

# s e r v i n g HOPE

FALL 2021

The Foodbank's Backpack program ensures students in need have enough food to eat between school dismissal on Friday and when it reconvenes on Monday morning.



ARKANSAS  
FOOD BANK



## Packing Hope into the **Weekend**

Food insecurity is more than just missing meals – it describes a family's inability to provide enough food for everyone in the household to live healthy lives. When you add children to the equation, access to food becomes even more important. Research proves that by providing nutritious food to children, not only do academics improve, but emotional and behavioral improvements happen too.

As students are heading back to school this fall, they'll once again have access to meals they might have otherwise lost during the summer. But family budgets will experience new strains – like paying for school supplies or new clothes. That's why making sure these children have access to food over the weekend is still just as important.

The Foodbank's Backpack program does exactly this by ensuring students in need have enough food to eat between school dismissal on Friday and when it reconvenes on Monday morning. Backpack kits include easy-to-prepare food for students to subtly stow away in their backpacks,

and each kit comes with breakfast, lunch, and dinner, plus two snacks for Saturday and Sunday.

Each year, we ask school Backpack program coordinators to share stories with us about the impact of their program. Teresa, from England Elementary School, shared this with us:

"We recently added two kindergarten siblings to the program when their teachers noticed they had lost weight and discovered they were stuffing their pockets full of food during lunch to take home. They have a two-year-old and a brand new baby sibling in the house. Dad works a minimum wage job, and mom stays home with the little ones. All of them are excited about the food backpack."

**Thank you for your generous support.  
Because of you, we're able to ensure  
children across central and southern  
Arkansas have enough food to eat over  
the weekend!**



# Rhonda's Letter

**Dear Friend,**

The fall season always brings an air of excitement to the Foodbank. With cooler temperatures around the corner, students have started heading back to school. Plus, the Foodbank is celebrating Hunger Action Month, a special time of year for our staff, donors, volunteers, and partners to shine a light on our hunger work.

September is Hunger Action Month, a month solely dedicated to considering how each of us can take a specific action to ensure our neighbors have enough food to eat. Whether that's volunteering your time, donating your dollars, or using your voice, each and every action counts toward a community where no one has to go hungry. Be on the lookout for opportunities to get involved with the Foodbank during this special month in your email and on social media.

While we've spent the last few months ensuring students have access to meals during the summer, we're now entering a new school year that presents different challenges. While students once again have access to meals during the day while they're at school, they're still at risk of hunger after school and over the weekend. Even more, the additional cost of back-to-school necessities puts extra pressure on a family's monthly budget.

This time of year reminds us of the importance of food for children who are learning. With your support, the Foodbank can make sure children are able to focus at school, stay active, and enjoy every day – rather than worrying about where they'll find their next meal.

However you get involved with the Foodbank, I'm thankful every day that you choose to support hunger relief here in central and southern Arkansas.

**Your generosity is changing lives!**

In service,

Rhonda Sanders  
CEO

“This time of year reminds us of the importance of food for children who are learning.”

## Board of **Directors**

### OFFICERS

Will Montgomery — President  
Anton Janik — Vice-President  
Trent Roberts — Treasurer  
Ashley Wimberley — Secretary  
Cliff McKinney — Parliamentarian  
Joe Copeland — Member at Large

### MEMBERS

Ashten Adamson	ShaRhonda Love	Maria Smedley
Patricia Brown	Matt McDaniel	Dustin Smith
Luke Cordova	Dr. Larry Miller	Lauren Waldrip
Dr. Charles Glasier	Kathryn Roberts	Maggie Young
Jordan Johnson	Wes Simpson	
David Locke	Neill Sloan	





"We live on a fixed income, and this food makes sure my grandchildren are fed. Without it, well ... I don't know what we'd do."

## Food Shouldn't be an Impossible Choice

Mary is from Lonoke, and like many other grandparents in Arkansas, **she takes care of her grandchildren full-time.** Mary also lives on a tight monthly budget and faces the recurring challenge of making sure every dollar is budgeted and spent with careful consideration.

When her income doesn't cover all of her family's expenses, and she needs help making ends meet, Mary visits her local food pantry to receive groceries. "We live on a fixed income, and this food makes sure my grandchildren are fed. Without it, well ... I don't know what we'd do."

With grandchildren heading back to school, people like Mary face additional costs like clothing, haircuts, and school supplies, which will put even more pressure on her tight budget. Additionally, there is a clear connection between education and nutrition. Kids need balanced, nutritious meals on the table — and they need them every day.

Food shouldn't be an impossible choice — and families like Mary's shouldn't have to decide between necessities and other important back-to-school costs. When you give to the Foodbank, you're helping people like Mary make ends meet. You're providing hope in the form of food!





## Smiles All Around

For many Russellville families, 2020 was a difficult year. April and her husband, with their four teenagers, found themselves reaching out for help in new ways.

During their first visit to Main Street Mission in Russellville, April and one of her daughters were excited to receive their box of food. When asked what this would mean for them, April responded with a huge smile on her face, "This means there's food! I don't know exactly what's inside this box, but I know there's milk, and that's something we never have enough of. Once a week, we cook a big meal and share it with some of our elderly neighbors. We know what it's like to struggle."

April counts her family as blessed. Even though quarantining was difficult mentally, her husband was still able to work on a reduced schedule. "We have four teenagers, and I homeschooled all of them – well, just three now because my oldest graduated last year and is enrolled in college," she said with a proud smile.

**Your support helps us put smiles on the faces of those we serve. Thank you!**

**HUNGER  
ACTION  
MONTH™**

**FEEDING  
AMERICA®**

## Mark **Your Calendar!**

### **Hunger Action Day - Friday, September 17**

Hunger Action Day is a day for people all over the United States to stand together, spread the word and take action to solve the hunger crisis — dedicating ourselves to a solution.

### **Harvest Night - Saturday, September 18, 5 p.m. - 8 p.m.**

Held at Arkansas Foodbank, this family-friendly event will showcase Southern cuisine, craft beverages, children's activities and live entertainment. Contact the Foodbank to purchase tickets.

ARKANSAS  
**FOOD BANK**  
arkansasfoodbank.org

4301 W 65th Street  
Little Rock, AR 72209  
586 Phillips County 241 Road  
Lexa, AR 72355  
205 N Martin Street  
Warren, AR 71671

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

