

KIDS ARE HAPPY AND HEALTHY THANKS TO YOU

For many low-income families, the free and reduced-price school meal program alleviates the stress of buying groceries and packing lunches. But when school is out for the day, many of these children won't get to eat again until breakfast at school the next morning.

The Kids Cafe at Evangelist Baptist Church in Oklahoma City exists to make sure more children are going to bed with full stomachs. Through your gifts to the Regional Food Bank, this program provides a meal three days a week and a snack the other two days to nearly 70 children in 1st – 5th grades.



Kids Cafe Director Wanda Black says the children are much happier and more energized after eating the nutritious meals.

“They're so excited about the food when they come in!” she says.

Wanda says that for many of these children, the meal they receive from the Kids Cafe is the last meal they'll eat that day.

“Without this program, some of our children would more than likely not have a meal on the days we're not in session,” Wanda says, fighting back tears.

In fact, three siblings in the program have told Wanda they only get to eat on the days they come to the Kids Cafe. They're being raised by only one parent who isn't able to provide enough food for them. The family is so grateful for the filling snacks and meals they receive each week.

Because of friends like you, these children don't have to wait until breakfast the next morning for a full meal. Your gifts to the Food Bank enable programs like the Kids Cafe to serve nutritious food to hungry kids when they need it most. The children and those who serve them are so grateful for the help you provide.

“We appreciate you so very much!” Wanda says. “We feel very blessed to be able to provide a service like this. It's like a miracle for our children.”



THE LINK

“Fighting Hunger...Feeding Hope”™

FALL 2007



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The mission of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma is to help the charitable community effectively feed people in need.

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Kids are ready for school because of you...see inside!

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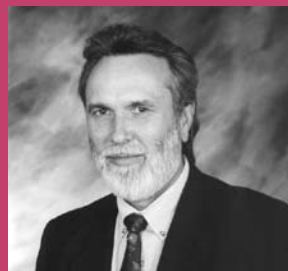
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FROM THE DIRECTOR



RODNEY W. BIVENS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

After a long summer break, children in central and western Oklahoma are heading back to the classroom to begin another year of school.

For some students, this new school year is full of potential for gaining important new skills and knowledge. But for students from low-income families who can't afford to provide the nutritious food they need on a daily basis, the odds are already stacked against them. It's nearly impossible for children to concentrate in class when their stomachs are growling.

But thanks to friends like you, there are far fewer children with growling stomachs in the classroom. Your generosity during our Matching Challenge provided much-needed resources for the summer, when financial donations typically drop. Because of your faithful support of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma, children had enough to eat throughout the summer and are ready to succeed in a new school year. And with your help, there will be plenty for them to eat this fall, too.

One very special program that you make possible is *Food 4 Kids*, which provides backpacks of nutritious food to chronically hungry elementary school children every Friday during the school year. Thanks to your gifts, this program has expanded significantly to serve more than 5,600 children in 182 schools in 29 central and western Oklahoma counties. On the next page you can read more about how you are helping transform children's lives through *Food 4 Kids*.

Astronaut Buzz Aldrin once said, "If we can conquer space, we can conquer childhood hunger." I hope you will continue to join us in "*Fighting Hunger...Feeding Hope*" in our community – with your help we are one step closer to ensuring that all children have enough to eat.

**"If we can conquer space,
we can conquer
childhood hunger"**

Kids are Ready to Learn Because of You!

When a child is hungry, it's almost impossible for her to concentrate on anything but her empty stomach, much less her teacher's lessons.

At Telstar Elementary in Oklahoma City, staff member Candi Ahrens found many students were having a hard time paying attention in her computer class because they were so hungry. So three years ago, the school implemented the Regional Food Bank's *Food 4 Kids* program to combat the problem of childhood hunger.

Food 4 Kids, a program which your gifts make possible, provides backpacks of healthy, kid-friendly food to chronically hungry elementary school children every weekend throughout the school year. Candi, the *Food 4 Kids* Coordinator at Telstar, says last year they served 115 children, all of whom were on the free and reduced-price school meal program and come from low-income families. Without school meals on the weekends, many of these children were coming to school on Monday mornings without having had a full meal since lunch on Friday.

"These little backpacks have a dramatic impact on the kids," she says. "If they're hungry in class, they can't concentrate."

Ten-year-old Rykeem and 6-year-old Lesley have been taking home backpacks through *Food 4 Kids* for two years. Their mother, Lucritia, says the food they receive has made a huge difference for their family.

"It helps a lot!" she says. "There's a lot of good food in the backpack – it's not junk food. A lot of it is stuff we can't afford to buy."

Lucritia adds that both Rykeem and Lesley have been able to concentrate better in class now that they have nutritious food to eat on the weekends.



Lesley and Rykeem look forward to taking their backpacks of food home each Friday.

"They look forward to it every week!" she says.

Candi says dozens of other families have been impacted by the *Food 4 Kids* program as well. Mrs. Faulkner, a Pre-K teacher at Telstar, says she often gets thank you notes from parents of students on the program.

You make it possible for *Food 4 Kids* to feed thousands of children just like Rykeem and Lesley across central and western Oklahoma. Because of you, these children will be able to start each school week ready to focus on their futures rather than their empty stomachs.

Thank You for Doing Your Part to Fight Hunger!

As children begin a new year of school, it's important for them to receive the nourishment they need. That's why the support of friends like you is so invaluable. Your gifts to the Regional Food Bank ensure that central and western Oklahomans of all ages have plenty to eat throughout the year. Thank you for all you do!



WE'D LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING GROUPS FOR DOING THEIR PART TO HELP THEIR NEIGHBORS IN NEED:

KEEP ON TRUCKIN'!

Thanks to Chesapeake Energy Corporation and Devon Energy Corporation, the Food Bank trucks are sporting a whole new look these days! Visit our website at www.regionalfoodbank.org and click on the tractor trailer graphic to check them out!

THE SARKEYS FOUNDATION

Thanks to the Sarkeys Foundation and their 3-year, \$150,000 commitment to *Food 4 Kids*, more than 1,200 elementary school children will receive a backpack of food throughout the 2007-2008 school year. Thank you for your generosity!

RBC DAIN RAUSCHER

More than 40 elementary school children will receive food to sustain them over the weekends and school holidays thanks to a generous \$5,000 donation from RBC Dain Rauscher to the *Food 4 Kids* program. We're so grateful for your partnership!

BUTTERFIELD MEMORIAL FOUNDATION

Thank you to Butterfield Memorial Foundation for donating \$10,000 to help the Regional Food Bank achieve its mission of helping the charitable community effectively feed people in need.

FEEDING HOPE AND LETTER CARRIERS FOOD DRIVE

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year's Letter Carriers Food Drive such a success! We raised more than \$274,000 in donations and more than 405,000 pounds of food! Thank you to all the generous Oklahomans who donated – you made this the most successful food drive on record!

TASK FORCE ON HUNGER

Governor Brad Henry signed the Hunger Task Force Bill on June 4th, calling for a collaborative effort to evaluate and recommend solutions to the issue of hunger in Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA REDHAWKS

Baseball fans received a free ticket to the June 22nd Oklahoma Redhawks game in exchange for a canned food donation to the Food Bank. Thank you, Redhawks!

DONOR RECEPTION

John and Gail Wynne and Gary and Connie Hulse hosted a donor reception in the Wynnes' home in Enid on June 26th. More than 70 people came by to learn more about the Food Bank's mission and its impact on Garfield County. Thank you to all who attended!

MAKE SURE TO SAVE THE DATE FOR THESE SPECIAL EVENTS!

HOPE'S HARVEST

Mark your calendars and make plans to attend *Hope's Harvest* on Thursday, November 1st. This free, hour-long informational luncheon gives you a chance to see and hear more about the great work being done through the Food Bank because of your gifts.

COMBINED FEDERAL CAMPAIGN

The 2007 Combined Federal Campaign of Central Oklahoma is just around the corner. To support the Regional Food Bank, please mark our **NEW designation code 67922**. Thank you for your support!

You Give Hope to a Family in Crisis

PROFILE

When Kimberly's husband was seriously injured in an accident last year, she knew life would be difficult for them and their four children while he was out of work during his recovery. But she never imagined the family would be forced to split up after losing their home.

With only food stamps and her oldest son's disability check for income, Kimberly was unable to pay the family's mounting bills, leaving them to move in with various friends.

The family has since been reunited, but making ends meet is still a challenge. Kimberly says food stamps rarely stretch until the end of the month because meat, milk and baby formula are so expensive. Keeping enough food in the house for a large family has been hard, especially during the summer when the children are out of school.

But Kimberly knows she can get help from The Lord's Harvest Food Pantry when she needs food. This partner agency of the Regional Food Bank offers a special distribution at Burton Park in El Reno every Wednesday evening for families in need – and your gifts make this possible. Kimberly comes every week for nutritious groceries to feed her family.

"It's definitely a blessing," she says. "I don't know what I'd do without it!"

Kimberly's husband recently returned to his job, and she says their financial situation is looking better now that he's able to work again.

"It's definitely looking up," she says. "I can't wait to get ahead of the bills!"

You're giving hope to Kimberly's family and thousands of others just like them in central and western Oklahoma through your gifts to the Food Bank. Because of your compassion, she and her husband don't have to choose between paying bills and buying groceries.

"Thank you, thank you is all I can say!" she says genuinely.

You are truly changing lives with your generosity. Thank you for caring for your neighbors in need.



Kimberly and her son Jacob take home groceries from the Lord's Harvest distribution at Burton Park.

A Man with a Mission

In 1975, 21-year-old Eugene left his home in Melbourne, Florida to try to start a new life in Houston, Texas. He hadn't been able to find a job in Florida and wanted to get away from his troubled past clouded with substance abuse and a difficult home life.

But his arrival in Houston brought a familiar rush of overwhelming panic.

"I looked up at all the buildings and thought, 'what am I gonna do now?'" he recalls. "I had no family and no friends. I had nobody to turn to at all."

Having spent all his money on the trip, Eugene desperately looked for a way to survive in a new city. Finding a job wasn't as easy as he thought it would be and he had nowhere to live. Eugene was suddenly homeless. He found a local Salvation Army, where he stayed for three months while working different manual labor jobs each day.

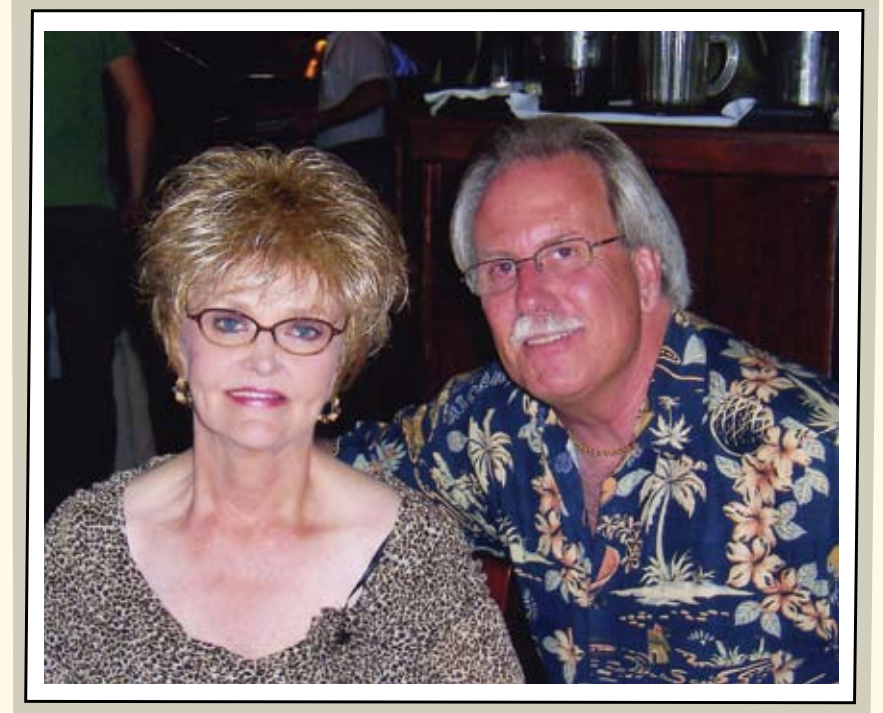
"I would get up at 4:30 every morning and work for \$2 an hour, working eight and nine hour days," he says. But at the end of the day, there was always something hot to eat at the Salvation Army.

Eugene was finally offered a steady job three months later. Since then, he has maintained full-time employment for more than three decades and even earned a college degree. He now lives in Moore, Oklahoma with his wife and makes a good living as a truck driver.

Now that Eugene has turned his life around, he is passionate about giving back to the community that helped him when he was in need. He is an incredibly faithful Food Bank donor who has made it his mission to give nearly every week.

"I look at what I ate for three months of my life, and if I can give a child a meal, it's such a small price to give back," he says through tears. "This is my way of saying 'thank you.'"

Eugene also encourages others to give back.



Eugene and his wife, Toni.

"Think about the money you spend for one meal, even if it's just \$10" he says. "If you took that \$10 and gave it to the Regional Food Bank, you could help 70 people have a meal tonight instead of buying a hamburger."

There's no sufficient way to express the gratitude we have for Eugene's generosity and for all of the gracious friends who make our work possible every day.

New IRA Rules Make Giving Easier

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 allows transfers from your IRA to go directly to a qualified charity. The provision provides for a reduction in gross income for certain distributions of up to \$100,000 from your IRA or Roth IRA account, which would otherwise be included as part of your income.

Requirements:

- + Donor must be at least 70 ½ years old
- + Distributions may not exceed \$100,000 per year
- + Gifts must be transferred directly to charity
- + No donor advised funds

If you would like more information about how the IRA Rollover might work for you, please contact us at (405) 972-1111, ext. 113 or email plannedgiving@regionalfoodbank.org. To view an informational video on IRA Rollovers, visit the Estate Planning section at our web site, www.regionalfoodbank.org.