



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Notes from Harry

Winter Newsletter 2019-20 | Vol. XIX, No. 4

Serving Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry and Lee Counties

Blueprint for helping kids

Harry Chapin Food Bank is proud to be named a Blueprint Partner by the Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF), the founding organization of the Naples Winter Wine Festival. The Blueprint Partner program was introduced by NCEF to highlight partners that exemplify the highest levels of effectiveness and accountability in serving children who are at risk in Collier County.

NCEF's unique approach, which emphasizes collaboration between organizations and bridges public and private resources, has become a blueprint for how to transform a community, one issue at a time. Each NCEF beneficiary is fully vetted and many utilize that process as a "Good Housekeeping Stamp of Approval." The Blueprint Partner program builds upon that process.

NAPLES CHILDREN
NCEF
& EDUCATION
FOUNDATION



This Issue

- 2 Publix Fuels Hunger Relief
- 3 Hunger Walk in January
- 4 Wells Fargo Holiday Giving
- 6 Volunteers See the Need
- 7 Family Volunteer Day



Hunger
Never
takes a *holiday*

Be a Harry's hero for the holidays

During the holidays, Harry Chapin Food Bank is often the catalyst for many residents of Southwest Florida to have joyous celebrations. The simple act of gathering around the holiday table, enjoying a meal and taking in the highlights of the season is not a reality for thousands of our neighbors. The holidays shine a light on the importance of our mission to lead our community in the fight to end hunger.

People we serve are dealing with the usual struggle to balance paying bills and buying food, with the additional scramble to scrape up funds to buy gifts and celebrate with family.

Your generosity is directly related to the amount of food we provide to those who may not know where their next meal is

coming from. They are people like Jim, who came to one of our mobile pantries in Fort Myers recently for the first time.

"It's going to be tough," he said about getting through the holidays. At 48 years old and a marine mechanic, he owned his own business. But this year he was diagnosed with COPD, and can no longer work.

"I worked all my life. I feel embarrassed to be here," he said.

Jim has a wife and four children. He knows his illness and the resulting change in his family's economic status means their holiday celebration won't be the same as in years past, and the holiday table may not be as full. He hates the idea that going to our food pantry has become a necessity.

Jim's situation is reflected in the lives of many others in Southwest Florida who reach out to Harry Chapin Food Bank for help at a time of adversity.

We thank you for your caring and commitment to help Jim and others who will struggle this holiday season. You are the reason our mission moves ever closer to fulfillment. You are Harry's heroes.



Jim with his mobile pantry food

Our mission is to lead our community in the fight to end hunger.



"It breaks my heart that so many of our neighbors don't have the same opportunity, because they are struggling with hunger."

Richard LeBer
Harry Chapin Food Bank
President & CEO

Our gratitude continues to grow with your support this holiday season

I love the holiday season, especially gathering with my family to share love, laughter – and food. It's an important time of fellowship and renewal for us. I'm so glad we're able to do it. It breaks my heart that so many of our neighbors don't have the same opportunity, because they are struggling with hunger.

That's why we're so grateful for your support at this critical time, so that we can feed the 1 in 8 Southwest Floridians

who will go hungry this year. It's a big job -- \$42 million worth of food last year – but we know that we can do it, thanks to the wonderful generosity of so many in our community like you.

Thank you for your support!

P.S. Don't forget to sign up for the WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk on January 18. See you there!

Publix fuels hunger relief

Publix Super Markets Charities presented the food bank with a \$150,000 gift for a new refrigerated truck at an event attended by local officials, dignitaries and guests. The gift was in recognition of September being Hunger Action Month, and part of a \$5 million gift to the Feeding America food bank network, of which Harry Chapin Food Bank is a member.

Thank you Publix, for your great partnership in helping people struggling with hunger.



Photo L-R: Publix Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer David Phillips; Food Bank President and CEO Richard LeBer; Food Bank Board Chairman Bill Dillon; Publix Vice Chairman Emeritus Barney Barnett.

Schools partnership to reduce waste

Harry Chapin Food Bank and the Lee County School District launched a new partnership this fall to make sure extra food doesn't go to waste. The pilot program will have schools donate produce and other items close to their expiration date to the food bank. So far, we have received more than 4,600

pounds of food from the district's Food and Nutrition Services Warehouse. "This partnership is an extra step we can take to ensure that we are reducing waste as well as helping out our community," said Lauren Couchois, director of food and nutrition services for the school district.



Photo L-R: Richard LeBer, food bank president and CEO and Lauren Couchois, Lee County School District.

Our vision is that no one has to go hungry in our community.

Let Your Feet Lead the Way to Fighting Hunger

Mark your calendars for Jan. 18, 2020 and spiff up your sneakers in preparation for the WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk, Harry Chapin Food Bank's biggest fundraiser of the year.

This is a fun way to spend time with family, get a little exercise and most of all, participate in our mission to lead our community in the fight to end hunger.

The 12th annual WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk, presented by Bill Smith Appliances and Electronics and Copperleaf Charitable Foundation, at Miromar Outlets in Estero is a family-friendly and pet-friendly event. The two-mile walk starts at 9:30 a.m., with registration at 8:30 a.m.

Because of your support, we have raised nearly \$3 million at the walk over the last 11 years.



Carolyn Mijokovic and Oliver



You can continue the tradition of participating in the WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk by making a donation, forming a walk team or becoming a sponsor. Visit winkhungerwalk.com to register.

Harry Chapin Food Bank is the largest hunger-relief agency in Southwest Florida, leading the charge to rescue food that would otherwise go to waste. The money you raise will help us distribute food directly through our food bank programs like the Care and Share: Senior Feeding Program, Harry's Helpings, In-School Pantries, and Fulfill Mobile Pantries. We also distribute food through our Partner Agency Program, a network of more than 150 partner agencies.

Walkers range from individuals to teams from organizations, businesses and communities. Carolyn Mijokovic, a volunteer and donor, led a team of 15-20 members from the Bella Terra community in the 2019 Walk, along with her dog, Oliver. She will do so again in 2020.

"We're pretty fortunate. We live in a community where

most people have jobs or are retired," she said. "However, within our community, if we find out there is somebody in need, we all come together to try to serve the need."

The chairwoman of the 2020 walk is Noelle Melanson, a local attorney who previously served on the board of the food bank. For the last eight years, her firm, Melanson Law PA, has been a WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk sponsor.

"I know that the food bank is a good steward of the money it receives and I know that every dollar raised truly does benefit our community," Melanson said. "Food is central to every aspect of life – from simply surviving to celebrating - and I dream of a society where people do not have to worry about where their next meal will come from."

IF YOU GO

For more information or to register, sign up at winkhungerwalk.com, or contact John Kuhn, food bank special events manager, at 239.334.7007, ext. 152 or at jkuhn@harrychapinfoodbank.org.

Remember us in your **estate planning**.

Volunteers See the Need at Fulfill Mobile Pantry

Can you imagine having a need to provide food for your family so intense that you are willing to arrive hours early for one of our Fulfill Mobile Pantries, just to stake out a place in line?

Often, that's what happens at Beautiful Savior Church in Lehigh Acres. A line of portable shopping carts stand in a single file. Some are attended by their owners, others are simply marking a place in line. People arrive at the church at noon to wait for a mobile pantry that doesn't start until 4 p.m. The earlier they arrive, the more likely they are to receive food if the pantry should run out. Rain or shine, they remain in line.

It's a familiar scene to Ramon Velez and Nelly Espinoza. The couple began volunteering at Harry Chapin Food Bank's Fulfill Mobile Pantries when they moved to Southwest Florida nearly a year ago from Maryland.

Nelly and Ramon have been married for 41 years and recently retired. They are so in tune with each other, they tend to finish one another's sentences. Ramon was born in the Bronx. Nelly was born in Philadelphia. They moved to Puerto Rico for a time, then came back to the states about 30 years ago.

Ramon served 26 years in the Army, retiring as a sergeant. Then he drove a tractor trailer for 11 years. Nelly worked for a time at an assisted living facility and raised three children. They have seven grandchildren.

After they moved to Lehigh Acres, they found themselves with time

on their hands and decided to do something to help the community. Jose Soto, their good friend and one of the food bank's mobile pantry drivers, suggested they try volunteering at a Fulfill Mobile Pantry.

"We were surprised at how many people needed food," Nelly said. "This is a first-time experience for us." The couple saw many situations that awakened them to the reality of hunger in the community. "We like to help people anyway," Nelly said. "That is what God tells us to do. To help people."

Ramon recalled an incident when he saw a teenage boy, maybe 16 or 17 years old, who came to the back of the church and wouldn't stand in line. "He was scared," Ramon said. "I said, 'What are you scared for?' He thought he couldn't get food because he was homeless."

In another incident, the pantry had ended, the mobile pantry truck had been packed up and

everyone was ready to leave. Then a woman drove up. "I see the lady is crying," Ramon said. She needed food and learned the pantry was over.

"Her husband had an accident, he was in the hospital," Nelly said. "There was no income in the house." The woman showed them a photo of her husband, who was recovering from a car accident.

"I don't want to see people cry for food," Ramon said. They gave her the leftover food from the mobile pantry.

The woman started hugging them, saying "God bless you, thank you," Nelly said. The outpouring of heartfelt gratitude was amazing.

In fiscal year 2019, Harry Chapin Food Bank held 317 Fulfill Mobile Pantries throughout the five counties we serve. Nelly and Ramon want more people to be aware that help is out there for people struggling with hunger. For a calendar of Fulfill Mobile Pantry sites, visit harrychapinfoodbank.org.



Nelly and Ramon Velez

Harry's photo album



A group of our regular volunteers help sort and pack 8,250 pounds of spaghetti squash at our Fort Myers Distribution Center.



We are thankful for the 1,595 pounds of food and \$1,746 in monetary gifts received from members of the community who attended Aviation Day Nov. 16 at Page Field Airport in Fort Myers.



Henry and Sandy Peterson held their fourth annual Thanksgiving "turkey drop" on Sanibel Island and collected 1,786 pounds of turkeys and "sides" for the food bank. Thank you to all who donated!



We served 211 families at our Fulfill Mobile Pantry held Nov. 8 at the Bonita Springs Lions Club.



Harry Chapin Food Bank staff wore orange in support of Hunger Action Day, to help raise awareness of hunger in Southwest Florida and across the United States.



A group from Suncoast Credit Union packed 3,731 pounds of fresh produce at our Collier County Center.



A group from Florida Gulf Coast University Athletics volunteered in our Fort Myers Distribution Center, helping the food bank pack 2,469 pounds of potatoes for our neighbors in need this Thanksgiving season.



School Principal Brandy Macchia cuts the ribbon at a new in-school pantry at Ray V. Pottorf Elementary School. Thanks to a gift from the Laboda Family, this pantry will help feed students and families in need.



The 2020 Leadership Collier class gained a broad overview of how local human service agencies collaborate to effectively serve the growing needs of Collier County on Human Services Day at our Collier County Center.

Tying Flies to End Hunger

Alex and Adam Haiken found a way to tie their favorite hobby to fundraising for Harry Chapin Food Bank.

Their venture is a twist on traditional food and fund drives and shows that with a little creativity, you just might be able to combine a passion for doing what you love with a passion for giving back.

The brothers formed FliesForaCause.com in 2013, a nonprofit that sells their hand-tied fishing flies. They direct 75 percent of every purchase to the charity of the buyer's choice, selected from a list of seven that includes Harry Chapin Food Bank. The other 25 percent goes back into the business to help it grow. They have provided gifts of \$4,204 so far to Harry Chapin

Food Bank as a result.

Alex, 20, is now a junior at the University of Michigan and Adam, 17, a senior at Canterbury High School. Their fundraising journey started in 2012 with a gift of fly fishing rods from their grandfather, who also taught the brothers how to use them.



Photo: Left, Barbara Evans, food bank chief development officer and Adam Haiken.

As they developed their skills, they also started designing and

tying their own flies. Then, they decided to try and sell them and raise money for charity at the same time.

Adam said they just wanted to give back to the community. "Every day I make an effort to watch the news." Whether it's local, national or international, "Most of it is horrible," he said. "I felt I should do my part to give a little joy to people."

The young entrepreneurs both like to fish in Estero Bay. Their unique way of fundraising has definitely caught the imagination of their customers and contributed to a great cause – fighting hunger. They write on their website: "We hope our passion can transcend catching fish and significantly impact people's lives."

Wells Fargo focuses on holiday giving

**WELLS
FARGO**

Wells Fargo's national Holiday Food Bank campaign continues through Dec.

31, pledging up to \$5 million to Feeding America and its network of 200 food banks, of which Harry Chapin Food Bank is a member. Here's how it works:

Of the \$5 million, \$3 million is pledged to the Feeding America national office.

The other \$2 million is targeted for the member food banks. Of that amount:

- \$1 million will be split equally among the 200 food banks, which will receive \$5,000 each.
- \$1 million will be used for a 1:1 donation match, up to \$25,000 per food bank and up to \$5,000 per donor. So every monetary gift to Harry Chapin Food Bank will be matched up to \$25,000 through this campaign.

How you can help: Give online at www.feedingamerica.org/wellsfargo. Or, text MEALS to 91990. You can also give at your Wells Fargo ATM, and the gift will go to the food bank in your billing zip code.

In addition, Wells Fargo is turning all its branches into Wells Fargo "Food Banks," accepting donations of nonperishable foods that will be delivered to the food bank in their area.



Family Volunteer Day

Get into the holiday spirit with your family and embrace the spirit of giving back at our next Family Volunteer Day from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 21. The event will be held at the food bank's Fort Myers Distribution Center, 3760 Fowler St., and our Collier County Center, 3940 Prospect Ave. #101, Naples. To register, go to hcfb.org/dec-21-family-volunteer-day.

The free event is open to families with children age 10 and older. Families will receive a tour of our facilities and learn how the food bank works to feed roughly 28,000 people per week. Participants will pack food items for those we serve, create and decorate paper bags that contain food for our senior feeding program.

Debbie LaCavera Honored with Distinguished Volunteer Award



Debbie LaCavera was named a Distinguished Fundraising Volunteer by The Association of Fundraising Professionals Collier-Lee Chapter at its

2019 National Philanthropy Day event. LaCavera has volunteered with the food bank for more than 13 years. She handles orientation for new volunteers, volunteers twice a week in our warehouse sorting or packing food, and volunteers at other food bank events like Family Volunteer Day and the Letter Carriers Food Drive. "I do whatever needs to be done," she said. We honor Debbie's hard work, enthusiasm and dedication.

New Volunteer Numbers

Fiscal Year 2018-19



4,108
Volunteers



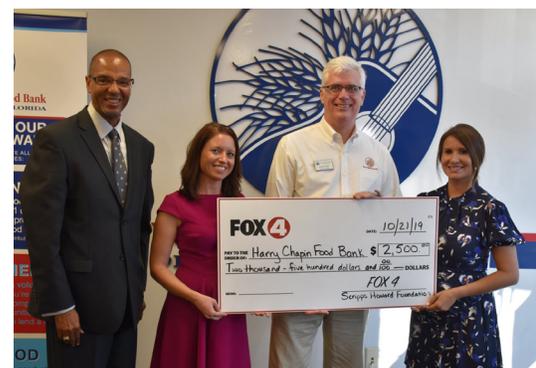
43,025
Hours provided



Over \$1 Million
of in-kind service*

*Independent Sector values volunteer hours at \$24.69 per hour nationally.

Scripps Howard Foundation presents check



We had a group of visitors from the Scripps Howard Foundation and Fox 4 News in October at our Fort Myers Distribution Center. They started the day packing food kits for a senior food program, then headed off to a Fulfill Mobile Pantry to distribute food to families in need. They ended the day by presenting the food bank with a \$2,500 check. We are grateful for their continued support in our mission to lead our community in the fight to end hunger.



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

**Harry Chapin Food Bank of
Southwest Florida**
3760 Fowler Street
Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Sign up to receive email
updates from Harry
Chapin Food Bank
Text **HARRY** to **42828**
to get started.

Consider a Charitable IRA Rollover Gift!

The Charitable IRA Rollover gift is a unique opportunity for donors over 70 ½ years old. Federal legislation allows you to make a tax-free distribution from your IRA directly to a qualified charity, such as Harry Chapin Food Bank.

- Distributions must be made from your IRA trustee directly to Harry Chapin Food Bank for this gift to count as part of your qualified minimum distribution.
- Gifts up to \$100,000 are eligible.
- No taxes are paid on the qualified minimum distribution used to fund this gift, so no tax deductions are available.
- Gifts cannot be made from 401(k) or 403(b) accounts and cannot be made to charitable remainder trusts, gift annuities or donor-advised funds.

For more information, contact Barbara Evans, chief development officer, at 239.334.6881 or baevans@harrychapinfoodbank.org

Harry's Happenings

- **Family Volunteer Day**
Dec. 21, 2019
Collier County Center, 9 to 11:30 a.m.
Fort Myers Distribution Center, 9 to 11:30 a.m.
To register, go to hcfb.org/dec-21-family-volunteer-day.
- **WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk**
Jan. 18, 2020
Miramar Outlets, Registration: 8:30 a.m.
Two-mile walk: 9:30 a.m.
Sign up at winkhungerwalk.com, or contact John Kuhn, food bank special events manager, at 239.334.7007, ext. 152 or jkuhn@harrychapinfoodbank.org
- **The Taste of Boca Grande**
Feb. 3, 2020
Boca Bay Pass Club, 6 to 9 p.m.
Tickets can be purchased by contacting Meg Madzar, events and food drive coordinator, at 239.334.7007 ext. 120 or mmadzar@harrychapinfoodbank.org.