



Harry Chapin Food Bank
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

Notes from Harry

Spring Newsletter 2023

SERVING CHARLOTTE, COLLIER, GLADES, HENDRY AND LEE COUNTIES

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After Hurricane Ian





A Legacy of Love

"The most impressive thing was just how everybody just got out there and supported Southwest Florida. I mean, the people and volunteers were from everywhere."

Two and a half years ago, the world seemed to shudder to a screeching halt. It is impossible to forget how the pandemic rattled Southwest Florida, and for David Derr, it was a call to action. After witnessing the long, winding lines of cars at the food bank's mobile distribution sites, he and his wife, Louise, realized there was an opportunity to give back to their community. When their stimulus check arrived in the mail, they knew the money would be best used to feed their neighbors who are hungry.



David did not grow up in a philanthropic household. After a long and rewarding career in the US Navy, he was able to retire early and live comfortably. Sadly, Louise passed away in late 2020, and David reevaluated his philanthropic priorities to ensure his contributions were having the maximum impact. He was aware that hidden pockets existed in Southwest Florida, where people struggled to make ends meet. In addition to making donations, he decided to volunteer his time with the food bank. He began building food kits and handing them out at our Fulfill Mobile Pantry Program distributions.

Then, another disaster struck Southwest Florida. After Hurricane Ian made landfall, David immediately responded by volunteering at our Fort Myers Distribution Center. When thousands of residents who were impacted by the hurricane came through our emergency food distribution lines, David also took the lead in efficiently directing traffic and counting each vehicle.

As David's volunteer interactions and understanding of the food bank grew, he realized that he could make an even greater impact. He felt compelled to join our Legacy Society, a special network recognizing supporters who include the food bank in their will or estate plans. Estate planning is an important way to ensure that loved ones are taken care of after you're gone. But it's also an excellent opportunity to give back to causes that are important to you.

By joining our Legacy Society, David is passing on his cherished values and sharing the gift of nutrition for generations to come. He is leaving a legacy of love, ensuring that no one in our community has to go hungry. We could not carry out our mission without the generosity of donors like David.

Thank you, David, for your incredible support and volunteerism! ■

It Takes a Village

Supporting our Community After Hurricane Ian

When Sabine Estainvil toured Fun Time Early Childhood Academy (Fun Time) this past August, with her son, Marc, she immediately knew that it was the right choice. While choosing a school closer to home would be more convenient, Sabine loved Fun Time's philosophy regarding family involvement and could not wait to become a part of their "family." She was also interested in Fun Time's ability to connect her with various community resources across Collier County. After recently giving birth, as well as suffering from a medical injury, Sabine's family had suddenly lost half of their income.

Fun Time is one of Harry Chapin Food Bank's Harry's Helpings distribution sites, where families who are food-insecure are able to receive supplemental food kits filled with enough nutritious, shelf-stable food for 15 meals. Harry's Helpings aims to bridge the gap between families who may not be able to visit traditional food pantries and easily accessible food in familiar and comfortable locations. Through Harry's Helpings, Fun Time distributes over 50 food kits each month to their families who are hungry, like Sabine and Marc.



When Fun Time reopened in early October following the destruction caused by Hurricane Ian, Marc was one of several students not in attendance. The staff went to work immediately and found out that his family had suffered the complete loss of their home, cars,

and all belongings due to the flooding caused by Ian. While the family had been struggling to make ends meet before the storm as a one-income household because of inflation, now they were faced with a completely life-altering scenario. They had no home, no clothes, no food and no means of transportation.

Fun Time helped Sabine connect to much needed resources through the Collier Cares app and FEMA. When she received a text message saying that her family would receive temporary housing in an Airbnb rental, she did not understand at first because English is her second language. But when she realized that her family, including her two young children, would have a safe and dry place to stay, she broke down in tears.

School staff also applied to a local foundation that provided Sabine with grant funding to purchase lost items. After reaching out to various community organizations and resources, Fun Time soon began to receive donations of food and water from Harry Chapin Food Bank as well as clothing, diapers, formula, toiletries, and other necessities, and distributed those items to Sabine's family, as well as others who were in need.

Despite the tremendous work that has already taken place, recovery after Hurricane Ian will be a prolonged process. We are so thankful to be joined in this effort by partners like Fun Time Early Childhood Academy and countless other organizations and generous individuals who are rallying together to support our community. ■



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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, we hope you will 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.

Contact Lynnae Messina, Major Gifts Officer, at 239.334.7007 x105 or lmessina@harrychapinfoodbank.org.

Calling All Changemakers

Our volunteers are truly changemakers. As an extension of our mission, they are a crucial component of our food distribution operation and sound financial management. One special quality of our volunteer program is that our volunteer opportunities are flexible to meet your needs, varying from a one-time, three-hour shift in our warehouse or distribution sites, to executive level volunteerism involving 20 hours per month. Our changemakers' time and dedication truly change the lives of the 300,000 people we feed each month. If you are well, able and willing to volunteer, please consider making a difference in the community with us.

Call Lori Harrington, Volunteer Manager, at 239.334.7007 x141 or lharrington@harrychapinfoodbank.org.