



food *for*
thought

Wichita Falls Area Food Bank *Winter 2022*

*You Give Hope to
Older Adults*

Dear Friend



Kara Nickens, *CEO*

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The last two years have been challenging for all of us. The Wichita Falls Area Food Bank experienced a record number of people accessing our services and pounds of food we distributed.

Our staff and volunteers have been incredibly resilient in their resolve to serve others but **we could not have the impact we do without you!**

The Wichita Falls Area Food Bank was started in January of 1982 by a group of concerned citizens — just like you. They started collecting food out of a borrowed warehouse before moving to our current location on Midwestern Parkway.

It's amazing to see how much we have grown as an organization over the last 40 years and the impact we have made in our community. In 1993, the food bank distributed 1.4 million pounds of food, in 2021, the amount grew to 4.4 million pounds.

We expect to see the after effects of the pandemic for the foreseeable future. Many people who were struggling prior to the pandemic continue to need assistance, and there are many people who are facing hunger for the first time.

Though our current facility is landlocked, we are looking at growth options because the need for food in our communities continue to grow.

I thank you for your support over the years and hope that you will continue this journey with us as we strive for hunger free communities! Without your valued support we would not have the resources to ensure people in need have access to food.

Gratefully,

Kara Nickens
CEO



Thank You for 40 Years of Support!

A short history of the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank might read something like, “In the early 1980s volunteers for organizations serving the poor in Wichita Falls wanted to centralize food procurement for hunger relief,” but our story has always been more than that.

We were built on the hard work and dedication of just a few volunteers, in a borrowed warehouse, distributing food to just three North Texas Counties.

You've Fed Local North Texans In Need

These volunteers, coupled with support from the Community Action Corporation, created the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank in January of 1982, which at the time was only the sixth food bank in Texas!

In just over one year we were moving to our current location at 1230 Midwestern Pkwy, sponsored by the University Kiwanis Club.

With our roots planted we could focus on growing our operations to feed even more communities in North Texas. We had several expansions to our warehouse in the years 1995, 2000, and 2010, as we increased our service area from three counties to 12. With this growth, we were also able to add new services including Nutrition Education, Child Hunger services, and a Mobile Pantry.

Our vision is hunger-free communities, and with supporters like you, no goal is insurmountable. As we look forward to another 40 years, we know our community will take care of its own.



Rusty Celebrates History with the Food Bank

Rusty Williams was one of just a handful of employees when he first began his journey with the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank — and when he discovered for himself the critical care the Food Bank provides for the community.

After starting his first tenure with the Food Bank in 1989, Rusty rose through the ranks to become warehouse manager. When an electrical fire damaged his family's home in Munday, Texas, the Food Bank was there to help.

“The Food Bank helped us with food and had gathered a little money for us to get by until we could find another place to stay,” he recalls.

Rusty loved his job, but eventually left the Food Bank to take a job elsewhere. Then, in 2009, his love for the Food Bank brought him back. After serving in various positions, Rusty was promoted again, first to warehouse manager and then to his current position as operations director.

“I have such love for the people who work here and for what the Food Bank does for people in need,” he says.

We are so grateful for the passion Rusty pours into his work each day, and for all the people – including you – who join together to fight hunger in our community!

You're Bolstering *Shannon's Health*

Shannon is working hard to get back on her feet after a couple of especially challenging years, and she's thanking you for giving her the boost she needs to make it happen.

We met Shannon, 54, on a recent visit to Grace Ministries Food Pantry, a Food Bank Partner Agency. She says she started coming to the food pantry after she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer and had to stop working.

"Without Grace Ministries, I wouldn't know what to do," she says.

Shannon's husband passed away in 2018, and she has lived alone ever since, managing all her cancer treatment on her own and paying her medical bills. She's still waiting for survivor's benefits and doesn't qualify for SNAP.

The cancer treatments Shannon underwent put a big strain on her body and she says she's just beginning to get back on track physically.

"There are no words to express my gratitude."

Good nutrition has been one of the cornerstones of Shannon's recovery. Thanks to your generosity, she can stock up on enough healthy food to last her an entire month during one visit to the food pantry.

Shannon pauses to thank you for the groceries she receives from Grace Ministries Food Pantry.



Your generosity has even inspired Shannon to give back in her community when she is feeling well enough.

"Through this time, I hope to become healthy enough to pay it forward," Shannon says.

Shannon especially wanted to share her appreciation for you and the food you generously help provide.

"There are no words to express my gratitude," she says. "You've been such a blessing for me and for other people in my position."

10 years of Empty Bowls

It's hard to believe that it has been 10 years since Paula Perkins and Leslie Schaffner brought Empty Bowls to Wichita Falls. With every year the event has changed but has remained steadfast with the goal of filling empty bowls in our community.

With the uncertainty of the Covid-19 pandemic and the extensive planning involved, we decided to take Empty Bowls virtual for its 10th anniversary from November 26 to December 9. We were unsure about how we could translate a soup tasting event to an all-virtual event, but with supporters like you we shouldn't have worried at all! With a collective \$9,524 made in bowl sales alone and over \$40,000 from our sponsors, we are elated to say that Empty Bowls 2021 was a resounding success!

We want to thank our sponsors, artists, volunteers, restaurants, supporters, and YOU for helping us ring in 10 YEARS of Empty Bowls. We can't wait to see what 2022 will bring!



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