YOU’RE GIVING SENIORS HOPE!
Dear Friend,

With the new year well underway, our staff and volunteers are working harder than ever to meet the growing need for food in our community. As they do so, I want to express my sincere gratitude for your ongoing support of the Arkansas Foodbank.

I especially want to thank everyone who participated in our holiday matching gift challenge. Because of generous friends like you, we were able to well exceed our $20,000 goal by the December 31 deadline. Thank you for helping us begin 2015 better prepared to serve our hungry neighbors!

At this time of year, my thoughts go out to the many senior citizens across our service area living on fixed incomes. These men and women — our parents and grandparents — need your help. They’ve sacrificed so much, only to find themselves struggling to pay for the essentials... including food.

In this issue of Serving Hope, you’ll read stories that show the true impact your generosity is making on our community. These cases illustrate that with a little help, no one has to go hungry — including members of our senior population.

Thank you again for ensuring that Arkansans of all ages are able to put food on the table. Your partnership makes all the difference.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Sanders, CEO

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“This is a blessing for us seniors.”

You’re Giving Seniors and Their Families Hope

When Eloise lost her husband of more than 20 years, it changed her life forever. She had no choice but to provide for their three children on her own. To make ends meet, she took a job at a factory assembling watches.

Now retired, Eloise spends most of her time caring for her grandchildren. But, she says, it’s been difficult to keep enough food on hand.

Eloise receives a monthly retirement check, but has struggled ever since she developed serious health problems. After multiple operations, the bills keep mounting, but her income stays the same. By the time she reaches the end of the month, there’s little left in her bank account to buy groceries.

But that was before she started visiting her local Foodbank member agency...

Now, thanks to you, she can fill her shelves with nutritious food — enough to feed both herself and her grandchildren without the financial burden. She estimates that the food she receives lasts her about a week, which adds a lot to her small food budget.

There are thousands of seniors who can’t afford something as basic as a warm meal. But thanks to you, Eloise and others in her situation can visit Primrose United Methodist Church — one of the many food pantries in the Arkansas Foodbank’s network — to pick up the food they need.

Eloise is so thankful for your generosity. “It’s nice to have this help,” she says. “This is a blessing for us seniors.”
Thank You for Helping Arkansans of All Ages!

SPECIAL THANKS!

2014 Thank You

There was a lot to be thankful for in 2014 at the Arkansas Foodbank. Our organization celebrated its 30th year of filling tables and helping to improve lives of Arkansans. Thanks to you, the Foodbank was able to distribute 22.4 million pounds of food to families and individuals in need. As we embark on a new year and a new journey, please remember that each of us has a part to play in order to make sure no one goes hungry. Please join us in 2015 to help fight hunger in Arkansas.

JOIN US!

Empty Bowls

The 13th annual Empty Bowls charity auction and dinner benefitting the Arkansas Foodbank will be held on Thursday, April 23, 2015 at Next Level Events inside the historic Union Station near downtown Little Rock. Throughout the evening, there will be silent and live auctions for arts, crafts, and goods created and donated by local artists and craftsmen. You can also enjoy great food from local restaurants. Call 501-569-4329 for ticket or sponsorship information or visit us on the web at arkansasfoodbank.org.

Arkansas Gives

Join the Arkansas Foodbank for a day of giving. The Arkansas Community Foundation is hosting its brand new online event “Arkansas Gives” on April 2nd. Please visit our website and social media sites to learn how to get involved and help us feed hungry people.

Feeding Hope

Help us commemorate the Arkansas Foodbank’s 30-year history of hunger relief through images of our mission in a photo book entitled “Feeding Hope” with photographs by Ray Scott. From our warehouse in Little Rock to the hands of Arkansans in need, each photograph helps tell the story of the Foodbank. The book is now on sale for $30 with all proceeds benefitting the Foodbank. Order your copy online at arkansasfoodbank.org.

Harvesters

Get involved with the Arkansas Foodbank by becoming a Harvester! Harvesters is our young professionals network created to help raise funds, provide volunteer support, and create awareness for the Arkansas Foodbank. Current membership obligations include a one-year commitment, service on at least one special event committee, recruitment of potential new members and a $30 annual membership fee. Contact Polly Deems at pdeems@arkansasfoodbank.org or 501-569-4320 for more information.

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.
When Connie and Henry Robinson retired recently, they knew they wanted to give back to their community in a meaningful way. As long-time supporters of the Arkansas Foodbank, they decided to invest more of their time in helping feed their hungry neighbors.

Now, once a week, they’re responsible for cleaning, sorting and stocking the Foodbank’s shelves with healthy food that will ultimately end up on the tables of hungry Arkansans. They’ve especially enjoyed spending time with member agency staff and volunteers who come to the Foodbank to pick up the groceries that will soon be distributed to neighbors in need.

“It’s inspiring to see how grateful people are that this food is always available,” says Henry.

Growing up, Henry and Connie both experienced poverty, but never hunger. They’ve been humbled by the stories told by those who must endure it every day. There’s never a doubt in their minds that the need is great.

Even after hearing these first-person accounts, the couple is still surprised by the amount of food that moves through the Foodbank’s distribution center. It’s a constant reminder of how many meals are needed to feed hungry families and individuals across Central and Southern Arkansas.

Connie and Henry have enjoyed volunteering, and they plan to continue serving at the Foodbank as long as they’re physically able. “It’s our duty to our fellow man,” says Connie. “It humbles us and gives us purpose in life,” adds Henry.

We’re so grateful to Connie and Henry for their dedicated service and positive impact on the community around them!
Lotherene has been through a lot in the past 76 years. When she was a little girl, she suffered from polio. Then, at just 28-years-old, she was injured in a car accident that kept her from working. She’s been confined to a wheelchair ever since.

Three years ago, her husband passed away, a tragic loss that left her unable to meet her basic needs without help. She now only receives a small Social Security check every month. This has made buying nutritious food a real challenge.

To make her budget stretch further, Lotherene began coming to Libby’s Rose, a Foodbank member agency in Malvern. She says that the pantry provides her with enough groceries to make meals that last several days.

“Without the food pantry, I don’t have any other options,” she says.

Lotherene is definitely a survivor, but she and countless other seniors like her still need help. Your gifts allow older adults across the Foodbank’s 33 counties to live out their retirement without the fear of going hungry.

With your support, Arkansans of all ages can visit pantries that are regularly stocked with a variety of healthy food items. This means the world to seniors like Lotherene, whose diabetes keeps her on a very strict diet. She can’t tell you how much she appreciates you.

“I am very thankful for the food,” she says, grateful for your compassion and generosity.
Linda is a 66-year-old retiree from Lonoke. Today she’s at Family Resource Services, her local Arkansas Foodbank member agency. Here she supplements her limited grocery budget with fruits, vegetables and other staples. This is the second time she’s ever visited a food pantry.

Linda’s had trouble with her finances for several years now. It all began when she retired early to take care of her ailing husband of 30 years. It was a tough decision, but it was a sacrifice that she felt she needed to make. “I would do it all over again,” she says.

After her husband passed away, Linda began dealing with her own health problems, which have left her disabled. The cost of countless doctor visits and just as many medications mean she’s unable to meet other needs — this includes food. Without the help she receives from the pantry, she wouldn’t have enough to eat today.

Weighing in at a mere 98 pounds, Linda can’t afford to go long without a nourishing meal. That’s why your support is so greatly needed. Your generosity ensures that seniors like Linda can take home healthy items like fresh produce and lean meat that they’re unable to afford on their own.

Although she tends to be soft spoken, Linda talks excitedly as she describes her experiences at Family Resource Services. She says that she’s amazed by how nice the people are at the pantry. “Everyone here acts like they’re your family,” she says.

Linda is so grateful for the food she’s been given. When asked what she’d say to donors like you who make this all possible, she pauses, and then responds with enthusiasm. “God bless you,” she exclaims. “If you were here, I would hug you!”

“If you were here, I would hug you!”

Thanks to You, Seniors Are Thriving