



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Notes from Harry

Fall Newsletter 2021

SERVING CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, GLADES, HENDRY AND LEE COUNTIES



WHAT'S INSIDE...

A Path to a Brighter Future
Bridging the Hunger Gap
Consider a Gift of
Securities!

A Path to a Brighter Future

Cynthia knows what it is like to be hungry. Growing up in Immokalee to migrant parents who travelled wherever they could find work, she would start each school year in a different town or sometimes in a different state as her family followed the harvests around the country. Being a new student is stressful in and of itself, but Cynthia had other worries. At each school, she wasn't sure if free or reduced breakfast and lunch were available, leaving her afraid she wouldn't have enough to eat throughout the day. The one uplifting constant in her life was that every January, Cynthia's family returned to Immokalee, where her parents worked in the fields while she and her sister returned to school and the guarantee of nutritious food. Cynthia enjoyed learning, and her parents instilled in her the importance of education and how it is the best path to a brighter future.

Cynthia didn't grow up with the same opportunities as children from more affluent families, yet it didn't stop her from graduating high school and college. During her last year of college, she returned to Immokalee to give back to the community she always called home and to her parents who always believed in her and pushed her to be better.

For the past three years, Cynthia has worked at Pathways Early Education Center in Immokalee. She knows all too well that **97% of the children in Immokalee are considered "economically needy."** To provide every child with the best possible nutrition available, she became a strong advocate of Pathways partnering with Harry Chapin Food Bank.

Harry's Helpings is an excellent fit for early education centers, and Pathways is currently one of the food bank's proud partners. Harry's Helpings aims to reduce barriers that

most families face as they struggle with food insecurity. It is one of two programs offered through the food bank to ensure children have enough nutritious food available at their respective places of learning. **This innovative feeding program provides a family of four with enough food for 15 meals.**

Cynthia is pursuing her dream of directing an early childhood learning center by simultaneously working on her Master of Public Administration and managing the Harry's Helpings distributions at Pathways. As children finish their day with laughter and excitement, she helps families pick up their food kits and sees the gratitude in their smiling faces. ■



Bridging the Hunger Gap

Harry Chapin Food Bank has been in Debbie's life for over ten years. Debbie, a single mother of two, received a diagnosis from her doctor she never thought possible. She was very ill, and treatment options were inadequate in helping her recover. The outcome looked grave.

Debbie worked full-time with a stable income and good insurance, but when her body started to reject the treatments, her illness rendered her unable to continue working, and in turn, she lost her health insurance. Debbie remembers that she was worried since she needed to take care of her two growing teenagers. Food became scarce in the house. Debbie did everything she could to keep working, decreasing her hours to part-time so she could still pay for medication, but there was little left over for anything else. She couldn't make ends meet.

Debbie turned to Harry Chapin Food Bank by way of CHAPS. CHAPS is one of over 150 agencies in our Partner Agency Program, a network that bridges the gap between the food bank and people who are hungry and cannot access food through our other distribution programs. Our partners include social service agencies, faith-based congregations, nonprofits and community organizations, operating throughout our five-county footprint, where families can acquire food in their own

communities. As trusted extensions of our mission, we provide our partner agencies roughly 70% of their food inventory, a critical component of all our partners, as distribution numbers have grown exponentially. **Last year, CHAPS alone distributed 87,632 pounds of food, an increase of 20,209 pounds in one year!**

Harry Chapin Food Bank and CHAPS ensured that Debbie's family had nutritious and healthy foods critical for her growing children and for Debbie's own health. Our various food procurement strategies allow us to provide our partner agencies with our shelf-stable fruits, vegetables, proteins, grains and milk as well as fresh produce and other perishable foods. Our membership with Feeding America affords us the ability to rescue food that would otherwise go to waste from various national retail and grocery stores, national food providers and farms. **Consequently, the food bank is the safety net of our community.**

Today, Debbie is in remission. Her gratitude for our Partner Agency Program and CHAPS runs deep. She regularly volunteers at CHAPS and for the food bank.

"Harry Chapin Food Bank and CHAPS saved my family. That is why I am here, giving my time and showing my children that life is a true circle." ■





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Consider a Gift of Securities!

Giving in sensible and practical ways may help minimize your tax burden and stretch your charitable dollars. Gifts of appreciated securities include stocks, bonds and mutual funds.

Instructions you can provide to your broker can be received by phone, email, or fax.

Here are some ways that securities held for more than 12 months can offer potential tax savings:

- **A gift of appreciated stock may eliminate capital gains tax.**
- **A gift of appreciated stock allows you to claim a charitable deduction up to 30% of your adjusted gross income.**

We would be happy to help you explore special giving opportunities. Simply contact Barbara Evans, Chief Development Officer at 239.334.6881 or baevans@harrychapinfoodbank.org.