“Thanksgiving, Christmas—you want them to be special, especially for the kids,” says Zarah, a single mom who picks up food assistance in Tucson. “But holidays are all about food, you know? Sharing a big meal, having dessert. So it’s hard when you don’t have it.”

Your generous support has helped us through another holiday season—the most difficult time of the year for many families facing food insecurity. At our Tucson distribution alone, volunteers served over 1,500 households in the days before Thanksgiving.

“We’re just glad to have a few things,” says Danielle, who was picking up food with her mother, Martha. “We’re having a simple meal this year, but we’re having it together.”

John, who was picking up food to share with his wife and two kids, was glad to see fresh produce in the mix. “That feels like people care, you know? Like people know we’re hurting right now and they want us to have good stuff. That means a lot.”
Dear Friends & Neighbors,

As I complete my eighth year of service at the Community Food Bank, I have come to realize that it’s time for me to make a change in my public service life. I will be leaving the food bank to return to my roots in southern Arizona’s environmental conservation movement with the Tucson Audubon Society.

I can’t begin to tell you how much my service at the Community Food Bank has meant to me, and how much your support has changed our community for the better. You have taught me so much and I feel so enriched by you, grateful for you, and indebted to you.

Please know that I fully trust our Board of Directors to work collaboratively on the selection of your next CEO, and what will undoubtedly be an amazing next chapter of mission accomplishments for the Community Food Bank.

I am so proud of what we’ve accomplished together in the last eight years. All of you, together, are a collective force for good in our community, and I can’t wait to see what you do next. Thank you for allowing me to serve with you for so many incredible years.

With tremendous gratitude & hope for the future,

Michael McDonald
CEO & President
In his eight years with the Community Food Bank, Michael has overseen tremendous growth of the organization, the launch of many new programs, a 4 million dollar renovation of our main facility, and operations throughout the pandemic.

Our microloan program, which offers low-interest accessible loans to local food entrepreneurs and businesses that align with the food bank’s mission, is just one of the innovative programs launched under Michael’s tenure.

Feeding America, the national network of food banks, recognized the Community Food Bank as Food Bank of the Year in 2018. As our Board of Directors notes, this recognition was “in no small part because of Michael’s courageous and innovative leadership.” 🌿
As food prices rise and supply chain issues continue, local food systems are more important than ever. And with your support, they’re thriving!

Our Santa Cruz River Farmers’ Market continues to support local growers while bringing local, seasonal produce to our community.

And for shoppers paying with public assistance benefits, the Double Up SNAP program means twice the fresh food at the same price.

“I can spend $20 on vegetables and get another $20 worth for free,” says Shannon, a farmers’ market customer who supplements her family’s grocery budget with WIC vouchers. “That’s unheard of. This much fresh produce would never be in our regular budget.”

Your gifts are providing local fruits and veggies to local kids and families, and supporting our local economy and local growers. Thank you!

“I would never be able to afford food like this at the store.”

Farmers’ markets make fresh food accessible—thanks to you!

Visit the Santa Cruz River Farmers’ Market! Every Thursday morning from 8-10am at 165 S. Linda Ave. Drive through or walk up!

70 local farmers & small-scale growers are supported by market sales

55% of our farmers’ market sales are made with public assistance benefits like SNAP
Your gifts are changing lives at Caridad Community Kitchen

_Culinary training is back on the menu!

After a long hiatus due to the pandemic, our culinary training program at Caridad Community Kitchen is back, with a new class of students set to start learning in January.

Caridad’s 10-week program is designed for low-income and unemployed community members who face barriers to employment to learn kitchen skills, gain confidence, and prepare for careers in the culinary industry.

And they do it all while preparing meals for the hungry!

Caridad’s culinary training program began in 2011, and Caridad graduates are now working in restaurants, hotels, hospitals, and nonprofits across southern Arizona.

“It really can be life-changing for students,” says Megan Black, Community Programs Manager at Caridad Community Kitchen. “We try to set students up for successful careers, but also for them to meet new people, build their confidence, and try new things.”

Tasty meals for our community and life-changing experiences in the kitchen: your gifts are making it happen! 🍳

Your generosity today builds a healthy, hunger-free tomorrow.

Planned giving is a way for you to integrate your personal, financial, and estate planning by making lifetime or testamentary charitable gifts.

LEARN MORE Visit plannedgiving.communityfoodbank.org or call Sio Castillo at (520) 882-3308
“I thought it would be good for kids to know what they’re eating and where it comes from.”

**Partner Spotlight: The Native American Advancement Foundation**

For Addy, teaching kids in the GuVo district of the Tohono O’odham Nation about growing food is about more than just having something fresh to eat. “It’s about investing in long-term food sovereignty,” says Addy, “and reasserting our traditional food systems, our culture, and our language.”

Addy is the Garden Coordinator with the Native American Advancement Foundation (NAAF), an organization working in the rural GuVo district to improve education, health and wellness, and food sustainability. Today, local kids are harvesting massive sunflowers and sharing their protein-rich seeds.

With your support, grant funds have allowed the NAAF to build Ruth’s Garden, a community space named for an honored elder, where the community comes together to grow foundational Tohono O’odham foods.

“It has really kicked off energy in the community for growing and cooking and working together to be healthier.”

“My favorite thing is evening time in the garden,” says Addy. “The way the sun sets on the plants, and the way it all smells. You look forward to tomorrow. To the future you’re growing.”

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**A Note of Thanks**

“I want to thank you. I’ve used the Food Bank plenty of times as I’m disabled and on a very fixed income. Those that donate have changed my life. I remember one time at the Food Bank I got milk, eggs and cheese. Which is a rarity. I cried in appreciation. Please continue to donate when you can. You won’t believe how blessed you can make one feel by helping out.”

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