



food *for*
thought

Wichita Falls Area Food Bank *Holidays 2020*

*You're Giving
Hope This
Holiday Season!*



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Dear Friend

What a year it's been. There have been so many changes in our lives and communities. We have new catch phrases, like social distancing and self-isolating. Face coverings have become our new normal. The list goes on and on. But one thing that hasn't changed is the issue of hunger.

During the pandemic, people have lost jobs, become sick, self-isolated while awaiting test results, and provided extra meals for kids when they were out of school.

We've seen a dramatic increase in the number of people in need of food. During the summer, we peaked at 3,400 bags per week for our *PowerPak 4 Kids* Backpack Program. Pre-pandemic, we distributed about 1,000 per week. Some months our food distribution numbers doubled compared to the previous year.

These last months have been stressful and humbling. Our team stayed resilient and worked many long days, evenings and weekends – without complaint. We have many heroes at the Food Bank, some are on the frontline delivering food, others are working in the warehouse or in the front office, but all have contributed greatly during this pandemic.

There is another hero in this fight to end hunger: **YOU!** YOU stepped up to ensure we had the food and funds we needed to meet the need in our community. YOU showed up to volunteer. YOU showered our team with your words of gratitude. Whether you donate money or food, volunteer or advocate on our behalf, THANK YOU for your support!

Let's take the time to celebrate all of our blessings this holiday season. We may not be able to physically gather the way we're used to, but we can certainly be together in spirit. Difficult times such as these often remind us of how precious and fleeting time with loved ones can be.

I wish you all a blessed and joyful holiday season and a safe and healthy 2021!

Gratefully,
Kara
Kara Nickens
CEO

You Ease Burdens for Local Family

Patty and her family have faced hurdle after hurdle over the past few years, but your generosity shines as a beacon of hope in the midst of their darkest days.

We met Patty as she picked up groceries on her first visit to the North Texas Food Pantry, a partner agency of the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank.

Patty shares that she was a certified nursing assistant before suffering a heart attack many years ago. Since then, her only income was Social Security disability assistance while her husband, Clarence, worked to support the family.

"You don't realize how much this helps."

But recently, Clarence fell on the job and hurt his back. He hasn't been able to work ever since, and his unemployment benefits are about to run out. Patty says she cares for her 26-year-old son, who is on the Autism spectrum, and also her middle brother who has a traumatic brain injury. Her oldest brother, Donnie, is currently in hospice care.



Patty is all smiles while picking up groceries from the North Texas Food Pantry, a partner agency of the Food Bank.

"The past few years have been tough," she says, tears rolling down her face.

On top of all of this, the sewer line recently ruptured under the family's house. Thankfully, they have help to make the repairs, but Patty and her husband will need to pay for parts. That's why she sought out the food pantry.

"You don't realize how much this helps," Patty says, with sincere gratitude for the food you've provided for her family.



Women Give Back

women who currently meet each Thursday to put together PowerPak 4 Kids bags for local children in need.

Each bag is packed with nutritious, easy-to-prepare food so kids don't have to skip meals on weekends when free or reduced-price school meals aren't available.

Isabella says that while the group's husbands are in pilot training, the wives collectively pack around 500 bags each week. During the COVID-19 pandemic, more bags than ever have been distributed to help offset the increased need for food among children in our community.

The group has been in existence for around 10 years, Isabella says, and though they're only living in the area for a short time, they set out to make a positive impact on the community that welcomes them.

When their husbands finish training and their families move on, another group of spouses will replace them.

Thank you to this amazing group of women for your ongoing partnership and for the critical role you play in hunger relief throughout our community.

"It's nice to give something back."

There are many ways to spend a few hours of extra time, but several Air Force spouses have made it their mission not to waste a moment as they give back to the Wichita Falls community during their stay here.

"It's nice to give something back," says Isabella Makelaar, one of five