



**food** *for*  
**thought**

**Wichita Falls Area Food Bank**

*Winter 2024*

*You Give Hope to  
Older Adults*

# Dear Friend



**David O'Neil, CEO**

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Dear Friend,

Have you ever been hungry?

Hunger is defined as “a feeling of discomfort or weakness caused by the lack of food, coupled with the desire to eat”. Hunger for many in our communities is a far too often occurrence. Those neighbors needing assistance from the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank and our 92 community partners continued to rise in 2023.

To put that in perspective, our 12-county service area has one of the highest food insecurity rates in the state at 15.4% compared to 13.7% in Texas and 12.8% in the United States. Additionally, the demand for food increased at our 9 Mobile Food Pantries serving over 32% more families in 2023.

Food inflation (up 17% year over year), decreases in government support, and increasing housing costs have made it even more difficult for hard-working, employed individuals to feed themselves, their children, and their families. Tough choices are being made between purchasing food, paying rent, utilities, and even filling prescriptions.

The good news is we have you! Your continued partnership and donations are as critical today as any other time of the year as hunger is a routine occurrence for many. With your support, we can better serve our neighbor's immediate needs, nourish their lives, while providing the opportunity to succeed.

Blessings!

David O'Neil  
CEO



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Your support helps Virginia manage her health .

## Virginia Appreciates *Your Support*

For our older neighbors like Virginia, your support is a true beacon of hope even in hard times.

Virginia, 71, is a beloved Jacksboro neighbor who knows the importance of nutrition and well-being. In her career, she worked for a home health company. Now retired, she enjoys fishing and spending time outside.

Virginia relies on a fixed income as well as SNAP assistance to make ends meet in retirement. “Rent goes up and it’s hard to sustain a comfortable living,” she says.

***“Thank you very much — this helps me so much with my health.”***

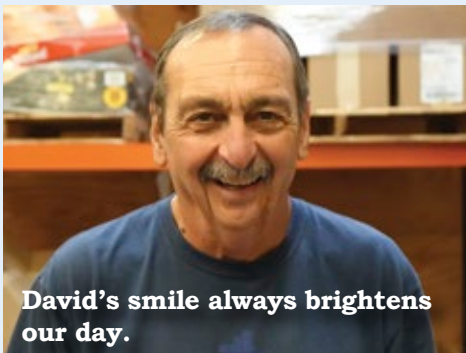
To stay healthy and manage her high blood pressure, Virginia tries to ensure her diet is full of nutritious produce and proteins. Your support means these healthy ingredients are available at the Jacksboro Community Food Pantry, an agency partner of the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank.



With every visit to the pantry, Virginia picks up enough food to last up to three weeks. Lunch meat, pork, and beans are her favorite items to bring home.

“Thank you very much—this helps so much with my health,” she says gratefully to partners like you. Thank you for standing with us to ensure that food access is available for anyone experiencing food insecurity in our Wichita Falls community!

## David is Our Volunteer of the Quarter!



**David's smile always brightens our day.**

Texas became David’s chosen home after he retired from the Navy in 1979. From then until 2018, he worked hard at his post-military career, and also spent time ensuring his community was cared for.

David’s volunteer history is extensive, from hospitals to the

Lions Club International, which provides vision screenings for children.

Food access in the Wichita Falls Area is an important mission for David, too. That’s why he donates time in our warehouse helping to sort, pack, and distribute nutritious food for our neighbors. His support is helping to ensure that healthy meals are available all year round.

Volunteerism is a practice that David learned from his father. “My father always told me to volunteer because he did,” he says. “The goal is to help someone else.”

Through his dedication, David is truly leading by example for his two adult daughters and five grandchildren.

To anyone who’s considering volunteering, David says, “I would invite people to come volunteer with me...it lets [people] know that there’s someone here to help.”

Thank you, David, for sharing your time to provide health and hope in our shared communities!



**Follow the QR code to learn even more about David's service.**

# You Make a Difference for Kathy Jo

Cousins Kathy Jo and Jennifer enjoy caring for all kinds of animals, especially Kathy Jo's three dogs.

Jennifer has been a real emotional support for Kathy Jo in the past five years, ever since Kathy Jo lost her husband. "He was a wonderful man," Kathy Jo says lovingly.

***"From the grace of God and my cousin Jennifer, she told me about this place"***

While healing from the heartbreaking loss of her spouse, Kathy Jo suddenly had to worry about how to put food on the table, too. The indescribable grief and stress of this time triggered seizures and other repercussions from her past traumatic brain injury,



making everything even harder to manage.

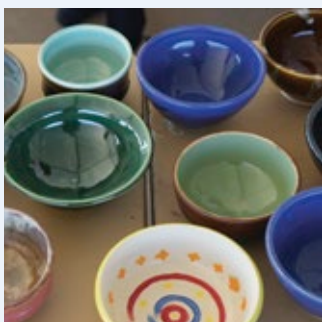
Thankfully, friends like you have been there to offer a beacon of hope. Your support means Kathy Jo can come with Jennifer to the Colonial Church Food Pantry, a partner agency of the Wichita Falls Area Food Bank.

"From the grace of God and my cousin Jennifer, she told me

about this place," Kathy Jo says.

At the pantry, Kathy Jo can pick up a variety of healthy food, like the vegetables she loves. But the best part, she says, is the volunteers who always share faith, prayer, and support.

Thank you for sharing your kind generosity with our neighbors like Kathy Jo!



## Empty Bowls 2023

At this year's Empty Bowl event, we were able to raise over \$70,000 to help fill empty bowls for our neighbors facing hunger!

Local artists, university students, restaurants, culinary program

participants and even a local winery all came together to provide delicious soups served in hand-crafted bowls, as well as drinks and desserts, for the event.

We would like to thank our community for sharing so much generosity and support. We look forward to filling empty bowls with hope and nourishment again next year!



## Welcome, Andrew Wolf

A warm welcome to our new Grant Development Manager, Andrew Wolf! Andrew has been active in our community as a dedicated volunteer for many years.

Downtown Wichita Falls Development and the local Big

Brothers Big Sisters are just two nonprofits who have seen Andrew's volunteer impact. Andrew says, "this position was a great opportunity to...create an impact for my hometown area."

Since joining WFAFB, Andrew has proven to be a valuable team member. We're excited to add Andrew to our dedicated and passionate team that serves our neighbors in 12 North Texas counties.