

Harvest News



A publication of

Food Bank of North Alabama

LATEST RESEARCH ON HUNGER IN NORTH ALABAMA

Together, the Food Bank and our partner feeding programs serve clients over half a million times per year. That's approximately seven times per client.

In 2014, the Food Bank staff and a team of trained volunteers traveled across North Alabama surveying community members seeking food assistance. In total, we visited 56 different charitable feeding programs interviewing over 360 people seeking food aid with a 70+ question survey. This statistically-valid data from our Hunger Study contributed to the nation's most comprehensive study of hunger published to date by Feeding America.

We asked questions such as:

- How often during the past 12 months did you or anyone in your household have to choose between paying for food and paying for medicine?
- Do you or anyone in your household currently serve in the U.S. Armed Forces?
- In the past 12 months, have you grown food in a garden either at home or at a community garden?

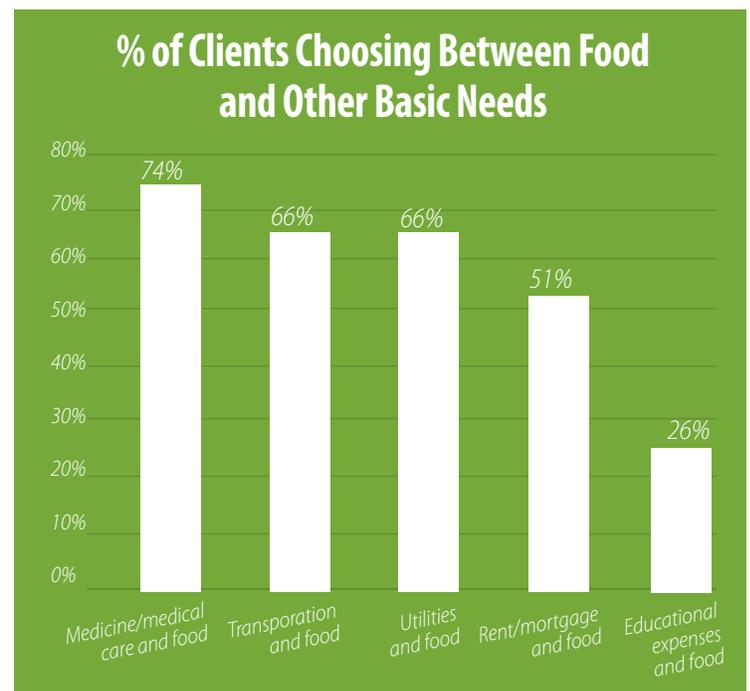
The results were eye-opening and had a big impact on the volunteers who helped us.

Our Hunger Study confirms that families at risk of hunger are diverse—they are young and old, employed and retired, facing illness and caretaking for others. Nearly one in seven are military families who have made great sacrifices for our society, yet still rely on emergency food from month to month. Many families have an employed member but still have trouble paying for food and other basic needs such as medicine or utilities. We also found that 26% of our clients were having to choose between educational expenses and

food—this is a trend sweeping our nation and is reflected in the opening of school pantries across North Alabama.

The results also show that assistance from common safety nets designed to prevent hunger—such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP—formerly food stamps)—often only last two weeks out of a month. Families are then forced to decide between paying for food and other necessities such as utilities, rent, transportation, and healthcare.

Our Executive Director, Kathryn Strickland, personally interviewed clients from across north Alabama for this research. She says, "This kind of data is so important because it shows the extent of hunger in north Alabama and lets us gauge the impact our efforts have in the community. Overall, the study confirms the real-life stories we hear every day."



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Food Bank of North Alabama



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Hunger Study Continued...

We are indebted to our partner feeding programs who participated and truly grateful to the volunteers who supported this monumental effort:

Ann Lee
John Whitman
Saymilon Griffin
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Dorothy Thomas
Betsy Laury
Pam Patrick
Emanuel Waddell
Katie Carpenter
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Bobbi Murphy
Elissa Finchum
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We are so happy to continue our partnership and are proud to work with each of you ending hunger in north Alabama!

Calling all Volunteers!

Do you want to contribute your time and energy to ending hunger in your community?

The Food Bank is proud to announce our new volunteer program! Five days a week we pick up donations from local grocery stores saving food from going to waste in landfills. We rely upon volunteers like you to help us inspect and sort these donations. This critical activity ensures we have a safe food supply to offer our region's most vulnerable citizens. Your volunteer time is very important! Individuals and groups are all welcomed! Call 256-382-0296 or email communityrelations@fbfna.org to schedule your volunteer day! We look forward to having you!



23rd Annual Letter Carrier Food Drive

On Saturday, May 9, the National Association of Letter Carriers' held its 23rd annual "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive.



Food Sorting Captain Eduardo Rea shows off a sorted box of Letter Carrier donations

While on deliveries, mail carriers across north Alabama picked up food donations from local residents. These critical donations are helping replenish the aisles of the Food Bank of North Alabama. We had record numbers of donations this year with over 160,000 pounds! HUGE THANKS to everyone who donated! Mike Hunsucker has been involved with the Letter Carrier food drive for over 20 years, "We're always excited to give back to the community. It's great to see the Food Bank warehouse completely full by the end of the day." Since the Letter Carrier Food Drive started 21 years ago over 2.4 million lbs has been gathered in north Alabama alone. We truly appreciate your generosity, thank you for supporting your local Food Bank!

Partner Agency Highlight: The CARE Center

Carpenter's Cabinet Ministries



Located in New Hope, AL the Community Assistance Resource Effort (CARE) Center was founded in 2000 after recognizing that there were unmet needs for families within the community. They started with a small food pantry and a clothing closet, but over time have grown to be a pillar in the community with two food pantries and a thrift store, serving thousands of families and children each year. Their mission is to impact southeastern Madison County by reducing poverty through education initiatives, employment resources, recovery programs, and emergency services. Part of their success is due to the collaborative effort from a multi-denominational Christian partnership of churches that demonstrates acts of service and kindness to all.

The CARE Center has dozens of success stories. Angela Hawke, their Executive Director, shared one of her experiences that particularly impacted her:

One day I was volunteering in the food pantry and helped a young mother out to her car. Together we put groceries in the back of her vehicle while her two little girls (preschool age) peered over the seat and watched intently. When the woman picked up a bag with two rolls of toilet paper she began to weep. "Are you ok?", I inquired? In between sobs she shared that she had been without toilet paper for weeks. Of course, this choked me up, "How could someone live without toilet paper?" I asked myself. Then the woman went on to say how she had to borrow gas money just to get to the food pantry that day. As you can imagine, this conversation impacted my life so much and was a reminder of why The CARE Center exists. I pray for that young mother and her children hoping that all of her needs are being provided for. I pray for all of our neighbors in need, those who are in crisis, or those who are under resourced. Not two situations are the same, but The CARE Center is always there.

The Care Center has partnered with the Food Bank since 2003. During that time, the Food Bank has supplied over 331,000 pounds of food and other items. To learn more about the CARE Center, visit www.thecare-center.org.



2nd Annual Rocket Chef Competition

Rocket Chef is back!!! This unique culinary competition is set for Monday, August 10th. Rocket Chef is designed to showcase local chefs, from a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences, and their ability to cook, in a time-pressured environment. Four chefs will cook an appetizer, entrée and dessert on stage in front of a live audience of more than 300 people and well respected culinary judges. Here's the best part - they'll be using mystery ingredients.



Two of our chefs competing in Rocket Chef 2014

Tickets will be sold in advance with the proceeds benefitting the Food Bank of North Alabama and Merrimack Hall's Johnny Stallings Arts Program. Beginning at 5:30p.m., there is a tasting reception, where food enthusiastic individuals will have the opportunity to sample cuisine from each chef's restaurant. The show begins at 7:00p.m.

In between the various rounds of the cooking competition, attendees will have an opportunity to learn more about food-related issues facing the local community, the work and mission of the Food Bank of North Alabama and Merrimack Hall, as well as ways in which individuals can donate and otherwise get involved in the fight to end hunger.

Tickets will go on sale June 2nd. Rocket Chef tickets can be purchased online at www.merrimackhall.com or by calling the Merrimack Hall box office at (256) 534-6455.

ASK FOR LOCAL



Next time you're at the grocery store or restaurant, ask for locally grown produce and support our north Alabama farmers! The North Alabama Farm Food Collaborative is a local food hub comprised of local farmers, buyers and support agencies who have come together to help family farmers sell fresh, local foods to public schools, grocery stores, restaurants and workplace cafeterias in our region. We want to increase access to healthy food choices for all residents and keep our food dollars local. Make sure your purchases are supporting Alabama family farms, ASK FOR LOCAL!

Special Recognition Donations

In Honor of

Alabama

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Nannette Austin

By Ashley Austin

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Landers McLarty Dodge Chrysler Jeep

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Townhouse Galleries

The Kroger Co. Foundation

Walmart Foundation, State Giving Program

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Grainger

Earth Fare

United Church of Huntsville

Chrysler Minority Dealers Association, Inc.



In 1984 a small group of volunteers started the Food Bank of North Alabama from a borrowed desk at the Huntsville Madison County Senior Center. Today we feed over 80,000 people in North Alabama through a network of over 200 partner feeding programs. We are also a proud member of Feeding America.