



COMMUNITY
FOOD BANK
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

NOURISHING NEWS

MAY
2023



School Pantries Flourish Summer Brings a Challenge

“Vegetables?” “Please.” “There’s lettuce and bread up ahead.” “Thank you.”

And so the conversation goes, repeatedly, with parents driving through the monthly school pantry in the parking lot of Prince Elementary School. Volunteers give out items from peanut butter to pasta to fresh vegetables. School pantries are a popular way for busy parents to get food when they drop off their children at school.

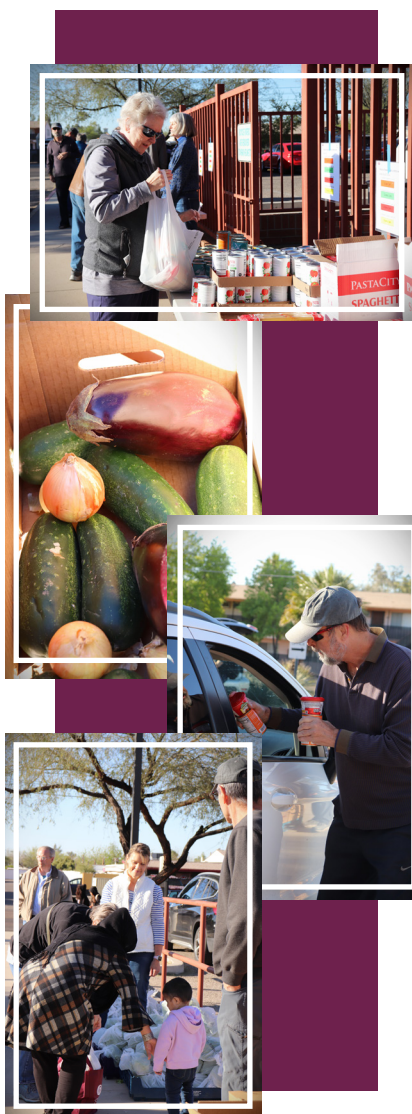
But as the school year ends, the rhythm of the school pantry is about to be interrupted. Of the 33 school pantries who partner with the Community Food Bank, about one third will stay open during the summer. Several school districts will offer free breakfast and lunch at their cafeterias during certain hours.

And, because of your support, the Community Food Bank will again make summer breakfasts, snacks, and weekend packs available at several public libraries and some community centers.



Summer is the most vulnerable time for families facing food insecurity as they rely heavily on free school meals to keep their kids fed during the school day. We are working hard to help families get food when they need it. Community support makes these options possible.

Linda Kraemer, *Family Health and Advocacy Manager*



¡Ahora disponible en español! communityfoodbank.org/newsletters

Making It Happen: The Important Work of Volunteers



Whether they're loading food into a grocery cart, pulling weeds in the garden, or putting together meals at Caridad Community Kitchen, volunteers help the Community Food Bank run. Last year they volunteered nearly 100,000 invaluable hours in all five counties the Community Food Bank serves. **Meet a few of these wonderful people who show up to help:**



Dvora volunteers three mornings a week at our Tucson warehouse – arriving at 5:15am! She gets carts ready, bags bread, and checks for supplies, all before we open at 8am. “Whatever needs to be done...it feels good to work and help!” says Dvora. “The reward of gratitude from clients is amazing.” Dvora was just recognized at the 20th Annual Governor’s Volunteer Service Awards.



Chloe, a University of Arizona senior, volunteers as part of an internship at Nuestra Tierra Learning Garden, feeding chickens, pulling weeds, and doing whatever is needed. “It’s a really welcoming space,” she says. “Everyone knows each other. I’ve never seen a garden grow this well in this area.”



Russell started volunteering after reading about food insecurity in 2020. He now takes regular shifts at Caridad Community Kitchen. “I was looking for something to do after the pandemic. I love keeping active and moving. This is the perfect place to (make) 500 sandwiches.”



Juanita brings her energy and positive attitude to our Nogales Resource Center twice a week. She helps in the pantry and sorts rescued product from grocery stores. She started volunteering in 2019.



Ten years ago **Janet** started as a greeter, volunteering at our Green Valley Resource Center. She’s still helping out every Tuesday. “This is part of my life,” she says. “I know everyone by name.” She helps people visiting the Food Bank get what they need and choose the foods their families will eat.



You don’t have to be a regular volunteer to help! In April, five members of the **Arizona Air National Guard** dropped in to distribute food in our Tucson pantry. Any amount of volunteer hours helps in our work.



Many of our volunteers are winter visitors. The summer months present a challenge as they head back home for the summer or go on vacation. Consider becoming a volunteer yourself this summer!

Visit volunteer.communityfoodbank.org to see available opportunities or email us at volunteer@communityfoodbank.org.

Invite a friend or family member to sign up also!
Teens 16 and over are welcome.



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We head into the challenges of summer even more grateful for your support. Demand has increased 30% at the Community Food Bank these last few months. High food and gas prices continue to have an impact. And we know summer can be a challenge for parents of children who can't access the free and reduced school lunch and breakfasts that are part of the school year.

Yet we have so much to be thankful for! On April 4th, you donated nearly **\$140,000 in just one day** to the Community Food Bank for Arizona Gives Day. Your continued support means we could move forward in April with supplying milk and eggs to supplement the food we distribute for families across Southern Arizona.

This spring we also honored the fabulous people who volunteer for the Community Food Bank, and make our work possible. It's difficult to thank our volunteers enough for all the work they do – **98,634 hours** last year alone!

If you are here for the summer and have some extra time, please consider joining us as a volunteer for just one day... or even more! Email us at volunteer@communityfoodbank.org.

Thank you!

Malea Chavez, CEO
Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona



GuVo Growth



Work is ongoing in the remote GuVo District on the western side of the Tohono O'odham Nation bordering Sonora, Mexico. A new kitchen in the community feasthouse is nearly up and operating. Fields have been cleared for a return to community farming as our partner, the Native American Advancement Foundation, continues to expand their community-based work in education and food sovereignty. This project is funded by the Community Food Bank and Feeding America. The GuVo district is home to four communities on the Tohono O'odham Nation.

What's the Buzz?

Research Finds Rich Diversity of Bees at Las Milpitas

With your support, the Community Food Bank has operated Las Milpitas Community Farm for the last 12 years. The six acres of land along the Santa Cruz River offers free garden plots for people to learn to grow their own fruits and vegetables.

New research finds the farm is also home to a rich variety of resident bees! "It's fantastic," says UA graduate and researcher Tanner Bland. "We've found ten different species we haven't found anywhere else."

The last five years of research have continually found new bee species at the farm, even rare native bees.

What brings them to the farm? The study credits sustainable organic farming, responsibly managed land with a high density of native plants, and the farm's proximity to the Santa Cruz River Park.

Bland will continue researching as part of the Tucson Bee Collaborative, happy to have what he calls a "unique piece of habitat" to study urban pollinators. The work is funded by the University of Arizona, Pima Community College, the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, and grants from the United States Geological Survey.

Visit Las Milpitas Community Farm at 2405 S Cottonwood Lane for a Saturday morning workday from 8am – noon. Email Grace at gsaavedra@communityfoodbank.org if interested.



*Bees come for a respite—
and stay permanently— at
Las Milpitas Community Farm.*

Sowing Remedies

A week-long social justice program for high school students

Two groups of local high school students used their Spring Break to get their hands dirty making compost and learning about food justice. It was all part of the Sowing Remedies program, held for the second year by the Community Organizing team at the Community Food Bank.

Community Organizing Manager Ashley Edgette says it “was created to build a future of food justice for our communities from the knowledge and power of youth” with the end goal of not only educating students but hoping they “grow new solutions” for our food system.

What Did They Learn?

At Las Milpitas Community Farm they learned how growing your own food fights food insecurity, then as a team, they started shoveling and made a mountain-sized heap of compost! At Nuestra Tierra Garden, they took turns harvesting vegetables, handling worms in the compost, and making their own self-watering containers.

This year, the program brought back past participants from the Sowing Remedies program to act as student teachers. Thomas Loya was in the Sowing Remedies program during their senior year of high school last year, where they found a passion:

...learning about our community's food, the land we live on, and connecting with people.



UPCOMING
EVENTS

canstruction JUNE 17 - 24



CAN you believe it? When architecture and engineering teams take over, canned food can become a cactus, Gila Monster, rattlesnake and more! We're excited to see what's built at this year's Canstruction, taking place at Park Place Mall from June 17-24. The sculptures are amazing, and even better, all of the canned food is donated to the Community Food Bank when the competition is over.

SAVE
THE
DATE!

Hunger
Walk 2023

SEPTEMBER 9, 2023



*Hands-on work:
learning how to
make compost and
why it's valuable.*



*Worms?
They can do
great things
for the soil.*



*A self-watering container gets
water to the roots of the plant,
cutting down on evaporation
and conserving water.*



Hot Diggity Dog-

This hike was a real wiener.

The picture alone brings a smile, but the HotDog Hundred added a lot more than humor to our community. Organized by local artist Joe Pagac, 20 hikers in hot dog suits walked 100 miles through the mountains of Tucson in rain and snow for a week in March. They raised \$25,000 for the Community Food Bank!

Pagac tells us he was inspired by a book which highlighted the benefit of doing things for others. He's planning another fundraising hike for next year!

Celebrating Our Connections



Sonoran winter white wheat is flourishing in the community garden at our Green Valley Resource Center. It's a wheat that has been grown in our area since the 1600s. Partner Development Supervisor Santos Yescas reminds us this crop is celebrated on May 15th – traditionally the feast day of San Ysidro Labrador, patron saint of farmers.

The wheat is ceremonially harvested in Mexico, Spain, the Philippines and Tucson. It's prepared in the traditional pozole de trigo. When these wheat berries ripen in Green Valley, they'll be offered to clients for use in salads and soup, along with the seeds, for anyone interested in growing this heirloom wheat.



**COMMUNITY
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OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

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ASSOCIATION
OF ARIZONA
FOOD BANKS

The Community Food Bank receives most of its funding from people like you. Supportive public funding includes: City of Tucson, Pima County, USDA, Community Development Block Grants and Community Service Block Grants/Pima County and City of Tucson; Arizona Department of Economic Security/Social Services Block Grant and Arizona Department of Health Services. Community Food Bank programs provide services to eligible participants without regard to race, color, creed, religion, handicap, age, national origin, sexual orientation, political beliefs or gender.