



NOURISHING NEWS



COMMUNITY FOOD BANK
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

AUGUST 2025

GARDENS, GRADS, AND MORE GOOD NEWS!

Down to Earth: A Garden Volunteer Spotlight

As a child, Matt McCullagh hated gardening. “My father has been an avid gardener my whole life and used to make us help him in the garden every weekend, whether we wanted to or not,” he recalls.

Let’s just say things have changed. A couple years ago, Matt’s company, Finley Distributing, raised some money for the Community Food Bank during a food drive and stopped by our Tucson resource center to drop off a check.

“They gave us a tour of the facilities. They took us through the warehouse” but when the Nuestra Tierra Community Garden was mentioned Matt’s ears perked up. “I said, wait, you’ve got a garden?” And Matt’s been volunteering there ever since.



MATT (CENTER) WITH MEMBERS
OF THE FINLEY VOLUNTEER TEAM



Depending on the size of the crew he brings with him, Matt’s typical day includes making the “planet’s best” potting soil, planting, collecting seeds, and sometimes, if the kids get up early enough, helping in the worm farm. And volunteering with Matt comes with a unique perk, his “famous” homemade breakfast burritos! To get them out early on Saturday mornings, “I’ve got to bribe them with something,” he jokes.

But whether it’s the burritos, or simply the rewarding feeling of helping others, Matt’s volunteer group has grown, from just he and his daughter, to a volunteer crew of sometimes up to twenty of his co-workers. **“It’s a lot of hard work, but it feels really good and makes an impact, so we keep signing up.”**



To take a tour or volunteer at our Nuestra Tierra garden, email garden@communityfoodbank.org.

¡Ahora disponible en español!
communityfoodbank.org/newsletters



My time as Interim CEO here at the Community Food Bank (CFB) has not been without its challenges. From rising food costs, to increased food insecurity, to federal cuts to food assistance programs like SNAP, it seems there's rarely a week without a new challenge.

But despite the ongoing challenges, our commitment to fighting hunger in Southern Arizona hasn't wavered—and fortunately, we've seen a few wins along the way as well.

For example, we're projecting an increased community need of nearly 15% this coming year, but thanks to your incredible support we will be able to meet that challenge and feed nearly 200,000 neighbors.

My tenure as interim CEO however is coming to a close, and I'm optimistic about what's next. Don't worry, I'm not going far. I'm excited to return to my full-time role as Chief Development Officer here at CFB.

I'm even more excited to introduce our new CEO, Natalie Jayroe. Natalie comes to us from the Second Harvest Food Bank of Greater New Orleans and has decades of experience in the food banking industry. That experience will certainly help us through these uncertain times.

In a short Q&A she recently did with us, Natalie says, **“The most innovative food banks are thinking through how to best serve in this new reality. It will take all our stake holders—the public sector, the for-profit supporters, and individuals and foundations who volunteer and donate—to come together, but I have absolute trust that we will find solutions, and I look forward to engaging in the work again.”**

Read more about Natalie and her plans for supporting our mission of a healthy, hunger-free tomorrow at communityfoodbank.org/meet-natalie.

Sio Castillo

Sio Castillo, Interim Chief Executive Officer
Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona

Summer Stock Up: Turned up to 11!

Southern Arizona, you're outta sight!

Our goal for this year's Summer Stock Up was to raise \$50,000 to support our Child Nutrition programs – helping provide summer nutrition kits and stock school pantries for the upcoming year.

But the universe had other plans, man. Thanks to the far-out energy of this beautiful community, we didn't just meet our goal – we blew past it, **raising over \$101,000!!!**

That's double the love, double the nourishment, and a whole lotta good vibes. Thank you again, Southern Arizona, for showing up, rockin' out, and proving that there is nothing groovier than helping kids.





Caridad Class 40: Knife & Life Skills

With knives sharpened and brimming with confidence, the 40th class of our Caridad Culinary Training Program is ready to make their mark in the culinary community. After ten weeks of rigorous training, our five new graduates suited up in their chef-whites and raised their spatulas high in a moving ceremony this July.

The celebration was filled with cheers, laughs, and tears, and included speeches from proud alumni, staff, and two of the program's graduates. In a tearful sendoff, program manager Chef Ismael said, **“Keep growing, keep believing in yourself, and no matter where you go next, you’ll always be part of the Caridad community.”**

“This is the first time in my life that I’ve attended a graduation – not as a guest, not watching from the sidelines, but as a graduate. This program didn’t just teach me how to cook. It reminded me that I have a future, that I am more than my past. This isn’t an end, it’s just the beginning.”

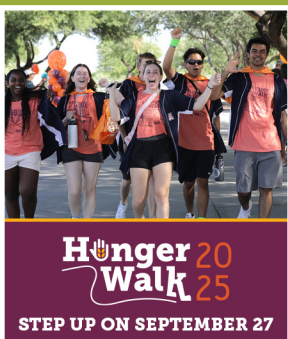
– Angel, Caridad Class 40 graduate

“The compassion and encouragement I received from my classmates and Caridad staff reminded me that I wasn’t alone. Their support carried me through and for that I’ll always be thankful. I’m beyond blessed that I got to share this experience with such a beautiful group of people.”

– Arian, Caridad Class 40 graduate

After the ceremony, lucky guests were treated to a delicious buffet-style meal with mouthwatering dishes curated by the graduates themselves. Caridad’s culinary training is designed for motivated individuals facing barriers to employment. We can’t wait to meet Class 41 this fall!

For more on this life-changing program, visit:
communityfoodbank.org/caridad-community-kitchen-culinary-training.



Ending Hunger- One Step at a Time. Hunger Walk 2025 returns on Saturday, September 27th for a fun-filled, feel-good walk with friends, families, and fellow community members fighting hunger. Whether you’re strolling through Tucson’s Kino Sports Complex (and even stepping inside our Country Club warehouse!), striding across the Historic Canoa Ranch in Green Valley, or pacing your own course as a Virtual Walker, every step helps stock shelves and fill plates.

Let’s walk the talk this September:
communityfoodbank.org/hungerwalk

**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

Building Landmarks, Fighting Hunger



Landmarks were the theme for this year's Construction Tucson: Build for Hunger, and the "Cansculptures" built by five local teams were nothing short of epic.

From the Can-thenon, a spectacular rendition of the Greek Parthenon, to a remarkable recreation of the iconic, local Tack Room Boot, it took approximately 20,000 cans to build these five awe-inspiring structures.

Thank you to Onyx Creative, The Tack Pack (a.23 studios), Lloyd Construction Company, and Tucson Electric Power for your award-worthy creations. The People's Choice Award

ultimately went to Team AZ Wildcans (Swaim Associates + DPR Construction + Bombardier) and their fantastic Canhenge remake, but everyone was a winner this year as all 20,000 cans and over \$10,000 were donated to the Community Food Bank to help us fight hunger today and construct a hunger-free tomorrow.

It takes a Citi...



In June, we shared our mission of feeding the hungry today and building a healthy, hunger-free tomorrow at Citi's Global Community Day.

In turn, three shifts of volunteers packed a whopping **38,000 meal kits** to be distributed at Community Food Bank sites across Southern Arizona!

Thanks to U.S. Hunger for providing the food and supplies, and Citi for doing the heavy lifting. Our community partners never cease to amaze!



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OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

3003 S. Country Club Rd.
Tucson, AZ 85713
(520) 622-0525
(800) 950-8681
communityfoodbank.org



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.