

WINTER 2024

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

# Nourishing **MATTERS**



**Harry Chapin Food Bank  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA**



## Fresh Force “Mobile Grocery Experience” Launch

Did you know that 70% of the 5-county footprint we serve is a food desert, areas that have limited access to nutritious food? To help serve those communities, Harry Chapin Food Bank launched our “Fresh Force” Mobile Grocery Experience. This innovative program travels to these rural, underserved communities, offering a dignified shopping experience. Community members select from a variety of fresh produce, canned goods, frozen meats, and more, emphasizing choice and respect.



# Richard LeBer Man of the Year



Richard LeBer (Shot on location by Brian Tietz at The Veranda Restaurant, Fort Myers / Hair by Duality Artistry)

At a prestigious event held in November, our esteemed President and CEO Richard LeBer was recognized as one of Gulfshore Life's "Men and Women of the Year."

"Any recognition I receive is because of the hard work we see every day by food bank staff and volunteers," LeBer humbly stated. "This is really their award. I'm honored to be called out, and honored to work with such an inspiring team."

This accolade is a testament to Richard's dedication to ensuring that no one in our community goes hungry. Under Richard's leadership, our Food Bank has become a beacon of hope in Southwest Florida. His commitment to fighting hunger is unwavering, even in the face of challenges like Hurricane Ian and COVID-19. We congratulate Richard on this well-deserved recognition.

*"Everybody, everybody, everybody has an occasional bad day, but I never have a day where I don't know in my soul that I'm doing work that's worthwhile."*

- Richard LeBer  
President and CEO

## Reflecting on a **Successful Holiday Season** and Start to 2024

### Celebrating 40 Years of Community Impact

As we finish the first few months of 2024, we look back with gratitude on the 40th anniversary of the Harry Chapin Food Bank, a beacon of hope in Southwest Florida and the region's sole Feeding America member. Our focus over the 2023 holiday season was to combat hunger, and thanks to the community's support, we made significant strides.

### A Season of Giving and Support

The holidays, a time meant for joy and togetherness, were challenging for many. Recognizing this, Harry Chapin Food Bank strived to ensure that no one in our community went hungry. Our mission was to provide food and a sense of holiday spirit and normalcy to those in need.

### Partnerships That Made a Difference

Our goal of hunger-free holidays was achieved through the unwavering support of our 170 partner agencies across Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. Together, we distributed thousands of holiday food boxes, each filled with wholesome and festive items, to families experiencing hunger.

### Acknowledging Our Challenges

Our achievements were significant, yet the need remains great. In Southwest Florida, one in eight adults and one in six children experienced food insecurity. These individuals, often unseen, face nights of hunger and uncertainty.

### Gratitude and Continued Support

We are immensely thankful for the community's support during the holiday season. Your contributions—whether through food drives, packing events, or donations—made a tangible difference. We proved that even a modest contribution could stretch far, providing crucial meals to our neighbors facing hunger.

### Looking Forward

As we reflect on our accomplishments, we also look ahead. Our fight to end hunger continues, and your ongoing support is vital. We encourage you to stay involved and help us sustain our efforts throughout the year.

### Join Our Ongoing Mission

Visit [harrychapinfoodbank.org](http://harrychapinfoodbank.org) to learn more about how you can contribute to our mission. Together, we can continue to make a meaningful impact in the lives of those facing food insecurity.

With appreciation,

Richard LeBer  
President and CEO

Stuart Haniff  
Chief Development Officer

# Community Impact:

## Harry Chapin Food Bank and Cornerstone Church's Successful Outreach



*Pastors Gregory Ford and Marjorie Ford*

In partnership with Cornerstone Church, Harry Chapin Food Bank recently hosted an impactful outreach event, reaching over 3,000 families in Fort Myers. This collaboration is part of the food bank's extensive network of over 170 partner agencies, working daily to support the community.

Our dedicated drivers, Walter and Clarence, played vital roles in the event's success.

Their efforts reflect the power of teamwork in addressing community needs. The significant turnout, with cars lined up back to the Imaginarium Science Center downtown, highlighted the community's reliance on and trust in these initiatives.

This annual event has demonstrated the enduring commitment of Harry Chapin Food Bank and its partners in providing essential support, especially during crucial times like the holidays.

This collaboration offers immediate relief to those facing food insecurity and strengthens community bonds. Harry Chapin Food Bank thanks everyone involved, underscoring the collective impact of partnerships in making a tangible difference.

*"I believe that people like ourselves and other agencies can and should stand in the gap and fill in some of the voids regarding food, supplies, support, and prayer."*

- Pastor Gregory Ford

## WINK Feeds Families March to a Million Meals

It is no secret Southwest Florida is facing a hunger crisis. The March to a Million Meals campaign provides families with canned goods, fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, dairy, and more. Dollars raised during the event help feed families in need across Southwest Florida.

WINK viewers and readers have raised more than \$1.6 million since 2021. Hunger is a year-round concern, so this continued support is greatly appreciated.

Every day in February, WINK news shared the importance of our food bank in Southwest Florida and the impact our food distribution programs have on the lives of our neighbors who are hungry.





# Working Together to Feed Our Neighbors

## Donor of the Month

In September 2023, Harry Chapin Food Bank launched its Donor of the Month program to honor donors, organizations, foundations, and individuals, who go above and beyond in their support of the food bank.

“We are incredibly grateful for our partners in the fight against hunger in Southwest Florida,” said Stuart Haniff, the chief development officer. “This program recognizes the amazing people and organizations doing their part daily to ensure no person or family goes hungry in our community.”



Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF)

### 2023-2024 Donors of the Month include:

- September '23: Publix Super Markets Charities
- October '23: Naples Children & Education Foundation (NCEF)
- November '23: Florida Blue Foundation
- December '23: Walmart Foundation
- January '24: The Richard M. Schulze Family Foundation
- February '24: Copperleaf Charitable Foundation

## Many Thanks to our Generous Partners

### TASTE OF THE TOWN



Karlee Bobzien from Businesses Supporting Communities with Stuart Haniff from Harry Chapin Food Bank

We are so grateful to WINK News and Businesses Supporting Communities for the opportunity to raise awareness around hunger in our community during WINK Taste of the Town this past November.

Thanks to the generosity of our community and the wonderful volunteers who donated their time, we will be able to provide roughly 12,000 healthy, nutritious meals.

### THANK YOU DUNKIN' JOY FOUNDATION

We're overjoyed to announce a generous \$5,000 grant from the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation, supporting our In-School Pantry program.



This incredible contribution will help us provide nutritious food directly within schools, ensuring hunger doesn't hinder students' learning. A heartfelt thank you to the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation for their commitment to childhood nutrition and education!



Harry Chapin Food Bank  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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