

serving HOPE

SPRING 2021

ARKANSAS
FOOD BANK



Dale Prater has faithfully served his hungry neighbors at his church's food pantry for 22 years.

Serving our Service Members

Dale has worn quite a few hats over the years ... he served in the United States Air Force for 23 years before retiring and starting a new career as a pastor. He has also given 22 years of his life to run the food pantry at Central Baptist Church in Sherwood.

While he joyfully serves everyone he meets, his heart is particularly burdened by the plight of military members. Since they are located near the Little Rock Air Force Base, they work hard to support active and retired service members who need help accessing food.

"I think of a single mom I know who lives in a housing project with her six kids. For 12 years I delivered food to her amazing family, and it was a blessing to be around and see how she raised her kids. Her oldest daughter was just discharged from the military for a bad leg injury. Every time I see someone in uniform I thank them for their service, because I know there were many years I was away from my family."

Due to certain barriers, low-income military families could be prevented from taking advantage of SNAP benefits to buy food. In order to make ends meet, these individuals

oftentimes have to rely on food pantries to feed their families. Dale works hard to make sure his pantry can meet this need – and does so with compassion.

Especially committed to the health of the clients he serves, Dale says, "I don't want to just give people cookies and snacks. The Foodbank has been very good to provide high-protein foods like peanut butter, meat and stuff like that. Food like this makes a difference in the lives of our active military and veterans who need help."

With tears in his eyes, Dale shares how grateful he is for every person who makes it possible to hand out food every week. "I just want to thank you so much because your donation changes lives. You're not only feeding people... you're coming alongside and helping our service members who have given so much to protect our country. You're supporting their families, whether you realize it or not."

The thanks belongs to friends like YOU. Every gift you make—big or small—provides food for families in need. Thank you for your ongoing support to help fight hunger in central and southern Arkansas!



Ready to Respond

What the Foodbank has been able to accomplish over the last 12 months is all thanks to the support we've received from our community – people like you.

Your generosity is the reason we've been able to feed Arkansans who are struggling to make ends meet. This year, we have plans to increase the number of mobile distributions across our 33-county service area, providing hope with a free box of food or a big bag of groceries. I wish you could see the smiles on the faces of the folks you're helping us feed ... the relief in their eyes knowing that someone does care, and that they won't go to bed hungry.

As we look ahead, our hearts are full of hope and we feel ready to respond to the challenges that come our way in 2021. With plans to provide extra support to our 419 local partner agencies and schools, expand our storage facilities to accept more product and ultimately feed more people – we are ready to provide new pathways to connect people, resources and food to reach those in need.

We know that it will take a while for people to get back on their feet, but as we help them get there, I remain grateful for the kindness and support of my fellow Arkansans. Thank you for everything you have done and will continue to do to help your hungry neighbors.

In gratitude,

Rhonda Sanders

Rhonda Sanders
CEO

“I wish you could see the smiles on the faces of the folks you're helping us feed ... the relief in their eyes knowing that someone does care, and that they won't go to bed hungry.”



In 2020, Arkansas Foodbank hosted 602 mobile distributions, compared to 51 in 2019, in order to quickly provide food to Arkansans in our region needing assistance.

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Giving Boys & Girls a **Healthy Start**



Jennifer Martisek is passionate about giving children and teens in her community opportunities to succeed. As the Director of Grant Administration at the Boys & Girls Club of El Dorado, her priority is obtaining the funds needed to make their program as strong as possible.

Their club was among the first to partner with Arkansas Foodbank and their Emergency School Pantry Program, an initiative funded by the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

What does this mean for families in El Dorado? Free emergency food boxes if they have children enrolled in a USDA children's feeding program like Free and Reduced Lunch, Summer Feeding or Afterschool program.

Jennifer says, "People were surprised as we were handing out the boxes and they made a comment that they're really happy because it's so helpful. You could see the surprise on some people's faces. I heard someone say, 'How much is it going to be?' and I told them, 'No, it's free!'"

Because many children in the community were already experiencing hunger even before the pandemic, the additional food has been especially helpful.

"It's sad because normally we would serve around 120 kids, and now we only have about 60 because of COVID restrictions. That means more kids are staying home unattended. We give our kids a full hot meal when they get here and some of them rely on that, so it's tough for them to go without."

Though the program has only been taking place for a few months, Jennifer has already seen the benefits for local children and their parents. She is thankful their club is able to give families a helping hand during these difficult times.

"Since we're able to partner with Arkansas Foodbank, it really helps kids and their parents. To allow us to give these kids food when we know some of them aren't going home to meals means so much. In this time when parents may be laid off or not making much money, it gives us a peace to be able to hand them food without them having to buy it. Just to be able to reach out to our children with your help has meant so much!"



To learn more about this grant program, visit our website arkansasfoodbank.org.

We Hope You'll Join Us at These **Upcoming Events**

APRIL 8, 2021

Arkansas Foodbank's Day of Giving

Join us on April 8 for our annual online Day of Giving. This event is a 24-hour opportunity for our community to come together and help change the lives of our hungry neighbors in central and southern Arkansas! **For more information, please visit arkansasfoodbank.org.**

MAY 7, 2021

19th Annual Empty Bowls

Please join us as we host our 19th annual Empty Bowls on May 7! Tickets are available now and can be purchased via our website. **For more information about our reimagined event, visit our website, arkansasfoodbank.org or contact Kate Snell at ksnell@arkansasfoodbank.org.**

JUNE-JULY 2021

21st Anniversary Summer Cereal Drive

The Summer Cereal Drive is back and it's bigger than ever! Did you know that 1 in 4 kids are depending on your support to provide healthy cereal this summer? You can register your team or make a personal donation at arkansasfoodbank.org. **For questions, please email Daniel Frazier at dfrazier@arkansasfoodbank.org.**

impact & **RESPONSE**

2020



We distributed 40.4 million pounds of food in 2020, a 37% increase from 2019.

i need food

In 2020, Arkansas Foodbank hosted 602 mobile food distributions across central and southern Arkansas, compared to 51 in 2019.



146,087 emergency food boxes distributed through our partner schools, agencies and mobile distributions.



We had 206,776 views on our website which is more than double what we experienced during 2019. Over 63,000 views were searching where to find food.



1,908 texts to find food through our new text messaging service.

