



NOURISHING NEWS



COMMUNITY FOOD BANK
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

OCTOBER 2025

GECKOS, HORSES, AND HOT MEALS, OH MY!

Squashing Hunger – One Trip at a Time

A long line of cars and trucks snaked through the lot on a warm, muggy morning at Picture Rocks Park, but spirits were anything but dampened. For many of our neighbors in rural communities, our mobile distributions are more than just a chance to stock up on much needed groceries. They're also a lifeline... and sometimes even a culinary adventure.

Patricia lives just two blocks away. “The people are great, very friendly,” she says with a smile. Like many, she’s felt the sting of rising costs and the distribution helps her stretch her budget and eat better. **“There are a lot of things that I’ve never bought before that they’ve had here. Nothing goes to waste.”** She’s discovered new favorites, too. **“I like squash. I was really surprised.”** Thanks to the recipe suggestions that sometimes come with the food, she’s even developed a taste for fish. “I like fish now,” she laughs.

For Meggie, a mother of three, the distribution is a safety net. Recently, she ran out of breakfast food, until she remembered the bagels tucked away in her freezer from last month’s visit. **“It’s really helpful to have the extra food on hand. We’re very grateful for everything we get.”**

But the story of Picture Rocks isn’t just about those receiving food—it’s also about those giving it out. Mark, a new volunteer, finds a purpose in the work. **“I don’t think you can work out here without understanding the need, and secondly, how grateful people are for the help.”** The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona sends trucks to 18 rural distribution sites across our 23,000-mile service area each month, from Ajo to Douglas, bringing not only food, but connection and hope.



— — — For a full list of rural distributions, visit <https://bit.ly/CFBRural> — — —

¡Ahora disponible en español!
communityfoodbank.org/newsletters



When I joined the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona (CFB) in August, I committed to spending my first 90 days listening and learning from those who have built CFB into one of the foremost food banks in the country. Two months in, I'm deeply inspired by what I've seen. From the beauty of our Las Milpitas Community Farm, to the energy of the Santa Cruz River Farmer's Market, to the dedication of our staff and volunteers at mobile distributions and resource centers, **the impact of our work is extraordinary.**

However, we must continue to adapt to meet the growing needs of our community. In the coming weeks, I'll be working with our team to identify areas for improvement and greater efficiency, ensuring we better serve Southern Arizona.

On a personal note, I was thrilled to participate in my first HungerWalk this month, virtually walking with my grandkids. It was a joyful reminder of the purpose behind our work.

Thank you for your continued support as we step up together to build a healthy, hunger-free community.



Natalie Jayroe, Chief Executive Officer
Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona

Gecko-nomics: Jennifer's Amazing Gift

Jennifer isn't just a proud supporter of the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona (CFB), she's also a client.

Earlier this year her fiancé lost his job. Though Jennifer works full-time at the local GEICO corporate office, they have been living in a local motel. "We've been struggling just like anyone else," she says. "Sometimes, things happen." She's been coming to CFB to make ends meet. **"The little bit of help we get to stretch those grocery dollars, I'm appreciative of that,"** she says.



This summer, GEICO launched a contest to award gifts to local non-profits. "I immediately thought of my experience with the Food Bank," Jennifer recalls. "You're amazing." She dove into online research, highlighting the impact of food insecurity both locally and nationally, and ended up winning the top prize: an amazing \$15,000 donation! **"I was in tears when I found out we won."**

Jennifer credits not only that research, but her personal experience with CFB for the win. "I truly personalized my presentation. There are people that are food insecure that have full-time jobs like myself and still need some help," she says. **"I'm still struggling, but if I can give back in some way, even if it's through my employer, I'll take that opportunity."**

See how your organization can help us fight hunger: communityfoodbank.org/host-a-fundraiser.



From Horse Stall... to the Heart of Amado

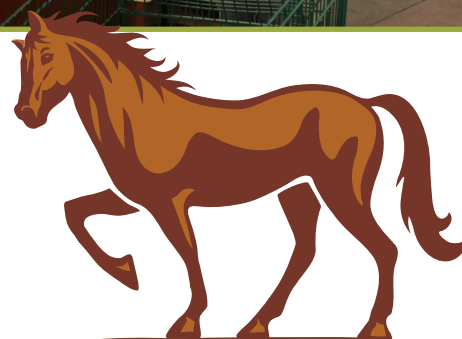
Arturo began volunteering at the Community Food Bank Amado Resource Center in 1989, when it was little more than “a horse stall.” For more than three decades, he’s been a steady presence serving neighbors up and down the I-19 corridor and as far west as Arivaca. Why travel so far? **“They feel comfortable with us,”** he says. **“That’s why.”**

But he’s more than just a friendly face. He grew up on a local ranch and has harnessed his green thumb to plant numerous fruit trees around the Resource Center. **“We have a guava plant, lemons, oranges, apples, grapes. We tell people to go out there and pick everything they want,”** he says.

Arturo is not the only familiar face to the hundreds of monthly visitors to the Resource Center. Karen began volunteering about 15 years ago and loves what she does. **“I feel like I’m doing something useful, and the people are so nice,”** she says. While she’s referring to the Resource Center’s visitors, Karen could very well be speaking about the wonderful staff and volunteers, who are seeing more new faces as the demand for food rises.

First-time visitors are all welcomed in the same warm way. “They’re apprehensive at first,” Karen says. **“But they usually leave smiling.”**

Find out more about our Amado Resource Center at communityfoodbank.org/amado-resource-center.



Season 4 Hope [November 5th–December 17th]: This holiday season, in partnership with KVOA News 4 Tucson, we will be collecting non-perishable food donations at locations throughout greater Tucson.



Holiday Harvest [November 13th, 6am–6pm]: Help us during our busiest time of the year, Thanksgiving Week, with monetary donations or non-perishable food items at Sam’s Club on 4701 N. Stone Ave.



Giving Tuesday [December 2nd]: Save the date for our biggest single day fundraiser of the year: Giving Tuesday, or as we call it, Giving FOODSday. Your donation on this day will help support our mission of a hunger-free tomorrow.



Winterhaven Festival of Lights [December 13th–27th]: A Southern Arizona holiday tradition for 70 years, festival visitors are encouraged to bring non-perishable food or a monetary donation for the Community Food Bank.


**UPCOMING
EVENTS**

Hot Meals, Warm Hearts



The Community Food Bank's Caridad Community Kitchen implemented its hot meal program less than 2 months ago, and it's quickly becoming a hit with neighbors. "I would think we probably have a 98 percent approval rate right now," said Todd Eanes, Caridad's Associate Director.

The shift from sack lunches to hot meals was a deliberate move aimed at improving both the nutrition and operational efficiency of Caridad's community meal program. "Sandwiches are just not very healthy," said Todd. **"Now we're doing really wholesome meals, with fresh vegetables."**

The kitchen's ability to rescue and repurpose food has also been a game-changer. A recent haul from the Community Food Bank included 450 pounds of potatoes and 100 pounds of grapes; ingredients that became part of a hearty meal featuring a hot entrée with mashed potatoes, fresh fruit, and bread. "On average, it's a 1200 calorie meal," Todd said. "You can live on that." That day alone, 187 meals were served.

As temperatures mercifully begin to cool across Southern Arizona, Todd estimates an increase in popularity with the program. "Now we're going into the fall and winter," he said, **"it's really going to be impactful."**

To support this amazing program, please visit communityfoodbank.org/caridad-community-kitchen.

Walk this Way

Over 1,000 HungerWalkers laced up in Tucson and Green Valley for our 16th annual HungerWalk to help fight hunger... one step at time. Walkers in Tucson were treated to a tour of both our Country Club warehouse and Nuestra Tierra Garden, while Green Valley participants strolled through the beautiful Historic Canoa Ranch.



"We couldn't have asked for a more gorgeous day," said Sio Castillo, CFB Chief Development Officer, **"and thanks to our community's participation and generosity, we're going to be able to help a lot of people."** Together, we raised more than \$125,000! We can't wait to walk again next year!



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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.