



# FEEDBACK



Tarrant Area Food Bank Newsletter  
Spring 2021

# LETTER FROM JULIE



Dear Caring Community,

Prior to COVID-19, Texas had the nation's fifth-highest rate of food insecurity among older adults. The pandemic has exacerbated this already alarmingly high rate, with

many older neighbors seeking food assistance for the first time in their lives.

Tarrant Area Food Bank has responded to this need by creating programs that prioritize the health and safety of people over age 65. We've expanded our partnerships with several local organizations to help meet the increased need.

I am hopeful for even greater relief being proposed in the 2021 legislative session which would streamline access to nutrition assistance for older Texans. A new SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) bill would simplify the program's lengthy application process for Texas households composed exclusively of older adults.

Determining eligibility for SNAP can be complicated because it is a targeted benefit that

takes into account household income, assets and expenses. But older adults on fixed incomes have stable financial situations that can make this process easier.

Unfortunately, due to a challenging online application and confusing documentation requirements, only half of eligible Texas age 65 and over are currently enrolled in SNAP. The SNAP application process for older adults needs to be simplified, especially during a health crisis where accessing these benefits quickly is so important.

Tarrant Area Food Bank is committed to serving food-insecure older adults in our community. This issue of Feedback shines a light on older neighbors and the support we can provide them, thanks to you.

Grateful you choose to give,

**Julie Butner**  
President & CEO

**TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK**

MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING AMERICA**

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# DICKIES ARENA HAS NEW SIGNIFICANCE FOR WILLIAMS

Although he's in his 70s, Williams still races horses part time to supplement his and his wife, Marlene's income. It doesn't bring in much money, but since Marlene was laid off, every penny counts.

Like so many neighbors, Marlene lost her job when the pandemic hit. She worked at a car auction facility and hopes to return at some point in the near future. In the meantime, money is tight. Williams says they've been having a hard time paying their bills lately.

The couple lives in southeast Fort Worth and were thrilled to learn from a neighbor about TAFB's special mobile food pantry at Dickies Arena.

We met Williams at the mobile pantry distribution in December. He was excited to pick from a variety of

fresh foods, including lean meat and fruit, to refill the empty shelves in their refrigerator.

"I appreciate having this here," he says. "God bless the volunteers and donors."

Your gifts mean so much to older adults who may be facing hunger for the first time due to COVID-19. At such an uncertain time, friends like you offer hope in the form of nutritious food. Thank you for your partnership.

"It's amazing the support people can bring to the community," Williams says.

*"It's amazing the support people can bring to the community." – Williams*



Williams is grateful to pick up healthy groceries from the TAFB mobile food pantry at Dickies Arena in Fort Worth.

# THANK YOU FOR FEEDING A BRIGHTER FUTURE

## ***Kate Farms Feeds Older Adults***

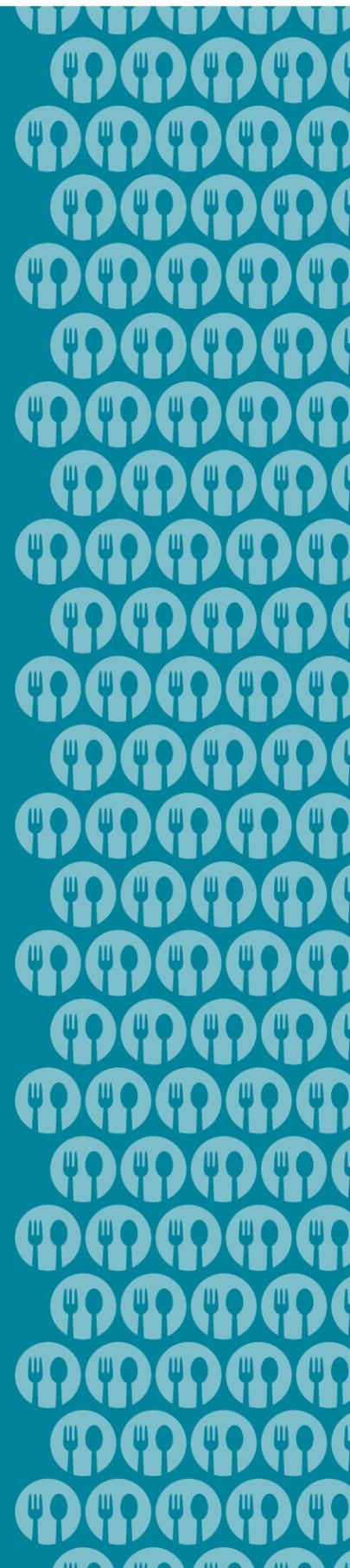
Last year, Kate Farms provided Tarrant Area Food Bank with plant-based, organic, non-GMO medical nutrition formula and meal replacement shakes. These beverages keep older adults strong and provide healthy antioxidants for people who may have lost access to good nutrition as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Providing Kate Farms products at distributions targeted toward older adults is one of the many ways we're supporting our neighbors in 2021.

## ***Meals on Wheels***

At the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, TAFB prioritized being able to reach vulnerable older adults who were encouraged to shelter in place. A new partnership with Meals on Wheels of Tarrant County and Catholic Charities of Fort Worth helped us go that extra mile to put fresh produce, groceries, and ready-to-eat meals on the doorsteps of homebound and disabled neighbors with no transportation.

## ***Your Helping Hands Are Needed***

With dozens of mobile markets every week and gardens still to be maintained, Tarrant Area Food Bank needs helping hands! Socially distant opportunities can be found at [tafb.org/volunteer](https://tafb.org/volunteer).



# THANK YOU TO OUR CARING AND CREATIVE CANSTRUCTION COMMITTEE!

Each year in September local architects fight hunger by participating in CANstruction, an international event in which architects and students compete to build complex objects out of cans, which are donated to food banks.

Usually held at Northeast Mall, the pandemic prevented 2020's Fort Worth edition of the event, an important source of donated food and funds for TAFB.

Well aware of surging hunger, the event committee refused to take a year off. Unable to gather in person to build, instead they held a virtual food and fundraising drive, aptly tagged #CANdemic, in which people participated in the "Pantry Challenge," filming themselves making a meal out

of anything in their pantries. CANstruction 2020 raised an incredible \$20,000 to fight hunger in our community, which will help fill more than 150,000 empty plates!

Matthew Hare, an architect in our local engineering industry, chaired this year's CANstruction committee and has volunteered with the event since 2007. He loves to see how excited participants get about both the construction projects and the effort to alleviate hunger.

"It's all about the volunteers who make up the competition and seeing the little sparks of creativity that pop up left and right," Matthew says.

## AGENCY SPOTLIGHT: H.O.P.E. PANTRY



If you receive medical services in zip code 76104 – recently noted to have the lowest life expectancy in Texas – you may be asked a few surprising questions about your food at your next doctor's visit. CareMore Health identified problems with food access among their patients and reached out to TAFB for support.

Together we created the H.O.P.E. Pantry! CareMore also partnered with our Community Nutrition team to pilot the Produce and Activity Prescription program, which we believe will lead to improved health outcomes for their patients by providing food, education, social support and other resources.

More and more local clinics are screening for food insecurity using the Social Determinants of Health framework. This framework recognizes that environmental and social conditions – like food, transportation and housing – can significantly affect overall health and longevity. This is good news for the seniors we serve, who often can be reluctant to seek out food assistance for themselves.



Because caring people like you choose to give, we can provide food, education and other resources to older adults across North Texas. Please continue your generous support!

# FIGHTING HUNGER WITH CATHOLIC CHARITIES AND MEALS ON WHEELS



The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed TAFB — and countless other groups — to problem solve quickly and efficiently. One of the most prevalent issues we've faced is a rise in hunger among older adults.

Already vulnerable and reliant on limited fixed incomes, older neighbors have been even more at risk of hunger as they shelter in place. Additionally, some local pantries have had to close or limit operations due to safety reasons and limited volunteer support.

To address this need, TAFB expanded our partnership with two vital organizations: Catholic Charities of Fort Worth (CCFW) and Meals on Wheels.

Beginning mid-April, we began sharing bags of fresh, and healthy groceries, in addition to the hot meals provided through Meals on Wheels distributions.

CCFW's Community Care Center also began helping callers seeking food assistance. Utilizing TAFB's robust software system, CCFW Community Care Center can navigate local hunger-relief partners through an interactive map that identifies the nearest food sources to help people in need and even deliver food directly to their homes by way of CCFW's transportation fleet.

In such a tumultuous time, it's a hopeful moment to reflect on the great things that can happen through teamwork. We are proud to work together in an unprecedented collaboration between three community cornerstones.

Thank you for helping make these innovative partnerships possible through your ongoing support!



## MAKE A LEGACY GIFT

Please consider including Tarrant Area Food Bank in your legacy plans through a will, trust, life insurance or another legacy gift. Through these special contributions, friends like you can help feed our neighbors in need for many years to come. To learn more about legacy planning, visit our website at [tafb.org/legacy](https://tafb.org/legacy).

Simply follow the link to "Legacy Gifts" for a wealth of educational resources. Please contact Stephen Raeside, Executive Vice President of Development, for more information at 817.857.7125 or [stephen.raeside@tafb.org](mailto:stephen.raeside@tafb.org).

Sandra visits the TAFB mobile market distribution at Tarrant County College's Northwest Campus to safely bring home healthy food to stock her kitchen.

## YOUR SUPPORT IS HELPING SANDRA'S FAMILY THRIVE

"Without this, our family would have to make tough choices," Sandra says of the TAFB mobile market that visits Tarrant County College's Northwest Campus in Fort Worth. "It's a huge relief to have the food."

Sandra's daughter, Samantha, found out about the mobile food market online. She works in administration at a local elementary school while her husband, Brandon, is deployed in Wichita Falls.

With Samantha, full-time employment and Brandon in the military, Sandra's been caring for her young grandchildren Daxton, two months, and his big brother, Max, 4. She used to run a hospital floor but now just fills in on an as-needed basis until she can fully retire.

The only other time Sandra needed help with food was when she was laid off about four years ago. Although it is an adjustment to

have to reach out for help again, she stays positive. She enjoys researching new recipes for foods she has never used before.

As she did when she struggled before, Sandra gives thanks for friends like you who offer a hand up to families like hers who might otherwise miss meals.

"I'm grateful for everything you do," she says.

You change lives for the better every day through your generous support. Thank you for fighting hunger alongside TAFB!



*"I'm grateful for everything you do."*

— Sandra

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