

Holiday 2011

generous helpings

houston  **foodbank**
Filling pantries. Filling lives.

You Make the
Holidays
BRIGHTER!



stories of your gifts making a difference...see inside

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Giving the Gift of Hope This HOLIDAY SEASON



Brian Greene
President and CEO

Dear Friend,

The holidays are quickly approaching. And just as I'm sure you're looking forward to celebrating this special season with your family, my wife and I are excited to spend the holidays with our two little boys. It's a great time for reconnecting, rejoicing and recharging with the ones we love.

The holiday season is also a time for reflecting on all that we have to be thankful for. One of the things at the top of my list is the new [Houston Food Bank](#) facility, which was completed this fall. For the first time this holiday season, our brand new Emergency Food Pantry will serve individuals who can't make it to a Food Bank partner agency during their operating hours.

Thanks to the generous contributions of individuals, foundations, corporations and public partners like you, we can make an even larger impact on the community during the holidays and all year long. Thanks to your support, we'll continue to expand our ability to fight hunger in Houston and across southeast Texas.

Hundreds of thousands of residents depend on the Houston Food Bank for food each week, and our work is especially important during the holidays. One in six families in Houston reports having trouble buying groceries. Many have to choose between paying their rent or mortgage and buying food.

As you'll see in this issue of *Generous Helpings*, your kindness is making a huge impact on families in need. Thanks to you, this holiday season, children in need have nutritious food to help them grow and learn. Your compassion means senior citizens on fixed incomes have a balanced meal. Your generosity brings hope to hungry families.

In this season of thanksgiving, I am extremely grateful to you for generously sharing with those who have less. I wish you and your loved ones a very happy holiday season!

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

“You’re helping make the world go ‘round.”

The holidays should be a joyful time for a young family. But for Sara, her husband Bobby, and their two little boys, a shadow hangs over the season — one that has been looming for months.

In June Sara gave birth to a precious baby boy they named

Jonathan. During delivery there were complications, and Sara had to stay in the hospital longer than expected.

With Sara in the hospital, Bobby did everything he could to take care of his children and his wife. But he lost his job and suddenly had no way to provide for his family.

For Sara and Bobby’s family, the joy of the holidays and the new baby is overshadowed by the fact that Bobby has no job and the family has no income. Sara says they’re behind on everything, and their electricity has even been shut off because they can’t afford to pay their bill.

Thanks
to your
generosity,

Sara’s family has one less thing to worry about because they have access to free, nutritious food from a [Houston Food Bank](#) partner agency. Sara says the helping hand is especially important during the holidays.

“Not many people have extra money for a big dinner,” says Sara. “It’s good to know there are places like this that are here when you need it.”

This outreach program, which began in 1981, provides food and clothing to an average of 400 individuals each week. They also give more than 400 holiday dinner food baskets to less fortunate neighbors for Thanksgiving and Christmas – thanks to friends like you.

Sara says she’s so grateful to have a place like this to help her family get back on their feet.

“Thank you. You’re helping make the world go ‘round,” she says. “My kids’ tummies are full.”



You're Spreading JOY This Holiday Season!

You help elderly southeast Texans.

You're making the holidays brighter for those in need.

Children have food on weekends and holiday breaks, thanks to you!

Thank you for putting food on families' tables.

Your support makes such a difference!



THANK YOU

THANK YOU HOUSTON RESTAURANT WEEKS 2011

With the most successful result in the event's history, Houston Restaurant Weeks 2011 raised over \$800,000 for the [Houston Food Bank](#). Houston Restaurant Weeks 2011 brought 142 Houston eateries together to help fight hunger with special menu offerings. From August 1 – 31, all participating restaurants offered three or four course dinner menus for \$35, donating \$5 to the Houston Food Bank. In addition, select restaurants offered two or three course lunch menus for \$20, with \$3 going to the Houston Food Bank.

THANK YOU, CHEVRON

A big Thank You to Chevron for their outstanding commitment to fighting hunger in our community. Chevron has donated \$100,000 to support the Food Bank's Backpack Buddy Club and \$50,000 to help feed hungry seniors, and \$100,000 to sponsor ABC-13's Share Your Holidays. Hundreds of Chevron employees came to the warehouse to volunteer in October, sorting and packaging food. Thanks, Chevron!



SAVE THE DATE

CANSTRUCTION | November 12 – 20, 2011

Don't forget to stop by CityCentre at I-10 and Beltway 8 to see colossal structures built out of non-perishable foods! Architects, engineers, designers, contractors and students across the city have donated their time and resources to make this event more amazing than ever! All of the food from the structures will be donated to the [Houston Food Bank](#).

ABC-13 SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS!

December 5 – 10, 2011

The ABC-13 Share Your Holidays! Food Drive has helped people in need during the holiday season for a quarter of a century. For more information about participating in this city-wide food drive, contact Rebeca Barvin at 713-547-8670.

If you're looking for a way to give back this holiday season, contact Perry McAfee at 713-547-8649 about volunteering during Share Your Holidays.

CHEVRON HOUSTON MARATHON

January 15, 2012

Are you running the Chevron Houston Marathon/ Aramco Half Marathon this year? Join our Run For Food Team and race against hunger! For more information, contact Donna Nisenson at dnisenson@houstonfoodbank.org.

Sharing the Harvest



Jacko and Nancy Garrett

“Whatever gifts you have, use them!” That’s the advice from Jacko and Nancy Garrett who own Garrett Farms, located in Danbury, about 35 miles south of Houston. It’s a family-owned rice farming operation that’s located on a portion of land that was originally purchased by Jacko’s parents back in 1936.

The Garretts have put their philanthropic principal into practice in a way that benefits the Houston

Food Bank. In the 1990s they founded a nonprofit organization called Share the Harvest Foundation. The organization takes rice that farmers donate and has it dried, milled, packaged and delivered to the [Houston Food Bank](#). Jacko says he’s thankful for industry donors who donate their time and services to support the organization’s work.

“It’s an industry effort,” notes Jacko. “We furnish the land, tractors and management necessary to produce the crop.” He adds thankfully, “The others in the industry have done a whole lot to help us.”

Jacko, who started rice farming in 1966, says he tries to pace it so there is always a year-and-a-half supply of rice on hand for the Food Bank. Currently, Share the Harvest donates about 60,000 pounds of rice a month (that’s 720,000 pounds a year!) to the Food Bank. Garrett Farms alone harvests about

100 to 200 acres a year for the Food Bank.

“We’ve been blessed and it’s our responsibility to share our blessing,” Jacko explains. “It’s a thing that we just like to do and serves a good purpose. The Lord blessed me with the ability to grow rice, and this is the way I know how to give back,” he says.

Jacko believes everyone can and should do something to help their community – nothing is too big or too small as long as we all contribute what we can.

“Each of us has a gift and ability to do things. Just whatever you feel comfortable with, then give back.”

We’re so grateful to Jacko and Nancy and everyone involved with the Share the Harvest Foundation. Rice is one of the most important staples we’re able to routinely provide for our hungry neighbors, and we have the Share the Harvest Foundation to thank.



LEAVE A LEGACY WITH THE FULL PLATE SOCIETY

The Full Plate Society is an honorary society recognizing individuals who have included the [Houston Food Bank](#) in their estate plans through a will, trust, life insurance gift or other planned gift. To help you as you plan for a way to preserve your resources and values and pass them on to your family and community, the Houston Food Bank now offers a free **Personal Estate Planning Course**. This is a home-study course designed to help you achieve a smart, effective legacy plan that meets

your philanthropic and financial goals. To sign up, please contact Amy Ragan at 713-547-8629 or aragan@houstonfoodbank.org. You can also find answers to some of your gift-planning questions at houstonfoodbank.org – just follow the link to “Donate” and click on “Donate Money,” then click on “Gift Planning/Wills.” As long as there are hungry people in our community, the Houston Food Bank will be here to serve them – and your commitments will allow us to continue fighting hunger for years to come.

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

“Thank you for **helping out** in this time of need.”

Estreberto and his family have been struggling recently. And they would be dreading the holidays if it weren't for friends like you and the services provided through [Houston Food Bank](#) partner agency Christian Community In Action at New Life Church in Houston.

Estreberto had a good job that he really enjoyed, working in water restoration. But work was slow for his company and they had to let him go. His family's income is now a mere third of what it was when Estreberto was working, and it barely covers rent and bills.

The family is grateful for the small amount of assistance they get. However, the benefits they receive simply aren't enough to feed his wife, Mayra, and their two daughters, 4-year-old Alena and 2-year-old Eliana for an entire month.

“It's hard, but you have to be positive,” says Estreberto.

Estreberto says he and Mayra have been married for five years, and that this is the first time they've ever really struggled.

“Things weren't bad before,” he explains. “We had everything we needed.”

Thankfully, the family has been able to receive good, healthy food such as cabbage, potatoes, canned vegetables, bread, juice and other staples from the food pantry at New Life Church. It gives Estreberto peace of mind to know he's providing for his family, especially his young girls who need nourishment to grow, learn and stay well during the winter months.

“They have to be healthy,” he insists. “I'd be struggling a lot more without this place. I'm just happy there are places like this to come to.”

With the holidays coming up, he says he's even more grateful to know his family will be able to make it through with the help of the food pantry and your generous donations to the Food Bank, which help support its efforts.

“Thank you for helping out in this time of need,” says Estreberto. “It means a lot to my family.”



“Thank you so much!”

You’d never know the stress that Shamekia deals with every day. Her bright, bubbly personality masks the hardships and difficulties she’s been through.

The single mother of all boys who range in age from one to 12 is warm and engaging as she volunteers at the Gleanings from the Harvest food pantry in Texas City. Shamekia says she enjoys giving back at Gleanings, a [Food Bank](#) partner agency, because she knows firsthand how special the food pantry is.

“This place has really been a blessing,” says Shamekia. “Not only to myself, but to a lot of families.”

As a single parent supporting active little boys, two of whom have disabilities, Shamekia struggles to make ends meet. Her home was damaged during Hurricane Ike, and she was recently in a car accident. Despite those setbacks, Shamekia is only weeks away from earning her GED so she can get a better job to support her children. Ultimately, she wants to become a hairdresser.

Coming to Gleanings for food has been a huge help for

Shamekia’s family and to the 3,000 other individuals the pantry serves each month. Shamekia loves to cook healthy meals for her growing sons. Thanks to friends like you, she has access to nutritious food to supplement what she’s able to buy on her limited budget.

“This is such a blessing,” says Shamekia.

She says her boys, who work up big appetites with their love of karate and basketball, are always excited when she comes home from the food pantry.

“They say, ‘we’re going to eat good tonight!’” she says with a smile.

Shamekia is good at budgeting herself, especially during the holidays when she gives her sons practical gifts like clothes and shoes rather than toys. Last year she received a turkey and food basket from Gleanings, which really brightened her family’s holiday.

Shamekia is so appreciative for the role you play in helping her make a better life for her family.

“Thank you so much!” she says with true gratitude.



houston 
foodbank
Filling pantries. Filling lives.



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your donations are welcomed at houstonfoodbank.org