



Food Matters



MISSISSIPPI
FOOD NETWORK

MEMBER OF
FEEDING
AMERICA

Mission

To relieve poverty-related hunger in our service area by distributing donated and purchased food and grocery products through a network of member churches and non-profit organizations. We provide nutrition education to our needy clients.

We also emphasize advocacy and related needs.

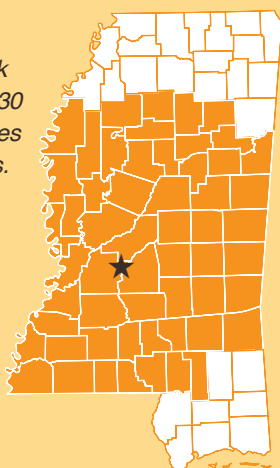
Vision

To eliminate poverty-related hunger in our service area.

Our Service Area

Mississippi Food Network distributes to 430 partner agencies in 56 counties.

★ = Mississippi Food Network Warehouse



Food Network Fact

Our service area is big! Our 56 counties add up to 32,955 square miles of Mississippi fields, towns and cities.

With an estimated 386,650 food-insecure Mississippians across all that space, that's about 12 people per square mile who are struggling with food insecurity.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A MEAL CAN MAKE

Summer should be a carefree time of playing and having fun with friends for children. But, for many families, the summer months can be a time of stress. This can be a time when many parents worry how they are going to feed their children on an already stretched income. Because many children rely on breakfast and lunch at school during the school year, parents have the expense of filling this gap during the summer months. But, thanks to partners of Mississippi Food Network participating in the 2018 Summer Feeding Program, children received more than 32,000 meals this summer.

Twenty-one different sites in 16 counties partnered with Mississippi Food Network in 2018 to provide these meals in rural areas of our service area. When we began the Summer Feeding Program in 2008, the decision was made to focus on rural areas. School districts in the larger areas often provide summer meals, but we found there was no service for children in rural communities. By partnering with local Boys & Girls Clubs, YMCA's, Regional Housing Authorities, youth development centers, and other non-profit organizations, children at these sites enjoyed a nutritious meal, along with participating in a variety of enrichment activities each day.

Each year, thanks to our donors, site partners, staff, and volunteers we are able to help provide children with something we all think as being very basic – food. But, when you live in an environment of food insecurity – **what a difference a meal can make.**



Dear Friends and Donors:

It is fall and the holidays are just around the corner! Over the next few days, weeks and months, much attention will be given to the food and festivities the holiday season will bring.

This is an especially exciting time for children. As it was when I was a child, youngsters across the country will be hoping to talk their parents into purchasing their favorite foods and snacks while shopping at the local grocery store. Sadly, however, this scenario will not play out this fall and the coming holidays for too many children, families and senior citizens here in Mississippi.

Statistically, our state is still the "hungriest" state in the nation. Every night, some 600,000 individuals (over 20 percent of the population), will continue going to bed hungry or not knowing how or when they may get their next meal. This includes over 200,000 children and over 100,000 seniors.

That was the bad news. The good news is that each year Mississippi Food Network receives financial and food donations from friends and supporters that help to provide meals for our neighbors in need. Last year, because of such donations, and because of the hard work of our network of 430 agencies, we distributed some 21.4 million pounds of food to Mississippians who faced hunger and food insecurity.

Every chance we get, we take the opportunity to say "Thank You" to those who support this critical work we do. We also would like to take this opportunity to remind those who are willing and able to share, your support is especially needed at this time.

Sincerely



Charles H. Beady, Jr., Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer



MISSISSIPPI
FOOD NETWORK

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COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHTS

One-in-five people in the Mississippi Food Network service area struggle with food insecurity, not knowing where their next meal will come from. In 2017, we distributed 21.4 million pounds of food, but we couldn't have done this without the help of our community who works with us through the year hosting food drives. Food drives help keep us stocked with staple canned food items distributed to our member agencies. Coordinating a food drive can be a great opportunity for a local business, school, scout troop, and club to get involved and help make an impact in their community. **If your group would like to host a food drive, please visit our website at www.msfoodnet.org/get-involved or contact Stacey Cain at 601-973-7089 or scain@msfoodnet.org.**



WJTV celebrated their Founder's Day on June 15, 2018, by hosting a food drive at local Kroger Stores. This food drive collected staple food items to help with the increased need during summer months, especially for families who depend on school meals for their children. **Thank you WJTV for providing almost 2,000 meals and for your continued support in the fight against hunger.**

Congratulations to Reed Harris on receiving his Eagle Scout badge. Reed provided more than 400 meals from a food drive benefiting Mississippi Food Network. The food drive, a community service project, was part of his requirement to achieve this award. **Thank you Reed.**



Meeting an Unmet Need

Mississippi Food Network, in partnership through grant funding from Tyson, launched a monthly mobile pantry in Warren County. The monthly mobile pantry delivers fresh produce, staple food items, and protein each month to an area that has a tremendous need and is designed to serve 250 – 300 families. We appreciate the Tyson employees and other volunteers who help Mississippi Food Network's staff pack the food and load the recipient's cars.



SCHOOL PROJECT BECOMES A PASSION

You are never too young to make a difference in the lives of others. What started as a school project on hunger has become a passion for Cameron Kuhn, a young lady from California. In 2015, at the age of 13, Cameron and her family made their first visit to Mississippi Food Network as part of their vacation to volunteer and bring a donation. That trip began a wonderful partnership spanning 2,143 miles between Mississippi and California.

After learning how many children in Mississippi face food insecurity, Cameron decided she wanted to make a difference for them. She started raising money by asking her family and friends to donate, starting a service club at her high school, and surpassing every goal she set to provide backpacks for children. As part of her journey to help, Cameron returns once a year to volunteer packing backpack meal kits. Since 2015, Cameron has raised \$14,679 – enough to provide 115 children with a backpack for an entire school year. When told of her total, Cameron's comment was "that's pretty good" – but, for the children who have been helped, it's more than pretty good – it is remarkable. She is a true example of how easy it is to make a difference. **Thank you, Cameron, for your love and compassion for the children in Mississippi.**



YOUR SUPPORT HELPS FAMILIES



The food pantry at Grace Episcopal Church in Canton started by serving rice and beans one Saturday a month. A few years ago, Jim Ladner, a church member, suggested they expand their reach to the community with a food pantry by partnering with Mississippi Food Network. They soon became a member agency and opened their food pantry; today, they serve more than 600 families each month. While talking with Mr. Ladner, he told us his volunteers are an important part of making this pantry successful. They typically have 15-20 volunteers on distribution days

to greet the clients and bring a little sunshine to the familiar faces in Canton. The clients of Grace Episcopal are quick to tell you how important this food pantry is to them. It's not just a place to get food, but it is also a place to get a warm smile from a friendly face and a place people make you feel you are genuinely cared about.

Rhonda Pace is extremely grateful for the help she gets at Grace Episcopal. Due to health problems, she is no longer able to hold a full-time job and relies on disability. At one time she was homeless and lived in her car, but now has her own place to live. But, as she told us, by the time she pays her rent, utilities, doctor bills and medicine, there often is not enough money left to purchase food. Even though she receives \$15 a month in food stamps, she is grateful for Grace Episcopal where she receives food assistance each month.

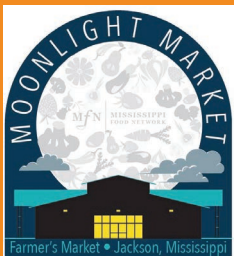


Gwendolyn Abron has been a client of Grace Episcopal Church for a little over a year. She is raising her six grandchildren and often questions how she is going to feed her family, especially since she does not receive food stamps. In March 2018 her house burned, but she still tries to also help give back to the community by providing a meal for someone else in need when she is able. Mrs. Abron told us without the support of this food pantry, she would not be where she is today. She is thankful for their kindness and for being a welcoming place to come get assistance for her family.



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Save the Date



March 21, 2019

**Mississippi Farmer's Market
Jackson, MS**

Action Against Hunger: How You Can Help

As September comes to a close, so does Feeding America's nationwide hunger awareness campaign. However, it is never too late to make a difference for one of the 386,650 people in Central Mississippi whose plates are empty.

It's tough to do basic activities on an empty stomach, but it's easy to make a difference. We're asking everyone to come together to help ensure that no child, adult, or senior in our community lacks the nutritional fuel to get through the day.



Educate

Teach your kids and grandkids about hunger and encourage them to help. Hunger knows no age, and neither does fighting it.



Volunteer

Even the smallest gift of your time can help us make a big difference. Schedule a time together with your family, friends, or coworkers to help our fellow neighbors in need. Contact scain@msfoodnet.org to learn about upcoming opportunities.



Donate

For every donated dollar we provide 7 meals to food-insecure individuals in Central Mississippi. Without help from our donors, we would not be able to do what we do. **Visit www.msfoodnet.org to make a gift today.**