



**Harry Chapin Food Bank**  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

# Notes from Harry

Spring Newsletter 2021

SERVING CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, GLADES, HENDRY AND LEE COUNTIES

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Families in Need

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# Coming Together to Feed Families in Need



**It only takes a few minutes to see that Immokalee residents Shy Vasquez and her husband, Christopher, are wealthy. This wealth is not reflected in their bank accounts but lives comfortably in their family relationships, values, beliefs and hopes. Economically, however, this family is struggling. They struggle to make ends meet. They struggle to provide food for their children.**

Shy works as a supervisor of housekeeping at NCH Healthcare System and is going to school to become a registered nurse. Christopher lost his job as a bus driver with Collier County Public Schools due to the pandemic. Their two preschool-aged children are enrolled in Pathways Early Education Center in Immokalee. Pathways has partnered with Harry Chapin Food Bank so that families like this one don't have to go hungry.

**Shy shares that her children come to her and say, "Mommy, I'm hungry."**

Because of the generosity of our community, Shy is able to give her growing children something to eat. Shy's children are enrolled in our Harry's Helpings Program at Pathways, which aims to reduce barriers that most families face as they struggle with food insecurity by making food kits readily available where their children attend pre-school or after-school programming. This innovative feeding program provides a family of four with enough food for 15 meals.

Shy and Christopher love that the food kits that they receive from the food bank help them provide the necessary stability for their family. Shy is not bashful to credit the food bank for helping her family, and many others in the community who are hungry, survive this pandemic.

Tears well up in Shy's eyes as she expresses the overwhelming gratitude she has for the thousands in this community who have come together to help families like hers. Shy states that it is a good thing when you see how happy people are to receive a box of food or a kind gesture. She is grateful that her children are learning the lessons of compassion and community.

Thank you for helping us feed families like Shy's, as well as the more than a quarter of a million people that we serve each month with nutritious food. ■

# The Safety Net of Our Community

Your food bank is committed to doing everything in its power to ensure that no one has to go hungry. We take pride in our critical role in the food insecurity landscape, which primarily involves sourcing and distributing fresh produce and nutritious foods to our partner organizations for their distributions, as well as our own food distribution programs. **We provide an average of 70 percent of the inventories that our partner agencies distribute.** Subsequently, the food bank is the safety net of our community.

Our distributions have exploded by more than 100 percent. The following are few illustrations:

Partner Organization	Pounds of Food Distributed March 2019 - March 2020	Pounds of Food Distributed March 2020 - March 2021
Brighter Bites	160,479	643,796
St. Matthew's House	93,210	1,981,100
Our Daily Bread	185,433	483,938
Meals of Hope	920,449	2,964,029
Noah's Ark Church	473,560	1,030,955
Grace Place for Children and Families	735,322	1,523,660
David Lawrence Center	124,739	245,721
First Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church	8,328	923,685
Wintergarden Presbyterian Church	45,359	661,604
Punta Gorda Church of the Nazarene	179,715	513,039
Adventist Community Center of Cape Coral	410,464	704,525
Catholic Charities of Bonita Springs	56,003	181,303
Community Cooperative	384,158	561,874
Fort Myers Rescue Mission	112,959	479,344

It is heartbreaking to know that the numbers of those whom we serve have grown from 28,000 people a week to over a quarter of a million people each month. **We give thanks for our 150 partners and how they are trusted extensions of our mission.**





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## Leave a Legacy

*A most generous gift*

Your thoughtful Will should be the cornerstone of your estate plan. A Will gives form and substance to your thoughtful concern for the future of your family and other beneficiaries. It also represents a person's final wishes and intentions. After providing for your loved ones, please consider one final testament of faith through a bequest in your Will or living trust that will provide an enduring foundation for Harry Chapin Food Bank's mission – to lead our community in the fight to end hunger. We would be happy to provide instructions to your legal advisor.

Call Barbara Evans, Chief Development Officer  
at 239.334.6881 or  
[baevans@harrychapinfoodbank.org](mailto:baevans@harrychapinfoodbank.org).

## Calling All Changemakers

Our changemakers are an extension of our team and are a key ingredient in our sound financial management. Every summer we face the challenge of being shorthanded, especially at our drive-thru distributions. If you are well, able and willing to volunteer, please consider making a difference with us.

Call Lori Harrington, Volunteer Manager  
at 239.334.7007 x141 or  
[lharrington@harrychapinfoodbank.org](mailto:lharrington@harrychapinfoodbank.org)