



Harry Chapin Food Bank OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Fighting Hunger,
Feeding Hope!

Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties

Winter 2018 — Vol. XVIII, No. 1

Still Time to Join Hunger Walk 2018!

In just a few weeks, more than 1,000 friends of the Harry Chapin Food Bank will participate in the 2018 WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk. You can make a difference on Saturday morning, Jan. 20, at Miromar Outlets in Estero. Sign up now — yourself or a team — at winkhungerwalk.com.



Teams rev up for last year's Walk.

Coming in April...

'A Place at the Table' Dinner Debuts

The Harry Chapin Food Bank hunger dinner debuts on April 19, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. at our Collier County Center. "Food-secure" and "food-insecure" guests will engage each other with experiences and issues around hunger. Make plans to be there by calling Miriam Pereira at (239) 334-7007, ext. 127.

35 Years of Feeding SW Florida, As the Need Continues to Grow

When the Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida opened its doors as the Lee County Food Cooperative in 1983, who could have imagined that 35 years later the Food Bank would distribute 22,300,000 pounds of food in a single year?

The Food Bank's reach has grown from a handful of partner agencies to more than 150 today. Through food pantries, soup kitchens, emergency shelters and disaster relief agencies, the Food Bank keeps hunger at bay for nearly 160,000 individuals (50,000 of them children) each year. They may be laid off, underemployed, dealing with illness, trying to recover lost wages or facing damages to home and property.

"We're still here leading our community in the fight to end hunger," said Richard LeBer, president and CEO. This anniversary year, the Food Bank is more deeply committed than ever to its vision that "no one has to go hungry."

A United Way partner agency, "the Food Bank is doing a tremendous job of expanding its programs and working with its affiliated agencies to feed hungry children, families, elderly and individuals," said Cliff Smith, president, **United Way of Lee, Hendry, Glades and Okeechobee**. "The tremendous passion for feeding people exhibited by the staff, board and volunteers make them truly a role model for all of us."

**Support our
mission to end
hunger by
donating today!**

Proud milestones along the way:

1985: Becomes Southwest Florida Food Bank.

1990: Affiliates with America's Second Harvest, now known as Feeding America — the national organization of food banks.

1993: Begins food distribution in Collier County.

1994: Named Harry Chapin Food Bank of Southwest Florida, a tribute to the late singer who passionately fought hunger.

2009: First refrigerated truck is packed with fresh produce.

2009: Debuts WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk, raising \$50,000. Last year, this signature event brought in \$325,000!

2009: Moves to its present 55,000-square-foot warehouse and offices on Fowler Street, with room to expand.

2010: Launches mobile pantry program, with a major goal of increasing distribution of fresh food.

2012: Begins operating from a warehouse in Naples.

2015: Starts federal Commodity Supplemental Food Program for seniors for the first time in Florida.

2017: Launches Care & Share: Senior Feeding Campaign and moves to larger space in Collier County.

2017: Distributes 22.3 million pounds of food at end of fiscal year (June 30) — 25 percent more than in 2013!

A Few Faces of Those You've Helped...





Harry Chapin Food Bank OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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'We Are up to the Challenge'

I hope the new year will be a good one for you. I also hope that you, your family and neighbors are recovering well from Hurricane Irma. Many of us still have a lot of recovery ahead. Some neighborhoods were severely affected and have not returned to normal. Even in neighborhoods where the storm was kind, people are struggling. Evacuation, lost hours at work and many repairs have taken their toll.

Your Food Bank has been very busy! In the month following Irma, we distributed 3.9 million pounds of food and conducted 72 mobile distributions. That's two-to-three times our normal level of activity. I am so proud of our team, all of our community partners and our donors. The outpouring of love and generosity we experienced after the storm truly touched our hearts. (See "Recover" article, page 3.)

Even as we cope with the aftermath of the storm, we also expect challenges from Washington, D.C. The proposed new tax rules, which Congress was weighing at press time, will likely add stress to many working families, who will need our help. As well, the new rules will create fundraising challenges for nonprofits like us. However, we are resolute in our determination to meet the needs of hungry members of our community. We are up to the challenge. Thank you for your support!



Richard LeBer, Harry
Chapin Food Bank
President and CEO

Welcome New Staff to the Food Bank...

Anna Suarez (below) is director of human resources and administration. The native of Peru spent 21 years with media company Gannett. Her past volunteer work included the Food Bank's human resources committee, as well as board member for Edison Festival of Light.



This "almost native" (his family moved here when he was a child), **John Kuhn** (left) is the Food Bank's special events manager. He has



worked for minor league baseball teams (most recently the Fort Myers Miracle) in positions that include team president, general manager and minority owner. He began volunteering at the Food Bank in 2012 and served on the marketing work group.



After five years of vacations in Cape Coral, circumstances allowed warehouse manager **Dennis Hall** (left) and his wife to move here. Formerly assistant warehouse manager for a large dairy in Pennsylvania, he also brings 20 years of experience coaching youth sports — football, basketball, baseball and softball.

OUR MISSION... *To lead our community in the fight to end hunger.*

OUR VISION... *No one has to go hungry in our community.*

**CONTACT US TO DONATE, VOLUNTEER
or SCHEDULE A TOUR: (239) 334-7007**

Look for
us on:



Florida's Food Banks Network

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.

'Recover, Rebuild, Restore' Campaign Brings Our Community Together

In a record six weeks, the Harry Chapin Food Bank's "Recover, Rebuild, Restore" campaign, initiated after Hurricane Irma, raised more than \$590,000! The campaign galvanized the Southwest Florida community into action, bringing people together in an "organized frenzy." Here's what we all accomplished together...

Ramping Up Mobile Pantries

In just 11 days between Sept. 9 (the day before Hurricane Irma hit) and Sept. 20, the



Food Bank received and distributed 49 semi-tractor trailer truckloads of disaster relief supplies — totaling nearly 2 million pounds of food, water and ice.

Within 12 days, the Food Bank sent 41 emergency mobile pantries into our five-county service area. Since

then, the Food Bank is averaging 26 to 30 mobile pantries per month, compared to the usual 15 to 17. In Everglades City, the Food Bank is sending a mobile pantry each week until the church food pantry (deluged with 6 feet of water) can reopen. A third monthly mobile pantry was added in Lehigh Acres. Each mobile pantry feeds up to 250 families.

Helpers Arrive From All Over

A group of five people from St. Petersburg, Fla., showed up with a trailer full of community-donated food. The trailer belonged to a roofing company called Low Slope Solutions, and was brought down by Amanda Holdup and her family.

Beth Tatro (right) arrived from the Good Shepherd Food Bank in Auburn, Me., where she is volunteer coordinator. When a disaster hits, members of Feeding America's network of 200 food banks set out to help each other. So Tatro assisted our



Food Bank's volunteer coordinator Tanya Phillips.

Boston Red Sox Pitch In

About 70 members of the Boston Red Sox organization — including minor league players, coaches and club officials — volunteered in the warehouse and at a mobile pantry. "It's my pleasure doing something for the community," said coach Walter Miranda. And Katie Haas, vice president of Florida business operations, said that partnerships with organizations



like the Harry Chapin Food Bank "allow Red Sox players and staff to assist where there is the greatest amount of need."

NetJets and NCEF Day of Service

The entire sales force from the central and southwestern regions of NetJets teamed with the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF) — founders of the Naples Winter Wine Festival — for a day of service at the Naples warehouse. It was about giving back to the community in a time of need. The volunteers packed 12,321 pounds of produce. NetJets is sponsor and exclusive private aviation partner of the festival.

NCEF also sponsors Food Bank mobile pantries in Collier County.



COME VISIT...

The Food Bank's **Collier County Center** invites the Naples community and partner agencies to visit on Feb. 7, from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for a close-up view of the new warehouse and on-site facilities.

Family Volunteer Day: Fun and Serious

Delayed by Hurricane Irma, **Family Volunteer Day** (photo below) was rescheduled for Nov. 18, drawing a crowd of parents with children over 10 years of age to the Fort Myers warehouse. They toured the facility, took family photos, colored greeting cards and bagged produce, as they learned about ways they can help overcome hunger in our local communities.

You, too, can participate!
Call (239) 334-7007.



544,000 Meals Over a Decade!

Supporters of the Harry Chapin Food Bank for 10 years, **Garden Street Companies** this year donated 25 percent of November sales at their U-Pull-It location. On Dec. 1, they presented the Food Bank with a check for \$37,608.57, which will provide more than 150,000 meals! We thank owners Rob and Linda Weber for their donations of 544,000 meals over the past decade.

Bank of America Fights Hunger

For the sixth year, **Bank of America** with the **Feeding America** network supported the Harry Chapin Food Bank locally through its nationwide **Give A Meal** program. For every dollar donated, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation gave \$2 more, up to \$1.5 million across the country.

'Care & Share' Gets Matching Grant

Launched last spring, the Harry Chapin Food Bank's **Care & Share: Senior Feeding Campaign** has been a rousing success. It provides much-needed supplemental food monthly to 2,200 low-income seniors in Charlotte, Collier and Lee counties.

Now, a grant from the **Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation** will match up to \$300,000 in donations to the Food Bank when they are specifically targeted

to "Care & Share" from donors in Collier and Lee counties. The Food Bank's goal is to fulfill the match by June 30.

This program, operating through 34 agencies, gives each senior at risk of food insecurity two bags, or kits, a month filled with age-appropriate food. These include cheese, shelf-stable milk, a canned protein like chicken or tuna, juice, a cereal item (such as oatmeal or grits), canned vegetables (low-sodium) and fruit (no-sugar-added), and low-sodium soups. Much of the time, the Food Bank adds fresh produce and bread to the kits. The soups have been especially appreciated, because they are ready to eat.

Donors can confidently direct their funds to this campaign because 97 cents of every donated dollar goes directly to feed those in need in Southwest Florida.



Senior Sam receives Care & Share bags.

Remember that the Food Bank can turn every \$1 donated into \$8 in food value!

Publix Donates Mobile Pantry Truck

A \$150,000 grant from **Publix Super Market Charities** will purchase a new refrigerated mobile pantry truck to support food distributions in under-served communities. As part of the grant award, the Food Bank will host 48 mobile pantries to serve children. Each provides food for about 250 families. We are so grateful to Publix for its support!



One family helped by a mobile pantry distribution after Hurricane Irma.

Food Bank Launches In-School Pantries To Reach More Food-Insecure Children

Baker Center, which provides early childhood programs in Charlotte County, became the site of the first in-school pantry in Southwest Florida set up and fully operated by the Harry Chapin Food Bank. More are planned to open in 2018.

Baker Center serves approximately 360 children, from newborns to 3-year-olds in Early Head Start and the 3- and 4-year-olds in Head Start.

The pantry program, part of the Food Bank's five-year strategic plan, is modeled on **Feeding America's School Pantry** program. (Feeding America is the national network of food banks.) It targets public schools where more than 75 percent of students receive free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch.

The first food distribution took place in October, with every-other-Thursday

distributions planned throughout the school year. The available food ranges from fresh meat and produce to canned goods, peanut butter and jelly, pasta and sauces.

In 2015, The Mosaic Company sponsored an in-school pantry only for Baker Center students. Supported by private donors, this new pantry widens that scope. "We let all parents at orientation know about the pantry opening," said Natalie

(Nicky) James, family services specialist, early childhood programs, Baker Center. "A lot more people will be helped."

The Food Bank separately supplies food to partner agencies that manage seven in-school pantries in Lee and Collier counties. Future in-school pantries are planned for Immokalee and Charlotte County.



Gift Cards, Turkeys Brighten Holidays

Our friends and neighbors heard our "**Call for Turkeys**" and came through, donating 824! The turkeys were in addition to \$37,500 in \$10 gift cards (designated for holiday meals) that the Food Bank purchased to distribute to families through partner agencies. Then, 330 more gift cards were donated by Naples-based **Wasmer, Schroeder & Company, LLC** and their employees.

Special Thanks...

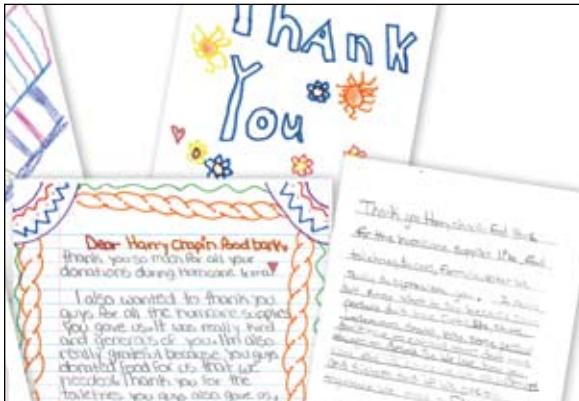
- **Temple Shalom**'s congregation, which has supported the Food Bank since 2002, raised \$12,697 during High Holy Days services.
- **Cape Coral Police Department**'s Holiday Heroes Food Drive brought in 14,000 pounds of food and \$1,000 in donations.

Harry Chapin Food Bank Photo Gallery

Find more photos at harrychapinfoodbank.org



Wells Fargo Advisors' Nov. 14 dinner honoring "Hurricane Heroes and Helpers" drew more than 240 attendees. The Harry Chapin Food Bank was honored alongside North Collier Fire & Rescue, St. Matthew's House and Naples Zoo. Senior Food Bank staff there were (l-r): Kari Lefort, Miriam Pereira, Richard LeBer and Anna Suarez. Separately, Wells Fargo Advisors' branches in Naples and Fort Myers presented a \$10,000 donation to the Food Bank.



People lined up for Food Bank **mobile pantry distributions** (above right) that helped in the recovery from Hurricane Irma. Children sent thank-you notes (above left) for the food, water, ice, toiletries and more they received. "All together we make a family," read one.



Fifteen volunteers from **Wells Fargo Advisors** participated in three packing and sorting events on Saturdays in August and September. "They know that fighting hunger is not a one-time thing," said Amanda Gardiner, branch manager of Cape Coral Parkway location and president of its volunteer chapter for west Florida.

'Why I Volunteer for the Food Bank...'



Lori Adamchek: *"I was interested in volunteering around hunger insecurity, and after searching online, I found the Harry Chapin Food Bank. Food is a basic human need, and I feel strongly that no one should be hungry in the wealthiest country on earth."*



Robert Perlmuter: *"I sort and pack frozen products at the warehouse two mornings a week. I'm fortunate not to need the Food Bank to support me. But too many people out there need help. I want to be a giver, so that's why I've volunteered here for six years."*

Public Radio Feeds Families!

In December, WGCU FM held its six-day "Feed Public Radio...Feed a Family" campaign. Thanks to the **Al & Nancy Burnett Charitable Foundation**, a portion of every pledge made during that campaign was matched by 6 percent, with the match benefiting the Harry Chapin Food Bank. And the radio station announced it would host a mobile pantry in one of the areas hardest-hit by Hurricane Irma.

Tour the Food Bank warehouse and learn how you can make a difference! Call (239) 334-7007.

Jewish Federation's Food Pantry Here to Help, No Questions Asked

A valued tenet in the Jewish faith is “tzedekah,” interpreted as the obligation to give aid and assistance to the needy.

The food pantry at the **Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte** counties embodies “tzedekah.” Between 60 and 70 families, individuals and seniors each month receive food from food drives and monetary donations throughout the year from area synagogues and other members of the community.



Carolyn Gora (right), board member, and volunteer Judith Yevick work in the food pantry at the Jewish Federation of Lee and Charlotte counties.

Also, the pantry receives a portion of the food collected at an inter-denominational Thanksgiving service — to which the entire community is invited by sponsors Temple Judea, Temple Beth-El, Iona-Hope Episcopal Church, Cypress Lake United Methodist Church, Cypress Lake Presbyterian Church and Quality Life Center.

As a partner agency of the Harry Chapin Food Bank, the Jewish Federation serves people of all faiths who “may be having a hard time, facing a medical emergency, or lost a job,” said Leni Sack, program director. “We don’t ask questions. If someone is in need of food, we are here to help them.”

During three Jewish holidays — Rosh Hashanah (the new year), Chanukah and Passover — the Jewish Federation delivers 200 gift bags to seniors, adding bags of food for those “we know have difficulties.”

Many people who receive the food are upset or embarrassed that they need this help. One woman came to the food pantry after her husband passed away. “She never

had to ask for help before, but with mounting medical bills, she didn’t know how she was going to pay for things,” Sack explained. “She was in tears and very appreciative, promising to help others when she got on her feet again.”

As for the Food Bank staff, “they are wonderful,” she said. “This year they gave us some Publix gift cards to give to families at Thanksgiving. So we try to support the Food Bank in as many ways as we can.”

Fight Hunger With a Planned Gift

You can continue your support of the Harry Chapin Food Bank when you make a planned gift.

Explore the opportunities with your attorney and/or financial advisor. You will be helping to ensure that your neighbors in need do not go hungry.

Contact Kelli King at (239) 334-7007 x202 or kelli@harrychapinfoodbank.org.

