

s e r v i n g  
HOPE

FALL 2025

ARKANSAS  
FOOD BANK



## From Volunteer to Recipient: Howard's Story

When tornadoes touched down in Arkansas a couple of years ago, people who had never needed food assistance before suddenly found themselves looking for help. Others, untouched by the destruction, stepped in to volunteer or donate — like Howard, who volunteered with The Church at Rock Creek Food Bank. *"They told me if I ever felt the pinch myself, I could come back,"* he recalls. With a job in finance and a daughter attending Harvard, he never expected to be in that situation.

But not long after that, **storms of a different kind touched down in Howard's life.**

His wife, already weakened by multiple sclerosis, developed liver failure. After an emergency liver transplant, she suffered a host of life-threatening complications. When she was finally released from the hospital, she was no longer able to work and went on disability. Howard had to leave work as well, to care for her full-time.

Now, with severely limited income, Howard felt the pinch. Like people he had only read about in the newspapers with *"a cursory glance,"* Howard struggled to pay the mortgage, keep up with utility bills, and put food on the table. *"I didn't think we*

*were in dire straits,"* he says, but **every month, the couple's financial situation grew worse.**

Howard returned to The Church at Rock Creek Food Bank. *"We've been supplemented graciously, and we're so appreciative,"* Howard says. *"I really see the difference it makes when people help."*

Without access to the Food Bank, Howard admits, *"We would be in a grave situation. It's good to know there's somebody we can depend on. **It's always a blessing when someone comes through with a bag of food,** and we've learned to stretch it. Groceries are so expensive now. I just don't see how people can get by."*

And that's exactly why the Arkansas Foodbank is here, and why your support is so critical right now to thousands of people like Howard who just need a helping hand.

*"We've been blessed,"* Howard says. *"Everyone is pitching in. We're getting better and we're standing in the word. **Thank God, we are making it.**"*

**"It's good to know there's somebody we can depend on."**



# Meeting Families' Food Needs

Growing up, many of us were raised with the idea that the kitchen is the heart of the home — a place where meals are shared and stories are passed down. Life looks a little different today. Between work, school, caregiving, and all the things that fill up our calendars, it can be tough for families — even those living under the same roof—to sit down at the same table. And even when they do, it's not uncommon to see everyone focused on their screens instead of each other.

Still, food has a way of bringing people together. It nourishes more than just bodies — it builds connection across generations, sparks conversation, and helps families feel whole. Whether your family includes young children, aging parents, or both, the dinner table can be a place where memories are made and love is shared.

But for too many Arkansas families, food insecurity is making those moments harder to come by. The rising cost of groceries is straining budgets, leaving less food for everyone — including children, seniors, and caregivers juggling it all.

That's why I'm so grateful for the work of the Arkansas Foodbank and our more than 400 partner agencies. With your support, we're helping households across the state stay nourished and connected!

There's more to feeding people than handing out food. Whenever possible, we offer choices — like fresh produce from local farms — that allow families to meet specific needs: dietary restrictions, allergies, or cultural preferences. Because food only helps if it can actually be eaten and enjoyed.

Some of our partners even offer a grocery store-style experience, where individuals can “shop” for what their household needs. That sense of normalcy and dignity means so much, especially for grandparents raising grandchildren, or older adults on fixed incomes sharing a home with extended family.

And we never forget how hard it can be to ask for help. No parent — or grandparent — wants to say, “I can't feed my family.” That's why we work hard to ensure our food pantries are in welcoming, familiar places — schools, churches, and community centers — where families already feel at home.

As summer winds down and families fall back into their routines, I hope more folks can find time to gather around the table. And maybe, as a family, you'll take one extra step: volunteer at a pantry, donate food, or organize a drive where you work or worship. Acts like these don't just fill shelves — they strengthen families and communities, one meal at a time.

With gratitude and respect,

Brian Burton, CEO

“With your support, we're helping households across the state stay nourished and connected!”

# Warehouse Manager Fights Hunger in Hometown

Have you ever wondered how the Arkansas Foodbank distributes goods to so many hungry people in need? We spoke with David King, the dedicated Director of our Warren Branch, to share how it all comes together behind the scenes.

The Warren Branch Warehouse serves 11 counties in southern Arkansas. At a little more than 10,000 square feet, it stores a lot of food! However, David tells us the food is seldom in the warehouse for more than two days. *"We have it organized and ready. Approximately 50 pantries get their food from here. They either show up or we have an 18-wheeler truck that delivers."*

Born and raised in Warren, David says it's rewarding to serve families in his hometown. *"I know these people. I confess, I never knew hunger was an issue until I started working here and seeing it."*

The need in this region is great, with many children growing up in poverty. Statewide, one in four children are at risk of hunger. In the 11 counties served by the Warren Branch Warehouse, the numbers are even higher.

David tells us, *"The hardest part in taking care of these people is, there's so much more you want to do, but you don't have the ability. You wish you could give these pantries more food, but you have to take into consideration you're doing all you can do."*

That spirit of service extends to the many men and women — and young people — who lend a hand to the hungry. *"We're working with Hampton High School's Beta Club, which is creating an on-site school pantry and continuing to run the TEFAP site that serves the Hampton community as well,"* David



***"It starts as a job and turns into a passion."***

says. *"It gives them a chance to see the need. Some know what it's like, some are living it, but some have no clue."*

David adds, *"You hope that once they're out of school, they're going to remember the need or the fact that they were helped, and they'll want to get involved with it for the remainder of their life."*

Should any of those young people come to work for the Arkansas Foodbank, they will find it as satisfying as David does. Speaking from experience, he says, *"It starts as a job and turns into a passion."*

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# You Helped a Single Mom Stretch her Budget

It can be challenging for anybody to feed a family. But Amanda knows firsthand how tough it is to care for a growing child when resources are tight and rent goes up.

She and her 15-year-old son, Leon, came to Arkansas from California hoping for a fresh start in a more affordable state. Amanda was hired as an Assistant Store Manager at a Dollar General. She and Leon were doing all right until their rent was raised. She found that her salary didn't go as far to cover her expenses, including food — but she didn't qualify for food stamps.

Fortunately, Amanda found the Cleburne County Cares Food Pantry in Heber Springs. Here, she was able to get food assistance that helped her stretch her budget so she and Leon could get by. Before going to the Food Pantry, Amanda says, *"We had the bare minimum. I may have had meat in my freezer, but no vegetables."* Now she is able to make complete meals, which is very important because Leon has the appetite of a typical teen-age boy. *"He likes to eat all the time,"* Amanda



says. He also likes to cook and shared his recipe for frozen burrito enchiladas!

Even now, Amanda says her pantry at home is *"pretty light."* In addition to the assistance she receives, she also purchases groceries at the Dollar General where she works. She considers herself fortunate to have that option, as she lives in a *"food desert,"* where she has to drive more than 20 miles to shop at a grocery store.

Amanda looks forward to getting into a better financial position someday and is working hard toward that goal. In the meantime, she is very thankful for your support of the Arkansas Foodbank. She tells you, *"It is very generous, very thoughtful, selfless and much appreciated. I hope that I'll be able to donate once I get back on my feet again, because I like helping and doing stuff like this too."*

## Save the Date!



**Hunger Action Month**  
September

Hunger Action Month is a month for Arkansans to stand together, spread the word, and take action in the fight against hunger. Join us in wearing orange on Hunger Action Day September 9 to help raise awareness!



**Central Arkansas  
Restaurant Week**

Join us for the 2nd annual Central Arkansas Restaurant Week, taking place September 5-12. Eat local and fight hunger at local restaurants in central Arkansas. **For more information, head to [carw.arkansasfoodbank.org](http://carw.arkansasfoodbank.org)!**



**Giving Tuesday**  
December 2

This Giving Tuesday, be a part of something powerful right here at home. Join the Arkansas Foodbank in the fight against hunger and help provide meals to individuals and families in need across our state — because every gift makes a difference.

