodbank.
Family Volunteer Day

Produce, families make for anti-hunger recipe

Nearly a year and a half ago, the Harry Chapin Food Bank started an experiment called “Family Volunteer Day.” A few times a year, we opened the food bank’s Fort Myers Food Distribution Center, and later the Collier County Center for families with children age 10 and older to volunteer.

The idea was to raise awareness of what the food bank does and how we are able to serve 28,000 people per week across five Southwest Florida counties. The 2½ hour event includes a tour, activities like sorting fresh produce, and creating designs and coloring the paper bags that contain the food for our Care & Share: Senior Feeding Campaign.

We have held five family volunteer days in Fort Myers and two in Naples since that first event in June 2017. The numbers are amazing: We have had 259 enthusiastic volunteers participate. They have sorted a total of 32,721 pounds of fresh produce, or nearly 16.4 tons. That includes 23,052 pounds of potatoes. How many servings of mashed potatoes would that make? More than 92,000!

They also sorted and packed 6,448 pounds of tomatoes and 3,221 pounds of cucumbers. They have created designs and decorated nearly 900 Care & Share bags, as well as packed 1,080 Care & Share bags full of food for our senior clients. These volunteers created 190 decorated fans to help our clients cool themselves while they wait in line at mobile food pantries.

And they learned a lot. Patricia LaBeau attended one of the Fort Myers events with her grandsons, Miles, 12, and Max, 10. “It’s a great opportunity for Miles and Max to give back to the community, instead of thinking everyone is just like them,” she said. The boys happily packed potatoes. “I just thought it would be good for the world,” Max said.

Emily Mayo attended a volunteer day with her father, Tom. “I know where I live, I have food in my house,” Emily said. She wanted to help others in need “because they don’t know where their next meal is coming from.”

The numbers may speak for themselves, but the greatest sign of success is the results you can’t quantify – a realization that hunger exists in our community, and that we all need to do something to fight it. Come join us!

Next Family Volunteer Day

When: 9 to 11:30 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 17
Where: Harry Chapin Food Bank
Fort Myers Distribution Center: 3760 Fowler St., Fort Myers
Collier County Center: 3940 Prospect Ave., #101, Naples

To register: Go to harrychapinfoodbank.org and click on the volunteer tab. For questions about Fort Myers, email Tanya Phillips, our Lee County volunteer coordinator, at tphillips@harrychapinfoodbank.org. For questions about Naples, email Todd Lewis, our Collier County volunteer coordinator, at tlewis@harrychapinfoodbank.org.

Note: All participants must be at least 10 years old.

Coming to the rescue in North Carolina

We sent two of our own to North Carolina to help in the aftermath of Hurricane Florence. Dennis Hall, our Fort Myers warehouse manager, and Mike Davis, our retail logistics manager, both flew to the Raleigh area to help in the recovery effort. The Harry Chapin Food Bank is a member of the Feeding America network of 200 food banks, which quickly moved water, more than 2 million pounds of food and manpower to the area after Florence hit. As record flooding continued, Feeding America asked for more assistance from its members. We were happy to help!

Photo: (L-R) Dennis Hall, Mike Davis

Donate easily and securely at harrychapinfoodbank.org.
Increase in food drives

The number of food drives held for the food bank and carloads of nonperishable donations dropped off at our Fort Myers Distribution Center has increased from just 19 in 2016 to 68 so far in 2018. These are donations gathered by individuals, businesses, communities and other groups to help us feed our neighbors in need. Holding a food and/or fund drive is also a great way to give.

Learn more at

Reasons why I volunteer ...

**Pete Powers**

“My wife had passed away the day after Christmas 2015, and I went into a very, very deep depression. My best friend suggested that one way to get out of it would be to do some volunteer work. The truth of this is that the food bank and volunteering saved my life. Every time I leave, on the way out, they always thank me. I turn around and say no, I’m the one that should be thanking you. You saved my life. You gave me a reason to keep going on.”

**Susan Rhoads**

“Working with all the volunteers at the food bank, they are just wonderful. They are like family to us. I’ve been doing a lot of the mobile pantries at various sites; it’s just so gratifying. The clients are so thankful also. “We’re very fortunate for the community that we live in. We have this great organization, the Harry Chapin Food Bank right in our neighborhood.”

Superstars wanted

Meet just three criteria and showcase your group, school or business T-shirt on our new superstar wall, honoring your food bank support!

1. **Funds**

Every bit does a lot. For every $1 donated to us, we can provide $8 worth of food value.

*Minimum $500 contribution*

2. **Friends**

Schedule a volunteer day. Whether you’re an individual, group or company, there are opportunities for everyone.

3. **Food**

Anyone can conduct a food drive! Register your drive with us, collect the food and drop it off.

Contact Meg Madzar, Harry Chapin Food Bank events and food drive coordinator, at mmadzar@harrychapinfoodbank.org or (239) 334-7007 ext. 120.

Power-ful purchase

We have a new generator! The 125-kilowatt generator has a 500 gallon tank and will run four to five days. It automatically kicks in when we lose power during a storm and keeps the freezer and cooler running. This improves our ability to keep perishable food fresh in case power goes out in a hurricane or other event.

Find out how you can volunteer with the Harry Chapin Food Bank at harrychapinfoodbank.org.
The Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida
3760 Fowler Street
Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Leave a legacy

Your support of the Harry Chapin Food Bank demonstrates your commitment to ending hunger in Southwest Florida. Please consider the Harry Chapin Food Bank when planning your will or estate. For more information, contact Miriam Pereira:
(239) 334-7007 ext. 127
mpereira@harrychapinfoodbank.org.

Harry’s happenings

- Nov. 17 - Family Volunteer Day
  Collier County Center, 9 to 11:30 a.m.
  Fort Myers Distribution Center, 9 to 11:30 a.m.
- Nov. 27 - Giving Tuesday
  The Tuesday after Thanksgiving follows Black Friday and Cyber Monday, and is set aside to celebrate the spirit of giving to others.

How donations are used

$1 equals $8 worth of food value

- 4 percent of donations go to administration and funding
- 96 percent of donations go to programs and services

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Find us on social media

Facebook  Twitter  Youtube  LinkedIn

A copy of the Food Bank’s official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Division of Consumer Services by calling toll-free within the state. Registration does not imply endorsement, approval or recommendation by the state. For more information, contact the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Affairs at 1-800-435-7352 or visit freshfromflorida.com.