Dear Friend,

Summer is almost here, and kids across Arkansas are excited to spend their days swimming, playing outside and taking family vacations. When I was a little girl, these were the things I looked forward to as the school year was winding down.

When I think about these happy memories of summers gone by, I’m reminded that thousands of kids in our community won’t have the same opportunities you and I did growing up. Instead, they’ll be spending the summer months hungry.

With no access to their school’s free and reduced-price meal programs during the summer, kids from low-income families will be at risk of missed meals — and countless health problems. As I think of my own grown children, who received plenty of nutritious fruits and veggies during the hot summer days, it breaks my heart to imagine so many young Arkansans going without proper nourishment.

Fortunately, friends like you are helping address this summer hunger crisis through your support of the Arkansas Foodbank. Every dollar you give enables us to provide four healthy meals that will give kids the fuel to keep moving. I hope I can continue to count on your generosity as we work together to serve these children — and their families.

Thank you so much for your compassion and generosity. Your gifts are helping feed the next generation during the hungriest time of year.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Sanders, CEO

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Thanks to You, Children Have Healthy Meals

Thomas is a loving husband, father and former truck driver. Today, he’s doing something he never thought he’d need to do — he’s visiting a community food pantry to pick up fresh groceries to help supplement his family’s food budget.

About three years ago, while driving his truck down the highway, Thomas was seriously injured in an accident that left him paralyzed for a month. Although he can walk now, he’s still in a lot of pain.

Unable to work, Thomas receives a small monthly disability check. His wife, Erica, works hard, but her paycheck just isn’t enough to meet the needs of their three young children — Madison, 4, Taylor, 5, and Memphis, 11. With mounting medical bills from Thomas’ health care, it’s becoming increasingly difficult to buy nutritious groceries.

With nowhere else to turn, Thomas and Erica reached out to their local Arkansas Foodbank member agency, Conway County Care Center. Here, they’re able to pick up fresh fruits, veggies and other important staples that will allow their children to thrive now and all summer long.

Because you give, children across our service area no longer have to worry about empty tables and empty stomachs during the long summer days. Instead, they can receive comfort in the form of wholesome, balanced meals.

As they look forward to the summer, Madison, Taylor and Memphis can spend their free time staying active and playing outside with their friends — like all kids should.

As a parent, Thomas couldn’t be more grateful for your generosity. “Thank you and God bless you,” he says. “If there’s anything I can do to repay [you], I would.”

“Thank you and God bless you.”
Thank You for Joining the Fight Against Summer Hunger!

Special Thanks

Empty Bowls

Thank you so much for making our 13th Annual Empty Bowls a success! Our signature event helped us secure funds to provide much needed food to our hungry Arkansas neighbors. A special thanks to all of our wonderful sponsors, media support, artist and chefs for making the evening perfect. We hope to see you at next year’s Empty Bowls on April 21, 2016!

Arkansas Gives

The Arkansas Foodbank was overwhelmed by the support we received during the first ever Arkansas Gives Day on April 2nd. We will be able to provide over 100,000 meals because of donations made and matched through the Arkansas Community Foundation. The Foodbank is excited for the groundwork laid by Arkansas Gives Day and we look forward to continuing to be a part of this movement in 2016.

THV Summer Cereal Drive

The 15th Annual THV Summer Cereal Drive is just around the corner. Businesses and organizations who wish to participate in this friendly competition to collect cereal can sign up now on our website at arkansasfoodbank.org. Last year we collected 218,000 boxes of cereal. Our goal is to collect 225,000 boxes this year! Tom Brannon and the THV11 crew will be live at community locations throughout the month of June collecting cereal. Check our website for community dates.

Family Night at the Arkansas Foodbank

Bring the family out to volunteer at the Arkansas Foodbank! Every third Tuesday of the month, we will open our warehouse after hours for special volunteer opportunities to include the whole family. Come sort food with us from 6:00-8:30 each night. Children 8 years-old and up can join in on the fun.

Feeding Hope

Celebrate 30 years of feeding hungry Arkansans by purchasing a copy of our image book “Feeding Hope.” In the book, you’ll see compelling images of the people we serve, the food we distribute, and of course, our volunteers and supporters. Each book is $30 and all of the proceeds will be used to purchase food for hungry people. Please call the Arkansas Foodbank or visit our website to order.

Legacy of Hope

At its heart, planned giving is very simple. It’s not about tax law or asset transfers. It’s about what you value most. If you value the Arkansas Foodbank, consider making a planned gift. Planned giving is one of the best ways to ensure that your support for hunger relief continues into the future. Legacy of Hope is wrapping up its first year. Become a charter member today. Whatever your financial situation, there’s a planned gift for you. Contact Jennifer Martinez-Belt at 501.569.4315 to join.

Arkansas Gives Day

THV11 Summer Cereal Drive

Family Night at the Arkansas Foodbank

Feeding Hope

Legacy of Hope

JOIN US!

Arkansas Foodbank
Jordan and Angie Johnson are the proud parents of three children — Staley Catherine, 2, Keeton, 5, and Patterson, 8. For several years, their family’s been actively involved with the Arkansas Foodbank.

From a very early age, Jordan’s parents taught him the importance of giving back to those in need. They did this by encouraging him to volunteer at his church’s food pantry. Today, he and Angie are passing this tradition of service onto their kids by taking them to the Foodbank.

“Giving back to the community is very important to our family,” says Jordan. “Volunteering is rooted in our faith journey.”

In addition to the time the family spends together sorting and packaging food at the warehouse, Jordan also serves as vice president of the board of directors. In this role, he helps the Foodbank meet current challenges and prepare for the future. Meanwhile, Angie works hard to convince civic and business leaders to support the Foodbank’s mission in any way they can.

Jordan says that he supports the Foodbank because he feels that hunger is a problem that can be solved. And by volunteering, Jordan hopes his family will be a part of that solution.

Although Jordan, Angie and their children are happy to be working to support hunger relief in our community, they know they can’t do it alone. That’s why they hope that others will also choose to donate their time and talents to the Foodbank.

“Come in for a tour,” he says. “You’ll be impressed how much of an impact you’re making.”

Thank you Jordan, Angie and the whole Johnson family. Your example of service brings hope to the thousands of hungry people we serve together.

Angie and her son, Patterson.
Scarlet and Shane* are doing everything they can to provide for their two children, Stone, 9, and Victoria, 12. But that’s been difficult ever since their income took a major hit, leaving them unable to afford many essentials — including food.

The family’s struggles began a few years ago, when Stone, who has autism, began having trouble at school. This often meant Shane — the assistant manager at a local restaurant — would have to leave work to pick him up.

As the calls from Stone’s school kept coming in, Shane and Scarlet came to a decision — Scarlet would continue working while Shane stayed home to help Stone whenever he needed to leave school early. They knew this would hurt their finances, but between their son’s episodes at school, and his regular trips to the specialist, they had no other options.

Now, with only Scarlet’s teacher salary and Stone’s Social Security benefits, it’s just not possible to buy the nutritious groceries the family needs — especially during the summer, when Scarlet doesn’t receive a paycheck.

To help make ends meet, Scarlet and Shane began visiting the Choctaw Food Pantry, an Arkansas Foodbank member agency near their home. Now, thanks to you, these loving parents can fill their children’s plates full of the healthy foods they love.

Each summer, families like Scarlet and Shane’s have hope because you choose to give to the Foodbank. Scarlet can’t tell you how much your generosity has meant to their family.

“Thank you so much for your gifts,” she says. “This is a lifesaver.”

*Names have been changed to protect identity.
Edman Sipe has dedicated most of his life to improving the lives of young children. As the co-founder and principal of Little Scholars Academy — an education center that operates year round — he’s committed to preparing the next generation for a bright academic future.

As an educator, Edman knows that nutritious food is vital to helping kids succeed in the classroom. That’s why he’s so grateful for your support of the Arkansas Foodbank, which provides free, nutritious meals for his students — most who come from families facing serious financial challenges.

“People are really struggling to survive in our community,” he says.

Thanks to you, parents have the comfort of knowing their children will receive balanced meals that will allow them to learn and grow. This includes girls like Jasmine*.

Although Jasmine’s mother, who’s blind, does her best to care for her daughter, there’s often not enough money to keep enough food in the house for the both of them. But through your support of the Foodbank, Little Scholars is able to provide Jasmine with nutritious meals and groceries that ensure she never goes to bed hungry.

At Little Scholars, Edman wants each of his 125 students to have the energy they need to excel in and outside the classroom this summer and all year long. Thanks to you, there’s no limit to what these kids can accomplish.

“This is a good investment for our future and you’re a big part of it,” he says.

*Name has been changed to protect identity.