New Program Delivers More Fresh Food ‘Just in Time’

About two-thirds of all donated food items to the Harry Chapin Food Bank are perishable, which puts partner agencies unable to store such food at a major disadvantage. So the staff came up with a new way to supplement mobile pantry distribution and deliver more of that fresh food to families, children and seniors in need.

“Fresh Food Express — Just in Time Delivery” helps partner agencies — particularly those in rural areas — that don’t have refrigerated, frozen or even dry storage adequate enough to serve their client population. Here’s how it works:

The partner agency arranges for its “regular order,” either delivered to the distribution site or picked up at the warehouse. Then, the partner agency can order additional “just-in-time” food, which can be fresh, frozen or dry, and schedule it to arrive just prior to the time when the regular food distribution begins. The partner agencies can serve their clients not only a healthy variety of fresh produce, frozen meat and whole grains, but more of them — 10,000 more pounds on average all in a single-two-hour distribution.

The refrigerated truck bringing the additional food can either unload the food at the site or act as temporary refrigeration space during distribution. Some clients can go home with twice as much food as they would have normally received.

The program, begun in late 2015, has successfully completed more than 25 distributions…with many more to come.

Fresh, nutritious produce makes a big difference in the lives of clients in need.

Looking Ahead...

Letter Carriers Prepare To ‘Stamp Out Hunger’

The Food Bank needs many volunteers for the 24th National Letter Carriers “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive on Saturday, May 14. Call 334-7007 x141 to sign up your group or just you.

In Their Words: ‘Every Little Bit Helps’

At a Lehigh Acres pantry:

• Sitting in the crowded sanctuary, Misty held her 3-year-old autistic son, Junior, close. She cares for three other children at home. Even with her husband working, the family needs food “because it’s hard, hard financially,” she said. The pantry “helps us out a great deal when we run low on food again. Every little bit helps.”

• After driving tractor-trailer trucks for 27 years, Frank Gonzalez is disabled and wears a pacemaker. With his income cut by two-thirds, money is tight, making it hard to feed a son and grandson. “My landlord told me” about the food pantry. “I didn’t know this existed.”

• Wendy and her 3-year-old daughter, Andrea, waited with a rolling shopping basket in which they hoped to carry food for another child at home. Even with a working husband, the rent is high and there are bills to pay.
Food Transforms Communities

This is my first newsletter as president and CEO of the Harry Chapin Food Bank. I am delighted to come to Southwest Florida, honored to have been chosen, and charmed by the welcome I have received.

It’s remarkable to me how much my life has transformed in the past several years and how central “feeding people” has been to that transformation. We all know how much the personal bonds of friendship and family are forged through feeding one another and eating together. I believe that is equally true of communities.

Food transforms bodies, but food also transforms the spirit. Food brings people together and transforms communities.

The opposite is also true. Where people are not fed, communities suffer. Hungry children lack the energy and focus to learn. Hungry adults find it hard to be productive members of society. Hungry seniors struggle to pass on their wisdom to the young. Hunger undermines our efforts to build a stronger community together.

My wish is that we come together to build a prosperous community for us all, and that the Harry Chapin Food Bank becomes the center of the ongoing transformation that only food can bring.

Capital Campaign Nears Successful Close

Garnering much support this past year, The Harry Chapin Food Bank’s Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope Capital Campaign is nearing its close. We thank the many donors who are helping us make a real impact on hunger in Southwest Florida. The funds raised are being used for the Fort Myers warehouse, necessary capital improvements, expansion of our truck fleet and upgrade of our refrigeration systems. Our successful campaign is saving us $15,000 every month!

Help us with a final donation!
Call Kelli King at 334-7007 x202

GRANTS AND DONATIONS

- Bi-Lo Winn-Dixie Foundation: $15,000
- C&N Foulds Foundation: $19,995
- Cape Coral Community Foundation: $10,000
- Copperleaf Charitable Foundation: $5,000
- MVP Realty Associates: $5,000
- Petracek International Study Charitable: $5,000
- Produce for Kids: $6,607.26
- Publix Super Markets Charities, Inc.: $25,000
- Saint Michael’s and All Angels Episcopal Church: $5,275
- St. John’s Episcopal Church: $10,583.33
- TJX Companies: $10,455.02
- United Church of Marco Island: $4,500
- U.S. Sugar Corp.: $5,000
- Walmart Foundation: $4,000

OUR MISSION

To overcome hunger in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties through education and by working in a cooperative effort with affiliated agencies in the procurement and distribution of food, equitably and without discrimination.

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

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.
Marco Island Marriott Associates Embrace a ‘Spirit to Serve’

The “Spirit to Serve” — Marriott’s program for staff to give back to the local community — “is as important as taking care of our guests,” said Chris Major, general manager of golf, The Rookery at Marco & Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club at the Marco Island Marriott Beach Resort.

Over the past four to five years, associates at the Marco Island Marriott have donated between $5,000 and $10,000 annually to the Harry Chapin Food Bank, as well as volunteered at countless mobile pantry distributions and food packing activities. “Associates know that they’re handing food to someone who needs it,” Major noted. And it’s very meaningful to them that the Food Bank can turn every dollar donated into $6 worth of food.

A representative from every discipline within the hotel — from food and beverage and front office to loss prevention and golf — serves on the hotel’s Spirit to Serve committee. Each will come up with at least one fundraising or volunteer activity a year for their colleagues. More recently, the resort has introduced these “giving back” opportunities to corporate groups meeting on site who want to help a local organization.

For 2016, the Marco Island Marriott has raised its Spirit to Serve goals to $200,000 in fundraising and 2,000 volunteer hours. “That will probably mean upwards of $20,000 and about 500 volunteer hours to benefit the Food Bank,” said Major.

In Memoriam...

Veronica Shoemaker. The Harry Chapin Food Bank salutes this long-time community activist, who recently passed away. Among her accomplishments, she was a co-founder of the Lee County Food Cooperative, the precursor of today’s Food Bank.

Alan Byerly. This dedicated Food Bank volunteer and former Naval officer, who passed away atop Mt. Kilimanjaro, was also a mountaineer, skier, whitewater kayaker, marathon runner, cyclist and devoted family man.

Food Bank Applauds Its Many Volunteers

Become a corporate partner! Call (239) 334-7007

Food Bank Applauds Its Many Volunteers

The Harry Chapin Food Bank applauded 200 of its more than 500 volunteers — from all over Southwest Florida — at a celebratory dinner March 16 at the Holiday Inn Fort Myers Airport. Thanks go to sponsors Comcast Cares and Super T-Shirts. Volunteers received lapel pins and certificates, and those with 100 hours of service during the year went home with a special T-shirt. We couldn’t do what we do without you!

Taste of Boca Grande A Smashing Success

The 14th annual Taste of Boca Grande at the Boca Bay Pass Club on the Gulf was a smashing success! Brimming with fine food from 20 restaurants, sweet music by the Steve Chapin Band (Steve in hat above with Food Bank board chair Keith Scoggins far right), and fun, the special event raised $42,000 for the Food Bank.

Our Thanks...

• Walmart swept into the Fort Myers warehouse and donated $5,000 worth of shelving and improvement products.

• The Community Foundation of Collier County hosted the 2nd annual “Give Where You Live” in Collier County. The 24-hour giving challenge benefited the Food Bank and 39 other non-profits.

• For the third year, Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples hosted its “Food for Families in Naples” Christmas tree in the clubhouse, raising $10,570. The three-year total comes to $28,990.

Pam Whitfield (right) of Bay Colony Golf Club in Naples presents a check to the Food Bank’s Kelli King.
Thank you to our sponsors, donors and walkers...and special thanks to Larry Lipman for his $10,000 donation!

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Find more photos at Facebook.com/HarryChapinFoodBank

How can your group help? Call Tanya Phillips at (239) 334-7007, x141.
Empty Bowls Naples Shatters Fundraising Record!

The 10th annual Empty Bowl Naples, presented by Tamiami Ford and Tamiami Hyundai, broke all records on January 23 — raising $97,341! This blew away last year’s record of $66,000. For a $15 donation, those in attendance chose from 2,500 handcrafted ceramic bowls created by local artists, educators, students and volunteers, in order to sample soups from 46 area restaurants. They kept their bowls as a reminder of those in the community who often face an empty bowl at home.

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Our Food Bank Hero

It happened just before Christmas at a mobile pantry distribution at Parkside Elementary. Food Bank driver Edson (Sonny) Pagan saw a little girl choking on food while her mother was on the distribution line. Moving swiftly, he performed the Heimlich maneuver on the child. The Food Bank gave him an award for his heroism!

More Fundraising!

With the support of the Walmart Foundation, WGCU’s Feed Public Radio...Feed A Family program during its December membership drive donated $20,000 to the Food Bank.

The 8th annual Darin Shultz’s New Year’s Doubles Challenge at Vivante in Punta Gorda raised $14,560! Special thanks to organizers Dan Couture, Jak Beardsworth, Lina Schultz, Marcia Schultz, Bob Blazekovic, Bob Head, Patty Galvin and Jody Van Cooney.
**Holy Trinity’s Food Pantry Is Serious About Helping Households in Need**

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Port Charlotte is serious about helping households in need with its food pantry. Open Monday, Wednesday and Thursday from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., and with the assistance of 18 dedicated volunteers, the pantry distributes food bags to 130 households each month, as well as many who are homeless.

The food pantry was born in response to hunger needs after Hurricane Charley hit in August 2004. Gale Brenner and her husband and another couple, the Dohrmans, take turns picking up food every Tuesday from the Harry Chapin Food Bank’s Fort Myers warehouse. With the pantry’s on-site refrigerator and freezer, bought two years ago, it can now accept nutritious fresh food from the Food Bank.

Visitors can get one pick-up every four weeks, and the pantry works with the local Homeless Coalition and its card system for tracking assistance.

“A lot of pantries hand over a bag of food, but the items might not be what is wanted,” said Brenner, who helps run the food pantry. “Our volunteers tell them what we have and ask what they need.”

One homeless man who visited the food pantry for four years just got an apartment, and expressed how grateful he was to have food in the cupboard and refrigerator.

The church also supports the food pantry through the WINK News Feeds Families Hunger Walk. Six participants this year raised $2,000, and the church added $1,000.

“We’re grateful for the Food Bank,” Brenner said. “We get people who need food for their kids, and that is just a heartbreaker.”

Shelves at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church’s pantry are filled with food to distribute three days a week.