

Food Matters

SPRING 2025

Mississippi Food Network changes lives by fighting hunger today and feeding hope for a healthier tomorrow.



Feeding Hearts and Minds: Joe Ann's Story

Joe Ann has been helping raise her two grandchildren off and on for the past 13 years. This became her full-time responsibility after her daughter passed away. Despite managing her own health challenges — including a pacemaker and diabetes — she remains committed to giving her grandchildren the best life possible.

The journey hasn't been easy, especially when it comes to keeping growing children well-fed. "Now that they're bigger, they eat like truck drivers," Joe Ann shares. "They eat more and they burn a lot of energy." Living on disability benefits means that making ends meet can be challenging, particularly when it comes to keeping the pantry stocked for hungry, growing kids.

The support Joe Ann receives makes "a good bit of difference" in their daily lives, ensuring there's always food on the table. Joe Ann's dedication to her

grandchildren is evident in how she manages their resources — she always makes sure their plates are filled first.

But what truly stands out is her consideration for others in need. Despite her own challenges, she thinks of her neighbors and practices thoughtful restraint with the assistance available. "I don't come every time," she explains, "because when we're doing okay, someone else may need it."

This mindset of community care and mutual support is what makes Joe Ann's story so inspiring. Even while facing her own health and financial challenges, she maintains a spirit of gratitude and consideration for others. When asked what she would say to those who support the food pantry and the Mississippi Food Network, she responded, "Thank you. And you're really doing a great service."

Mission

Mississippi Food Network changes lives by fighting hunger today and feeding hope for a healthier tomorrow.

Vision

A Hunger-Free Mississippi.

Our Service Area

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



★ = Mississippi Food Network Distribution Center

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.

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Charles H. Beady, Jr., Ph.D.



Dear Friends and Donors:

As the saying goes, time has a way of 'flying by.' I write this letter reflecting upon the fact that I have now served as CEO at Mississippi Food Network for over a decade. And, as I reflect on those years of service, I do so with a sense of pride and gratitude regarding what we have accomplished together.

Over the last ten years we have improved the fleet of vehicles used to transport food throughout our 38,000-square-mile

service area. We have made considerable changes and upgrades to our physical plant. We have invested in our salary structure to ensure that our lowest paid employees and their families do not face hunger and food insecurity issues. And, we have made much progress toward achieving the goals and objectives called for in the strategic plans that have been in place during my tenure here.

When I reference "we" in this letter, I am referring to a supportive Board of Directors, a staff of employees that has always been willing to go above and beyond the call of duty, and you, our host of loyal friends and donors who have been unwavering in your support of all our efforts to fight hunger today and feed hope for a healthier tomorrow.

You are a most critical part of the MFN team. Without you, none of what we have been able to accomplish would have been possible. As always, your continued support is both welcomed and needed.

With Gratitude,



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



Feeding Families and Futures

In the heart of Greenwood, Mississippi, the Greenwood Community Center stands as a pillar of support for the local community. Serving as an after school feeding site, the Greenwood Community Center provides children not just with meals but with a place to grow, learn, and thrive. Led by Earnest Adams, the Greenwood Community Center has become a haven for families in need, especially in an area where many households are led by grandparents who hadn't planned to raise children in their later years.

The Greenwood Community Center's after school program is a lifeline for many. Each day, children are picked up from school, given a nutritious meal, and supported with their schoolwork. Adams explains the significance of this routine: "When we started, no kid could come to the door hungry and leave hungry." This motto drives the Greenwood Community Center's mission, ensuring every child feels seen, supported, and well-fed.

"We've seen them improve," Adams shares, referencing the Gate test, an academic milestone for many students. "That was one big improvement that we saw — for the kids to pass the test." The program's structure, coupled with the nourishing meals provided, has contributed to healthier, more focused, and academically successful children.



a hot dog meal that draws an incredible turnout of 300-400 people, further emphasizing its role as a cornerstone of the community.

Adams doesn't shy away from crediting a critical partner in their success: the Mississippi Food Network. "Without the Mississippi Food Network, this place wouldn't be successful because we couldn't feed the kids," he says. "I don't think the Mississippi Food Network even has an idea of how great of a job they're doing."

Serving a primarily elderly area, the Greenwood Community Center bridges generational gaps, uniting seniors and children through shared resources and mutual care. "We see healthy kids," Adams remarks, reflecting on the transformative power of consistent nutrition and community programming.

Through its dedication to feeding and educating the next generation, the Greenwood Community Center is changing lives. Adams sums it up best: "A lot of these programs, a lot of these people, a lot of these kids, man, their lives are being changed because of the Mississippi Food Network."



The Greenwood Community Center's reach extends beyond after-school care. During the summer, they average 60-70 children daily, offering breakfast, lunch, and snacks to sustain their energy for learning and play. And every Wednesday since 2019, the Greenwood Community Center hosts

Turkey Drive 16 Recap



1,200
Turkeys Collected



250
Volunteer Hours



\$24,000+
Raised



941,780
Total Meals
Since 2012

How The Jackson Resource Center is Changing Lives Through Compassion

Patalamus, the dedicated Director of the Jackson Resource Center (JRC), has devoted herself to supporting some of Jackson’s most vulnerable residents. Under her leadership, JRC provides permanent supportive housing for 30 individuals experiencing homelessness at their main campus, offering them stability and a place to rebuild their lives. But Patalamus’s commitment goes far beyond housing. Through JRC’s soup kitchen and meal delivery services, she and her team work tirelessly to meet the immediate needs of those facing hunger.



The JRC’s soup kitchen opens its doors twice daily, Monday through Friday, serving hot meals at 11 a.m., and again at 3:30 p.m., welcoming anyone in need. Many community members return for both meals, and each one is offered a warm meal and a place to rest. In addition, Patalamus has helped establish a meal delivery program to bring hot food directly to seniors who are homebound, ensuring they receive the fresh meals they need. The demand is high — anywhere from 70 to 100 people count on the center for meals each day, with numbers varying based on the time of the month.

This mission was born from a simple outreach effort. In 2012, Patalamus and her team began distributing food once a week at Poindexter Park. When they saw the immense need, they expanded

to providing food boxes. But they soon realized that for those without kitchens or means to cook, food boxes weren’t practical. Adapting to meet the community’s needs, they transitioned to a soup kitchen model to ensure everyone could receive hot, ready-to-eat meals.

Reflecting on her work, Patalamus says, “Wherever individuals can find a break, they are looking for it, and they need it — it helps.” Her approach is clear: to offer food, support, and hope to those who need it most. Patalamus’s work at the Jackson Resource Center exemplifies how empathy and adaptability can create a profound impact on a community.

Look What Your Contribution Helped Us Do in 2024



5,964
volunteer hours



20.7
MILLION
nutritious meals
provided to our
neighbors in need



24.9
MILLION
pounds of
food distributed



19.9
MILLION
pounds of fresh
produce supplied



1,477,588
neighbors served

Your kindness and generosity make a BIG impact. Thank you!

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