COMMUNITY FOOD BANK OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF IMPACT

NOURISHING NEWS



IN THIS ISSUE: MERGING, MUSIC, & MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

OCTOBER 2026

Moving On Up



On October 1st, the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona and Mobile Meals of Southern Arizona officially merged. While the merger is new, the connection between our two organizations is anything but. Both were born from a simple idea: when people in our community need help, our community steps up.

More than 50 years ago, a need arose for people who were homebound and dependent on special diet meals. In 1970, when government funding for those meals was discontinued, members of the medical community knew they couldn't simply let the people who depended on them go without. With support from the Pima County Medical Society Alliance (PCMSA), Mobile Meals of Tucson was born. What started with just 42 clients has grown into Mobile Meals of Southern Arizona, serving hundreds of older adults, people with disabilities, and others who depend on nutritious meals delivered to their homes.

In 2025 alone, **Mobile Meals provided 90,000 meals to 796 clients. Its 200 volunteers contributed nearly 11,000 hours** just to meal deliveries, with even more volunteers helping behind the scenes in the office and kitchen.

And the program has continued to evolve. Until 2023, Mobile Meals' special-diet and basic healthy meals were sourced from local hospitals. Today, those meals are planned and prepared in Mobile Meals' own kitchen, giving the organization even greater ability to meet the unique needs of the people it serves.

PCMSA has continued to hold Mobile Meals close to its heart and remains one of its most dedicated and loyal supporters. That long-standing partnership is a powerful reminder of what can happen when people see a need and decide to do something about it.

That same community spirit helped give rise to the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona over 50 years ago, and now bringing our organizations together creates opportunities to share resources, expertise, facilities, people, and ideas. Staff and volunteers from both organizations have already begun finding ways to work more efficiently together, and the merger will allow us to build on that progress.

Because working hard matters. But working together can help us work smarter, reach more people, and make an even greater impact. For Mobile Meals clients, the Community Food Bank's resources and expertise can help strengthen and expand an already vital program. For the Food Bank, Mobile Meals brings decades of experience in home-delivered meals and serving people whose circumstances may make accessing traditional food assistance difficult.

And ultimately, that's what this merger is about: **bringing two community solutions together to help more people live healthy, nourished lives.**



NATALIE'S NOTES







Hello Friends and Neighbors,

Fall is officially upon us! I'm certainly excited to see some cooler temperatures on the horizon, because September definitely held onto some heat!

While the early hours of HungerWalk brought us lower temperatures, they also brought plenty of humidity. But we had a great time regardless! I especially enjoyed being at the park, watching Ballet Folklorico entertain the crowd as we stretched, enjoyed some Dunkin' Donuts, and picked up our fun T-shirts. I also hope everyone liked venturing through our warehouse to see firsthand the hard work behind the scenes, including our production line and the incredible amount of food we store there and then distribute across our five-county, 23,000-square-mile service area. Every year, that work helps us reach nearly 200,000 people in our community.

Later in September, I was honored to participate in a panel discussion moderated by AZPM about *A Place at the Table*, a powerful documentary exploring food insecurity, poverty, and what it would take to end hunger in America. I speak often about the reality that so many people are facing hunger while working incredibly hard to maintain their dignity and build better lives. It's a conversation I will continue to have, because **it's important to shine a light on the challenges so many people face and help others understand the realities behind the statistics.**

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

Growing Opportunity



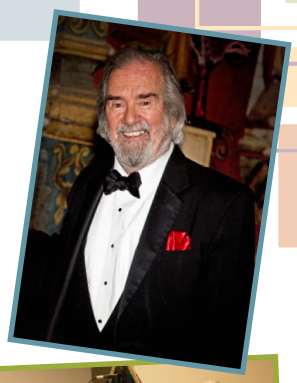
The Community Food Bank's Garden Program is proud to partner with Santa Cruz Training Programs (SCTP), a Nogales-based organization creating opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities to work, learn, and grow as independently as possible.

Through training, technical assistance, and educational resources, SCTP staff are building valuable skills in seedling propagation, nursery management, and plant production.

This partnership is helping strengthen local capacity for food-growing education and community plant production while creating new opportunities for learning, workforce development, and community engagement.

We love seeing regional partnerships like this take root. Together, we're helping cultivate resilient local food systems and healthier communities across Southern Arizona.

A Voice for Our Community







For nearly three decades, Edmund "Grayson" Hirst and the Sons of Orpheus have transformed holiday music into meaningful support for families across Southern Arizona.

Hirst's journey to Tucson began after a distinguished performing career. He attended The Juilliard School on a full scholarship and spent many years working as a professional soloist in New York City. In 1986, he accepted a teaching position at the University of Arizona, and five years later, he founded the Sons of Orpheus—The Male Choir of Tucson.

Since its founding in 1991, the choir has performed by invitation at the White House, the Vatican, and Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris. Its concert tours have also taken members throughout the British Isles and Europe. Yet some of the group's most meaningful performances have happened here at home.

For the past 27 years, the Sons of Orpheus has presented a holiday benefit concert supporting the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona. The choir generously donates all proceeds from the performances to the Food Bank. **This tradition has raised approximately $400,000 for our organization over the years.**

The annual concert welcomes audiences numbering in the thousands and features guest soloists, musicians, and community performers. For Hirst, however, the real significance of the event is how their music is able to help neighbors experiencing hunger.

"It just makes sense. It's the thing to do," Hirst said. **"Every dollar we bring in helps the Food Bank do even more for people in Southern Arizona."**

As Hirst prepares to retire as the choir's artistic director at the end of December, he hopes this Tucson holiday tradition will continue into its 28th year. His legacy demonstrates what can happen when talent, generosity, and commitment to community come together.

** The 2027 concert is scheduled for Wednesday, December 16th, 7pm at Catalina United Methodist Church, 2700 E Speedway, Tucson, AZ 85716.*

UPCOMING EVENTS



Season 4 Hope (November 2nd–December 21st): This holiday season, in partnership with KVOA News 4 Tucson, we will be collecting non-perishable food donations at locations throughout greater Tucson.



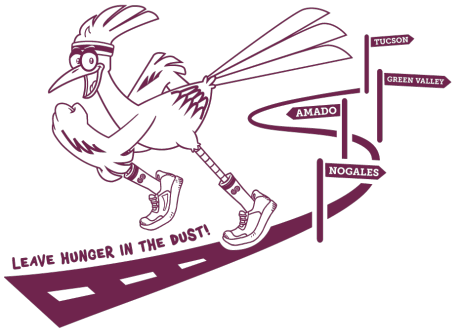
Holiday Harvest (November 12th, 6am–6pm): Help us stock up for our busiest time of the year, Thanksgiving Week, with monetary donations or by bringing non-perishable food items to Bashas' at 2000 W River Rd. communityfoodbank.org/holidayharvest



Giving Tuesday (December 1st): 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 today, tomorrow, and always.



Winterhaven Festival of Lights (December 12th–26th): A Southern Arizona holiday tradition for over 70 years, festival visitors are encouraged to bring non-perishable food or a monetary donation for the Food Bank. communityfoodbank.org/winterhaven





On September 12th, we asked our community to HELP US LEAVE HUNGER IN THE DUST... and nearly 1,000 people showed up to do just that! We laced up in Tucson and Green Valley for our 17th annual HungerWalk, coming together to fight hunger one step at a time.

Tucson participants got a behind-the-scenes look at our Country Club warehouse and strolled through our lovingly tended Nuestra Tierra Learning Garden, while Green Valley participants enjoyed the beautiful paths of Historic Canoa Ranch.

Most importantly, we took steps together toward a healthier, hunger-free Southern Arizona. And thanks to this incredible community, we crossed the **$150,000 finish line together (our fundraising goal)!** We're so grateful to everyone who joined us, supported a walker, made a donation, or cheered us on from afar. Funds raised through HungerWalk will support additional food purchases, community food distributions, child nutrition programs, and other essential resources for individuals and families across Southern Arizona.

Partners in Purpose



In late August, 76 people representing 43 partner agencies, regional food banks, the Arizona Food Bank Network, and the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) gathered for our annual USDA Partner Conference.

The conference brings our TEFAP* and CSFP** partners together to share updates, learn best practices, strengthen connections, and celebrate their shared work to reduce hunger across Southern Arizona. A highlight was hands-on training in Link2Feed, our case management and client tracking software, where partners learned tips and tricks for navigating the platform.

Several partners told us it was one of the best conferences they had attended in recent years. We were thrilled to hear they left with new knowledge, stronger connections, and an even greater appreciation for the work we accomplish together. **"This conference is such a wonderful opportunity to bring everyone together in person so they can network, learn, and grow,"** said Brianna Encinas, Partner Programs Coordinator.

COMMUNITY FOOD BANK
OF SOUTHERN ARIZONA

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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.

Food Bank of the Year

*The Emergency Food Assistance Program **Commodity Supplemental Food Program

Este boletín está disponible en español: communityfoodbank.org/newsletters