



THE LINK

"Fighting Hunger... Feeding Hope"™

HOLIDAY 2011



REGIONAL
**FOOD
BANK**
of Oklahoma

www.regionalfoodbank.org

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**FEEDING
AMERICA**

You're Spreading JOY
this Holiday Season!

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RODNEY W. BIVENS

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friend,

For some Oklahoma families, the holidays can be bittersweet. Spending time with loved ones is a joy, but when it comes time for sharing a special meal, there may not be enough food to go around.

This is one of the most challenging holiday seasons we've seen in a while. The [Regional Food Bank](#) is struggling to keep up with increasing need. Our food supply is lower than it's been in more than five years, due in part to a 40 percent reduction in national donations. That means there's less food for the Food Bank to distribute to our partner agencies, and less for them to give away to Oklahomans in need.

On top of the ongoing economic downturn, rural Oklahoma was hit especially hard with this year's drought. Families who may have never needed help before, are struggling to make ends meet.

Through it all, I'm endlessly grateful to supporters like you who continue to make our work possible every day. Without you, thousands of our Oklahoma neighbors could go hungry this holiday season.

As you come together with loved ones to share and celebrate this holiday season, please remember our less fortunate neighbors. Oklahomans in need are counting on you not just to fill their empty stomachs, but to give them real hope in the form of food.

Thank you so much for all you do, and as you read this issue of *The Link*, I hope you'll see just how important your support of the Food Bank is to the families you help.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

- Anne Frank

Happy holidays!

You're Putting Meals on the Table this Holiday Season

In the small western Oklahoma town of Woodward, Jamie and her husband are doing all they can to provide for their two young children, 5-year-old Leo and infant daughter Millie.

This past summer's drought left the family without much income from their landscaping business. Jamie's husband has been picking up as many extra jobs as he can, but they're still behind on their bills. Jamie wishes she could work, too, but childcare is so expensive that she doesn't have a choice but to stay home with the children.

Jamie dreams of going back to school to help lift her family out of their current situation, but until then, she needs some temporary help just to put food on the table.

Jamie is already nervous about providing enough food for both children when Leo is out of school for the holiday break and won't have access to school meals. A big family meal to celebrate the holidays seems out of the question. But that's where you come in.

Your support of the [Regional Food Bank](#) means struggling families in Woodward have access to free, nutritious groceries through the Living Word Fellowship Church, a Food Bank partner agency. Jamie is so relieved and grateful to have found a helping hand when she needed it most.

"Without a place like this, we don't know what we'd do," she says, honestly.



Leo especially loves the fresh fruit that comes from the agency – a luxury many families in need can't afford at the grocery store.

Now, thanks to you, Jamie's family not only has food on the table, they'll have a happier holiday season.

"Thank you for providing a resource for those that have nowhere else to turn," says Jamie.



Hungry Oklahomans are Thankful for YOU!

THANK YOU!

DORADA FOODS/LOPEZ FOODS DONATES CHICKEN PATTIES!

The Food Bank would like to thank Dorada Foods/Lopez Foods for its generous donation of nearly 120,000 pounds of chicken patties in September. Protein items are always a luxury for the Food Bank, so this food donation is especially appreciated. Thank you, Dorada Foods/Lopez Foods!

OKLAHOMA'S OWN RIDE AGAINST CHILDHOOD HUNGER

Griffin Communications – parent company of News9, held the first motorcycle ride to help raise funds and awareness about the issue of childhood hunger in Oklahoma. More than 200 riders and their passengers joined morning news anchor, Stan Miller, on Saturday, September 17th for the ride from Oklahoma City to Stillwater. Participants were treated to breakfast at News9, courtesy of MIO, and BBQ and a live auction at Forman Harley Davidson in Stillwater. Sponsors included: Gold Sponsor Masonic Fraternities of Oklahoma, Made in Oklahoma Coalition, Love's Country Stores, Sandridge Energy and Rococo. Nearly \$78,000 was raised through this year's ride event.

FOOD FOR KIDS MATCH

Thanks to Top of the World, Harris Foundation-OKC, Trusted Choice – Independent Insurance Agents of Oklahoma and an anonymous local donor, every gift to the [Regional Food Bank's](#) Food for Kids program was matched dollar for dollar up to \$100,000 in August and September. Your overwhelming generosity helped us not only reach, but exceed the match! Because of you, thousands of chronically hungry children will be fed this school year. Thank you!

STUDENTS AGAINST HUNGER

More than 200 metro and rural elementary, middle and high schools participated in this year's Students Against Hunger Food drive that wrapped up on November 4. Results from the food drive will be posted on our website as soon as all the food is collected and weighed. Thank you to the Young Lawyers Association, Chesapeake Energy and Devon Energy for sponsoring this event.

CITY, STATE AND FEDERAL EMPLOYEES

We would like to thank all the dedicated City, State and Federal employees who participated in their workplace giving campaigns. The money raised through these campaigns provides us with sustainable funding for our many services. Remember, our Designation Code for the Combined Federal Campaign is 67922. Our Designation Code for the State Charitable Campaign and the Heart of the City Campaign is 9220. We look forward to reporting on the success of these three campaigns!

HOPE'S HARVEST

We would like to thank the Chabad Center for Jewish Life and Learning for hosting Hope's Harvest on October 6th and Nechoma Goldman for catering the wonderful lunch. The event was successful in large part because of the support from Rabbi Cohen, Rabbi Goldman, Rabbi Jacobson and the Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City. A special thank you goes out to our speakers, Michael Joseph, Coach John Jensen and Michael Pollack for their help with the program.

DAY OF SERVICE

Thank you to all of the Board Members, Partners in Hope and their family and friends that volunteered at the Regional Food Bank on Saturday, September 10th for the second annual Day of Service. Who knew wearing hairnets and working with frozen food could be so much fun?

CREST 23RD INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

The CREST 23rd Annual Invitational Golf Tournament raised a record \$50,000 and donated 184,000 pounds of food to the [Regional Food Bank](#) this year! Thank you, CREST!

CAUSE MARKETING PARTNERS

The Regional Food Bank would like to thank Eat Around OKC, Allens Vegetables and Champion Windows for supporting the fight against hunger through their cause marketing campaigns.

THANK YOU TO THE FOLLOWING ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS GIFTS TO THE FOOD BANK:

The Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation • Better Days Foundation, Inc. • Carl C. Anderson, Sr. and Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation • Clyde Evans Charitable Trust • David W. Gorham Gift Fund • E. L. and Thelma Gaylord Foundation • J. Kenneth Davidson Trust • Judith E. Drabek Revocable Living Trust • J. Lyndall McCrory, Robert Fulton McCrory and Montie Ray McCrory Foundation • ONEOK Foundation, Inc. • The Philip Boyle Foundation • Sodexo Foundation, Inc. • Southern Oklahoma Memorial Foundation

JOIN US!

GOVERNOR FALLIN'S "FEEDING OKLAHOMA FOOD DRIVE" NOVEMBER 1 - 22

Please join Governor Mary Fallin by participating in the "Feeding Oklahoma Food Drive" to help feed our hungry Oklahoma neighbors this holiday season. For details on the food drive, visit www.feedoklahoma.org.

BEDLAM FOOD FIGHT | NOVEMBER 21

Join Magic 104.1 KMGL on Monday, November 21st from 5:30 – 10 a.m. for the University of Oklahoma vs. Oklahoma State University Bedlam Food Fight! Put your money where your team spirit is and drop your donation in the OU or OSU collection box. The real winners are the hungry Oklahomans who will be fed because of your generosity. Listen to Magic 104.1 for details.

KRAFT HUDDLE TO FIGHT HUNGER | NOW THROUGH JANUARY 9, 2012

This fall, the company that helps you feed your family is on a mission to help feed America by donating 25 million meals to families across America. Go to facebook.com/kraftfighthunger and simply "LIKE" the Huddle to Fight Hunger page. Then, type in your zip code and a meal will automatically be generated for the Regional Food Bank! Locally, Kraft is also promoting a 'text to give' campaign at every OU and OSU home game – find out more in your game program!

TAX CHECK-OFF | TAX YEAR 2011

If you would like to donate a portion of your state income tax return from tax year 2011, be sure to fill out form 511-G (Donations from a Refund) and check the box marked "Oklahoma Food Banks." Your donation will be used to help provide food to thousands of hungry Oklahomans. Thank you!

CHEFS' FEAST | MARCH 29, 2012

Join us for our 25th annual Chefs' Feast, presented by Chesapeake Energy, at the National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum. This delectable food and wine tasting event benefits the Regional Food Bank's Childhood Hunger Programs. To reserve your patron table, contact Angie Gaines at 405-604-7109 or againes@regionalfoodbank.org.

You're Helping a Mother Support her Sons

This holiday season, Effie is more grateful than you can imagine just to have a roof over her children's heads. Having a home and food to put on the table for 4-year-old Christopher and 13-year-old Bailey is not something she takes for granted.

This time last year, Effie was unemployed and looking everywhere for work. She and the boys moved to Oklahoma City with the hopes of better opportunities. But it took them longer to get on their feet than she'd anticipated. Effie and her children ended up sleeping in a shelter at night while she looked for work during the day.

Realizing she would have to create her own job if she was going to go back to work anytime soon, Effie started a cleaning company. Before long, she and the boys found a house they could afford to rent.

Effie was ecstatic to move out of the shelter and into their own home, but starting from scratch meant they had no food at all. Fortunately, Effie had heard about the Catholic Charities Women's Sanctuary, a partner agency of the [Regional Food Bank](#). The volunteers at Catholic Charities made sure Effie's kitchen was stocked so that she could support her children from day one in the new house.

Christopher is now in HeadStart and Bailey is in the 6th grade. Both receive free meals at school, which has been a huge help for Effie. But during the holiday break, she knows it's going to be a struggle to feed them, let alone have a special meal to celebrate as a family.



Effie and Bailey

She's so grateful to know that when things get really tight, your support means there will once again be food available for her family at the Catholic Charities food pantry.

"Thank you," says Effie. "You are always here when we need you and we genuinely appreciate everything you do."

YOU'RE INVITED!

We want to know more about the fight against hunger in your community. The Regional Food Bank is hosting a series of town hall meetings throughout central and western Oklahoma. Please join us to find out how you can help amplify the local voice for creating a hunger-free Oklahoma. To learn more, contact Torri Christian, Advocacy and Public Policy Manager, at (405) 600-3129 or tchristian@regionalfoodbank.org.

The Advocacy and Public Policy Department was made possible through a generous grant from MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger.

A Selfless Example of Service

Ralph Wheeler isn't one to sit around – he may be retired, but he's nearly as busy as ever. Much of Ralph's time is spent volunteering now, something he loves to do – especially when it means helping feed Oklahoma's hungry.

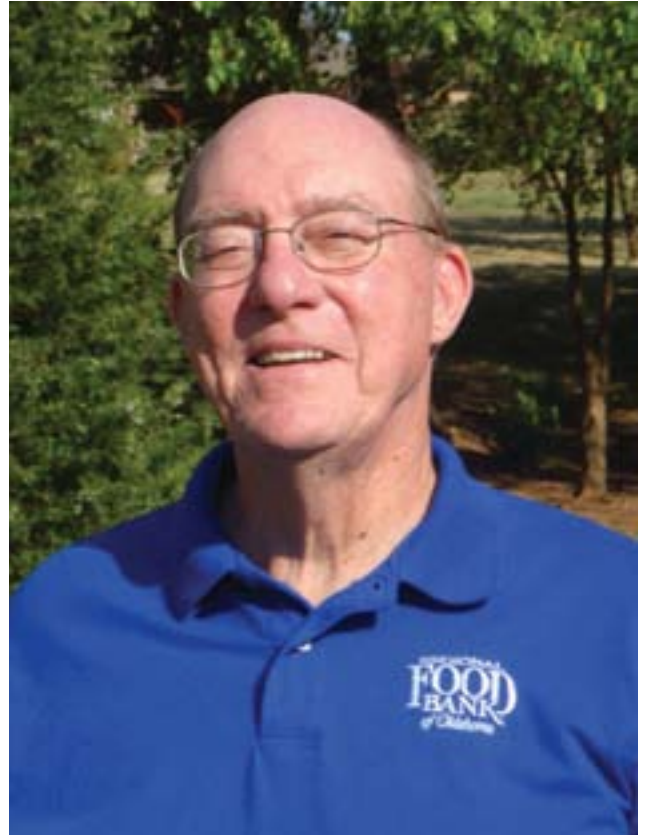
Ralph is a volunteer team leader at the [Regional Food Bank](#), rounding up volunteer and financial support wherever he goes. One of his best connections is to the Knights of Columbus. As a member himself, Ralph started encouraging the Knights to come out to help at the Food Bank one night a week. Word caught on quickly and more and more Knights got involved. Ralph says that once he started getting the word out to the Knights about the Food Bank, his phone started ringing with donations.

There are more than 20 Knights of Columbus councils within the Oklahoma City area, and Ralph hopes that by this time next year, they'll all be involved with the Food Bank in some capacity. He hopes to reach those outside of Oklahoma City, too.

But Ralph's involvement doesn't stop with the Knights of Columbus. He also has conducted food drives at his church, in local small businesses and in elementary schools.

Ralph sees his work with the Food Bank as a way to exercise his faith. As a retiree, he had been praying about how to give back to those in need, now that he has more time. He says he felt a calling to help feed the hungry.

Ralph has a real heart for children, the elderly and disabled – especially in rural areas where resources are sometimes scarce. That's why Ralph continues to expand his efforts to raise food and funds for the Food Bank, and he isn't planning on slowing down anytime soon.



Ralph Wheeler

"I've accomplished a lot of things that I didn't know I was going to be able to do," says Ralph, with humble satisfaction. "I was just a volunteer – look at how much one person can do."

We're so grateful for Ralph and all his efforts that help feed Oklahomans of all ages. He's setting a selfless example that hopefully many more will follow!

REMEMBER THE FOOD BANK IN YOUR WILL, ESTATE OR TRUST



You have the opportunity to pass on your values and make a lasting impact on a cause that is important to you through a will, trust or bequest. For more information, visit our estate planning page on the web at: www.regionalfoodbank.org. Simply follow the link to "Take Action/Financial Planning" for abundant planning resources. You can also email us at plannedgiving@regionalfoodbank.org.

You Give Families Something to Celebrate

“FIGHTING HUNGER...FEEDING HOPE”™

Shelly never thought her family would be the one in need. She and her husband both worked and their three children never had to go without. They were a content, loving family.

But tragically, Shelly's husband was killed in a car accident, an event that changed her family's life in so many ways. While dealing with the heavy burdens of grief and loss, Shelly was now on her own to support her family.

At first they were getting by on Shelly's job at the GM plant and her work as a part time substitute teacher. They receive a small amount of survivor benefits from her late husband as well.

But unfortunately, the downturned economy has hit Shelly and her family hard. The GM plant where she worked closed down, and soon after, school budget cuts meant she was being called less often for substitute teaching jobs.

Shelly admits that it was hard to ask for help, but when she realized all she could afford to feed her children meal after meal was inexpensive ramen noodles or boxed macaroni and cheese, she knew she had to do something.

She reached out to the food pantry at Highland Baptist Church in Moore, OK, a partner agency of the [Regional Food Bank](#). She was delighted to receive not only shelf-stable canned goods, cereal and rice,



but frozen meat and other fresh foods. The healthy variety of food gave her such relief, knowing her children could be truly nourished.

This holiday season, for the first time in a while, Shelly and her children will have something to celebrate, thanks to you. Rather than noodles and broth, they'll have a traditional family meal.

“My kids are so excited...” says Shelly. “I am thankful for this food. Please continue to give to those less fortunate.”

The mission of the Regional Food Bank of Oklahoma is “Fighting Hunger...Feeding Hope.”™



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3355 S. Purdue
Oklahoma City, OK 73137-0968
405-972-1111

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Send your comments to Angie Gaines, Marketing Manager, at againes@regionalfoodbank.org.

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 Chesapeake