

Fall 2008

generous helpings

Kids *are*
full
and
focused
thanks to
you!



houston 
foodbank

Filling pantries. Filling lives.

Your gifts make life brighter for children and families in need...see inside!

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Growing Together to Meet the Need

Dear Friend,

I know you've heard many reports about the increases in food and gas prices in recent months. The cost of important staples like milk and bread has risen by 9 percent since 2006, while gas prices have skyrocketed by 75 percent.



Brian Greene
President and CEO

The state of our economy affects us all. But for our neighbors living at or below the poverty line, rising food and gas prices are forcing them to choose between things like feeding their children or paying rent. And thousands of individuals and families are finding themselves in need for the first time in their lives. With your partnership, we can meet this growing need.

The Houston Food Bank recently announced plans to purchase a new warehouse facility in order to greatly increase our food storage space and allow us to achieve our goal of tripling our food distribution over the next eight years. We are very excited that \$11 million has already been raised toward our capital campaign goal of \$35 million in order to purchase the warehouse and develop programs that will help us serve those in need even more efficiently.

And now, with children heading back to school, I'm reminded more than ever of how important the work of feeding families in need is to the health of our community and the future of southeast Texas. Please take a few minutes to read the stories of children and families on the following pages who have been touched by your generosity. You may never know just how much you've done to bring hope to our hungry neighbors.

With this exciting season of growth on the horizon, I am so grateful to know that we have the support of friends like you. Thank you for joining us in the fight against hunger!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Greene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

“If you have a full stomach... you're able to focus better”

Cassandra Freaney always knew that many of the students at Frost Elementary School where she works as a Communities in Schools project manager were in need. So when the school implemented the Houston Food Bank's Backpack Buddy Club in December 2007, she was eager to help lead the effort. But she never imagined what an impact the program would have on the students.

"Before I knew it, I had 167 kids and their siblings getting food each weekend!" she says.

Frost Elementary is located in a very low-income neighborhood, so most of its students come from families who have a hard time keeping enough food in the house. Nearly all students are on the free and reduced-price school meal program. The food the children receive through the Backpack Buddy Club is truly a lifesaver for these children.

Cassandra says it didn't take long to be able to tell a difference in

students' behavior once they started receiving nutritious food for the weekends.

"Some kids used to be sluggish in the morning on Monday," says Cassandra. "But the following Monday when they came back after getting a backpack, they were energized and told me they loved it and they ate all their food!"

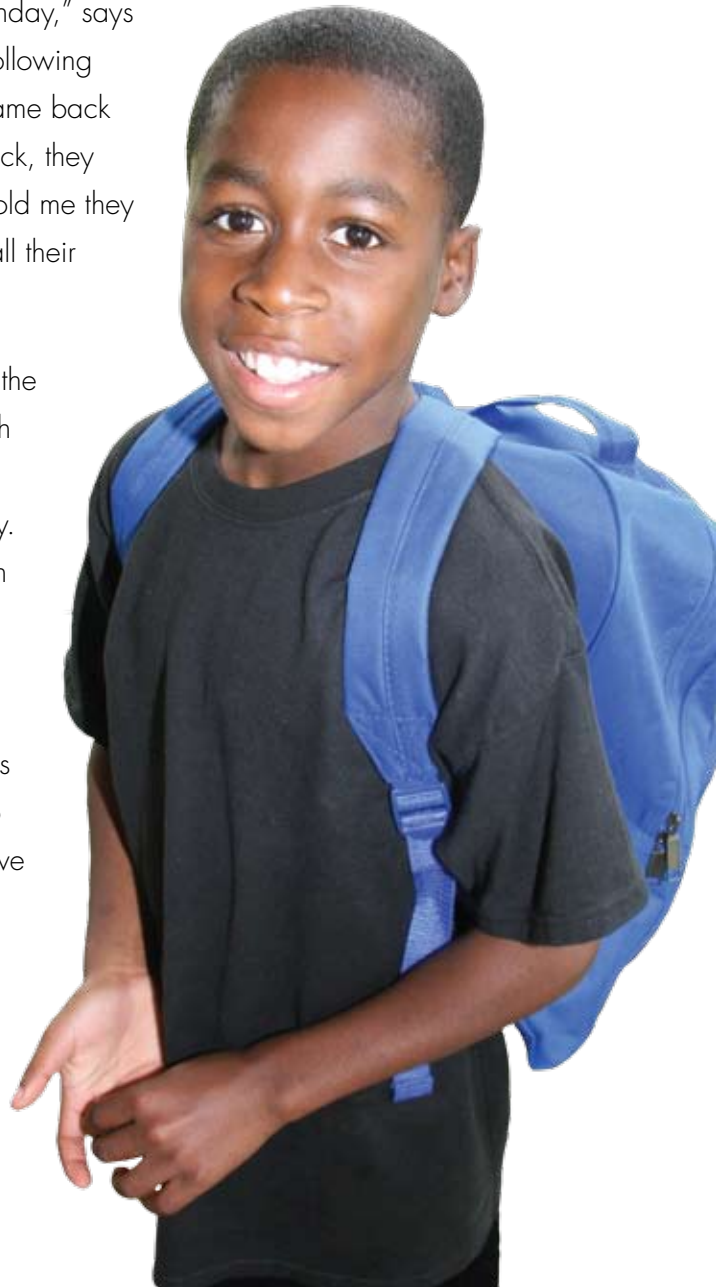
Cassandra shares the story of one family with five children who all attend Frost Elementary. Sometimes the children miss school on Fridays for appointments or because they are sick, but their mother always makes sure to come to school to pick up all five backpacks.

"If you have a full stomach and good nutrition, you're able to focus better and concentrate better,"

says Sharletha Woodard, a 5th grade teacher at Frost.

Cassandra echoes Sharletha's feelings and adds that she is so grateful for friends like you who make this important program possible.

"We truly, truly, truly appreciate the Food Bank and the Backpack Buddy program," she says. "It's been very successful and I hope it continues and that we'll always be a part of it!"



YOU BRING HOPE TO OUR HUNGRY NEIGHBORS!



Families in need can take home healthy groceries thanks to you.

You provide nutritious groceries for seniors in need.

You provide nutritious weekend food for hungry kids through the Backpack Buddy Club.

Southeast Texans in need are so grateful for the help you provide.

Hungry children receive filling meals because of your gifts.

THANK YOU!

CHANNEL 11 SPIRIT OF TEXAS FOOD DRIVE

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Channel 11 Spirit of Texas Food Drive on July 11! More than 387,000 pounds of food and \$224,000 were raised to help feed hungry southeast Texans. More than 40 institutions in the Texas Medical Center collected food and funds. Congratulations to our top two donors, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center and Methodist Hospital. We thank KHOU-TV and our wonderful sponsors, Gulf Coast Regional Blood Center, Kroger and Shell, for their support.

VALERO ENERGY CORPORATION

Thanks go out to the employees of Valero Energy Corporation for donating their time and talent to the Houston Food Bank! Employees have volunteered as a group twice this year, donating a total of 52 volunteer hours. Valero also gave a first-time gift of \$100,000 to the Houston Food Bank's capital campaign, which will help us feed even more hungry children, families and seniors in the coming years. Thank you, Valero Energy – we look forward to an ongoing partnership!

JOIN US!

CANSTRUCTION® NOVEMBER 8-15

You won't want to miss this year's Canstruction®! Local architecture and design firms are put to the test with the task of creating sculptures from nonperishable canned food items. Structures will be on display November 8-15 in the lobby of CenterPoint Energy in downtown Houston. All canned food will be donated to the Food Bank at the event's conclusion. Come out and vote for your favorites!

ABC-13 SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS FOOD DRIVE DECEMBER 5

Mark your calendars now for the ABC-13 Share Your Holidays

Food Drive! This food drive has helped feed southeast Texans in need during the holiday season for nearly 30 years. Food will be collected at the ABC-13 station at 3310 Bissonnet Drive this year. Drop off your nonperishable food items and help fight hunger during the holidays!

CHEVRON HOUSTON MARATHON JANUARY 18, 2009

Start training now to join the Houston Food Bank team January 18, 2009 to "Run for a Reason" and raise money to feed the hungry at the Chevron Houston Marathon! Visit houstonfoodbank.org for more information.

“It’s just a joy to get to do it.”

Denise Kinner is the picture of a committed volunteer. She faithfully arrives at the Food Bank every Saturday morning to help fill orders for partner agencies, and she even helps staff members when things get hectic. She says above all that it’s her faith that keeps her coming back week after week.

“I feel committed to [the Food Bank],” she says. “I love what I do each Saturday that I go in.”

Denise first became involved with the Houston Food Bank when her church’s Sunday School class started looking for a place to give back to the community. Although it never worked out for the group to volunteer together at the Food Bank, Denise decided to come on her own. She so enjoyed the feeling of knowing she was making a difference for hungry southeast Texans that she started coming every Saturday.

“I just think it’s a tremendous

organization,” says Denise. “It’s been a great opportunity to be a small part of what they do.”

Denise, who works as an implementation manager at a health insurance company in Houston, says volunteering at the Food Bank brings her a great deal of joy.

“I don’t feel like it’s work at all,” she says. “It’s just a joy to get to do it.”

Denise encourages others to find the joy that she has found by giving back to the community in any way they can.

“The idea of giving someone a helping hand really does add to your life in terms of your self worth and how you can make a difference in someone else’s life,” she says. “Even if it’s only one person – that one

thing you do for that person may have an incredible impact on his or her life.”

We are so grateful for faithful volunteers like Denise who help make our work possible every day.



BECOME A MEMBER OF THE FULL PLATE SOCIETY

If you have included the Houston Food Bank in your will, estate, or any other charitable gift plan, we want to induct you into the Food Bank’s new Full Plate Society! The Full Plate Society was created to recognize donors who have allocated any type of asset to the Food Bank through a charitable gift plan. Become a new member of this exclusive society that is creating and sustaining hunger relief for all of southeast Texas.

For more information about the Full Plate Society or how to become a part of this very special group of donors, visit the Gift Planning/Wills section of our website (houstonfoodbank.org) by clicking on the Donate Funds button or contact Scott Stuckey at 713-547-8667 or [sstuckey@houstonfoodbank.org](mailto:ssstuckey@houstonfoodbank.org).

You can also use the Gift Planning/Wills section for a helpful estate planning calculator, up-to-date tax information, monthly articles, sample bequest language and more.

Volunteer by visiting houstonfoodbank.org or contact Volunteer Services at 713-547-8609

“I’m very thankful for what I receive”

“I have a lot of hope for the future,” says Laura, wife and mother of three. “I want to see my children grow up healthy and become good people.”

Like most mothers, Laura only wants the best for her family. But lately, things have been tough.

Laura’s husband works in construction and hasn’t been able to get a job in two months. Laura stays at home with their children, ages 3, 2 and 5 months, so without any other source of income, it’s been a huge challenge to make ends meet. They receive a small amount of food stamps, but with five mouths to feed, it rarely stretches through the end of the month.

Fortunately, your gifts to the Houston Food Bank

are helping families like Laura’s every day. Thanks to your generosity, she can come to the food pantry at Our Lady of Guadalupe in Baytown when she needs help with groceries. This Food Bank partner agency provides important staples like fresh produce, rice, beans and meat to individuals and families in need. Laura is glad to know she can count on these nutritious items to feed her growing children.

“If I didn’t have produce from here, I couldn’t afford to buy it for my family,” she says. “The children really like fruit!”

Laura is grateful for the food she receives, and she knows it’s made possible through the generosity of friends like you.

“I’m very thankful for what I receive,” she says, with tears welling up in her eyes. “It’s a big help for my children – it’s a necessity.”



“We are partners in this effort”

Kathie Hartzog’s heart aches when she thinks about any of the 42 preschoolers she teaches at Small Steps Nurturing Center’s Fifth Ward Campus going to bed hungry. But sadly, she knows this is a real possibility for many of them.

“Some of our children are just a step above homelessness,” she says. “If they weren’t coming to this meal site, they would not have access to nutritious food.”

Small Steps Nurturing Center is a Houston Food Bank partner agency that provides specialized educational programs and childcare to disadvantaged children ages two through kindergarten. Kathie, program director of the Fifth Ward Campus, says most of the children they serve come from families living in poverty who likely don’t have access to nutritious food.

At Small Steps, children eat a filling breakfast, a nutritious lunch and a healthy snack every weekday. Kathie says the food the children receive makes a big difference in their health and well-being.

“We really do feel like we’re equipping them for life,” she says. “Good nutrition, a nurturing environment and intellectual stimulation - it makes a difference.”

It’s your gifts to the Houston Food Bank that help agencies like Small Steps Nurturing Center provide children in need with access to

healthy, filling meals. These children and those who serve them are grateful for your generosity.

“You are the kind of partner who makes our work possible,” says Kathie. “Every success we have with a child is possible because of your help. We are partners in this effort, and it’s wonderful to be in this kind of work with people who are so kind and generous!”



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houstonfoodbank.org

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