

SUMMER 2025

# Nourishing MATTERS



**Harry Chapin Food Bank**  
OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

## Hunger Doesn't Take a Summer Vacation

For many families in Southwest Florida, summer brings more than sunshine and time off—it brings stress, uncertainty, and hunger.

When the final school bell rings, thousands of children lose access to the free breakfasts and lunches on which they depend. Parents working in seasonal industries like agriculture, hospitality, and tourism often see their hours—and paychecks—cut. Suddenly, they're expected to cover two extra meals per day, per child, without any extra income. That's where Harry Chapin Food Bank steps in.

Through our robust feeding network of more than 175 partner agencies, we ensure vulnerable children will still have access to healthy, nutritious meals all summer long. Our targeted youth programs meet families where they are:

- **In-School Pantry Program:** Stocked with shelf-stable goods and supplemented with fresh produce and proteins, these pantries quietly support students and families year-round—and especially over summer when schools remain open for other services.
- **Harry's Helpings:** In early learning centers, after-school programs, and summer camps, we provide food kits designed to carry families through the week.
- **Fulfill Mobile Pantry Program:** Our trucks bring fresh food to underserved communities, supplementing gaps left by traditional support systems.

Harry Chapin Food Bank continues to serve as a vital resource, feeding over a quarter of a million people each month across Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties.

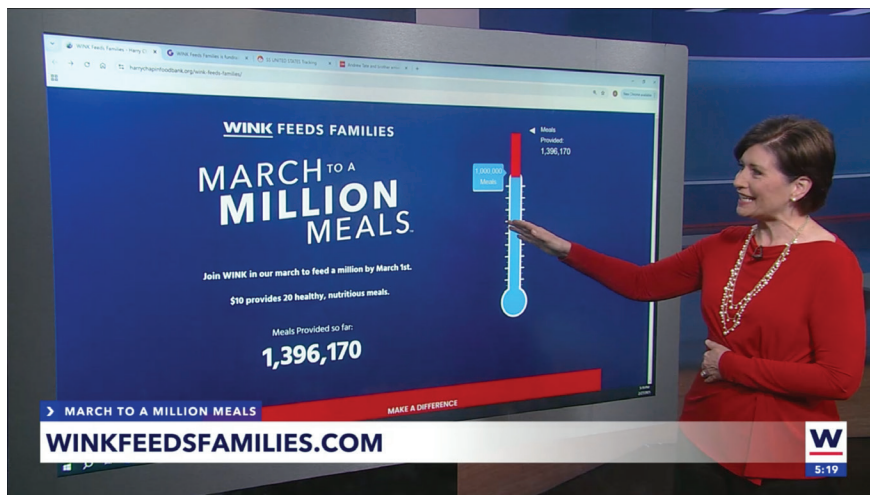
Every meal is more than nutrition—it's relief for a parent making impossible choices. It's fuel for a child who just wants to play and learn. And it's a reminder that even when school is out, their community hasn't checked out.

Hunger doesn't take a vacation. Neither do we.



**MAKE A GIFT**

[Give.HarryChapinFoodBank.org](https://Give.HarryChapinFoodBank.org)



## March to a Million Meals... and then some!

This February, our Southwest Florida community once again proved just how powerful compassion can be. Through the annual WINK Feeds Families March to a Million Meals campaign, supporters rallied to raise an incredible \$761,732—far surpassing the \$500,000 goal. That's enough to provide 1,542,464 meals to our neighbors facing hunger.

The campaign's success was powered by heartfelt generosity. WINK News Anchor Lois Thome shared how donors didn't just give—they told their stories. "The messages are so heartwarming," she said. "Whether they dedicated their gift to a loved one or shared their own struggles with hunger, it's all so meaningful."

One unforgettable moment came during a live WINK News broadcast from our Fort Myers Distribution Center on February 24. That's when Storm Smart Founder Brian Rist and CEO Scot Burris arrived with a surprise: a \$30,000 donation from Storm Smart and the Rist Family Foundation—announced live on air. "Every meal matters. No one should go hungry," they said, echoing the campaign's mission.

Over the last five years, March to a Million Meals has raised an astounding \$3.2 million, helping feed thousands across Southwest Florida. This year's outpouring of support is a testament to the compassion and commitment of our community.

Thank you, WINK News, and every donor who stepped up this year. Your support doesn't just provide meals – it brings hope, dignity, and comfort to those who need it most.

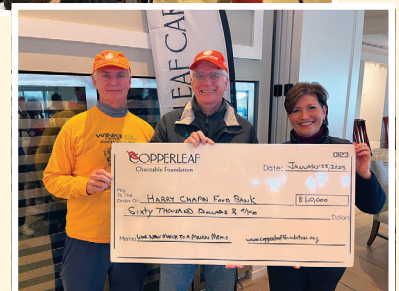
## A Copperleaf Kickstart

**When challenges arise, heroes step forward.**

In 2021, the annual WINK Feeds Families Hunger Walk was canceled because of COVID-19. In its place, Copperleaf Golf Club in Bonita Springs created its own Hunger Walk to support Harry Chapin Food Bank. Meanwhile, WINK News restructured its one-day event by establishing the month-long March to a Million Meals campaign.

Today, the Copperleaf Hunger Walk serves as the unofficial launch of March to a Million Meals. This year, the Copperleaf Charitable Foundation made an incredible impact, presenting a \$60,000 check to the food bank while residents of Copperleaf and the adjacent Lighthouse Bay donated 2,087 pounds of food.

They demonstrated the power of community and their support is a beacon of hope proving when neighbors come together, we can make life-changing differences for those around us.





## Irma: a neighbor helping neighbors

Irma is like many people in our community. She had a good job, raised a family and moved to Southwest Florida. Irma never expected to struggle financially, especially not to the point where she'd have difficulty putting food on the table.

That unfortunate reality hit, though. One day, while walking in a Collier County park, she noticed a line forming; it was a distribution event managed by Harry Chapin Food Bank. Irma wasn't sure what drew her in, but her heart said to join the line. "I was just walking, thinking about everything I had to figure out, and then I saw the food bank," Irma shared. "Something inside me said, 'Go. This is where you need to be.'"

That moment changed everything. She received food that day, but also kindness, compassion and a sense of belonging. It was the support and extended family she needed to move forward.

Even though Irma's financial strains subsided, her story didn't end there. Inspired by the generosity she experienced, Irma made a decision to help those who helped her. Instead of receiving help, she would give it!

Today, years later, she is still a regular volunteer for Harry Chapin Food Bank, helping to organize lines, register neighbors and offer compassion for those in need of support.

"I think seeing this was a sign that God was telling me to get out here and help these people," Irma said.

Her journey is a powerful reminder that we all need help at some point in our lives, but if we come together, we can lift each other up. Thank you, Irma, for the compassion, strength and hope you are bringing to our community!

## Hope on (big) wheels



Publix may be known as the place where "shopping is a pleasure," but to Harry Chapin Food Bank, Publix is a treasure.

One of the grocer's latest gifts to Harry Chapin Food Bank was a \$100,000 grant from Publix Super Markets Charities for a new dual-axle Peterbilt refrigerated truck. The additional vehicle allows the food bank to transport even more nutritious food, including fresh produce and dairy products, to families across Southwest Florida.

Publix also recently awarded a grant to purchase a new refrigerated van for Grace Place for Children and Families, an agency partner based in Collier County.

The van will transport fresh, nutritious food safely and efficiently to families experiencing hunger. Thank you, Publix, for your unwavering support!





# News in Brief



## Partnership brings produce garden to The Sanibel School

Harry Chapin Food Bank received a \$50,000 grant from the Sanctuary Golf Club Foundation to design and build a produce garden at The Sanibel School to help educate students about the food cycle.



## Able Academy brings smiles, support to Harry Chapin Food Bank

Every week, a group of 10-14 students from Able Academy volunteer at the food bank's Collier County Center, sorting and packing food while learning important life skills.

## Harry Chapin Food Bank sees spike in food distributions

The food bank's annual Impact Report noted a 10.6% increase in food distributions over the prior year, equating to an additional 3 million meals served to neighbors across Southwest Florida.



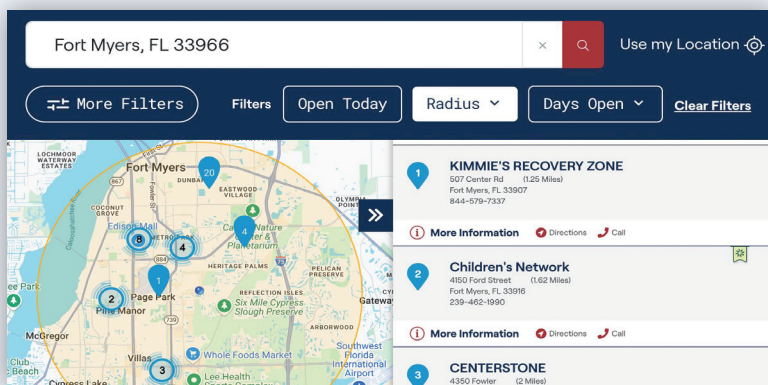
WINK exclusive on the state of hunger.



## Winning on the field and in the community

Spring training is over, but the impact left by the Boston Red Sox and Minnesota Twins will continue in our community throughout the baseball season.

- Twins: Food bank volunteers took over concession stands at Hammond Stadium for six home games, delivering burgers, brats and big smiles to baseball fans in exchange for donations to fuel our vision of ending hunger.
- Red Sox: More than 20 players, coaches and staff dedicated time during their busy schedules to sort and package food at our Fort Myers Distribution Center.



## A new and improved food finder

Thanks to the support of the Thierer Family Foundation, the food bank launched the Foundation's Vivory Food Locator, a new interactive webpage that allows anyone with internet access or cell service to quickly connect with agency partners serving their neighborhood.

[HarryChapinFoodBank.org/food-locator](http://HarryChapinFoodBank.org/food-locator)



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