

## WHAT HUNGER & COMPASSION LOOKS LIKE ON THE FRONT LINES



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## BARBARA

**B**arbara Rogers is the Pastor, Founder and Overseer of One Way Deliverance Ministry. She has been a pastor for 19 years and says she has seen so much, both from her time in New Orleans during Katrina, and now here for many years after relocating her ministry to Baton Rouge.

“So many people are hurting and dealing with so many disparities, especially our young people,” says Rogers. “Young mothers and their children, our elderly. Our elderly are trying to manage what they have. If they are getting a fixed income, after they pay bills or maybe buy medicine they don’t have enough for food. So it is vital that we help them in this regard, as much as we can.”

Each month, One Way Deliverance Ministry receives about 300 families coming to the pantry to receive food, however Barbara believes that number will increase soon as they have recently taken on a new area due to another pantry closing. With the food they receive from the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, the pantry is able to help people from many different backgrounds.

“The situations are dire,” states Rogers. “Some people who are working are not making enough to make ends meet. You see them come in with their little children and my heart goes out to them because I was a single parent for years and I understand the struggle. When I was coming up as a young woman, raising four kids on my own because I was divorced, I would go to St. Mary’s Food Bank years ago and they helped us so many times. So when I was called into the community service work, I knew that food had to be one of the main services that we offered.”

Now, One Way Deliverance Ministry not only has a pantry, but they offer other programs to help those in need. Having once been in need and now being in a position to help others, Rogers comes from a place of empathy toward people who visit her pantry.

“You know what it is to feel what they feel. And then it gives you the place of understanding what real compassion is. To be compassionate to their needs because you’ve been there and it’s real. It’s a real need, the disparities are real.”

Occasionally, people just need a little help. Barbara suggests, “Give people a chance. Don’t down them, but give them a hand up. We have to try to help pull them up... When people have been hurt by life and have gone through so much pain and disappointment and rejection, many of them feel that’s all life has for them. They don’t think that they deserve anything better or that they can obtain anything better. But we can help them, share with them. Ask ‘what is it we can help you with to make your life better?’”

“Please consider the poor. Please consider that the needs are vital, they are great,” she says. “And when you help somebody, you really help yourself. If we can come together collectively and pull someone up out of the trenches and out of a bad situation, it’s going to help the whole system. It’s going to help the whole community... We have to love everyday. There are 365 days of the year and we have to show love.”

# OPENING HEARTS - GIVING BIG IN A SMALL BUSINESS WORLD



A local T-shirt company continues to make their mark in Baton Rouge as people purchase their shirts showcasing the spirit of Louisiana. But it is the company's spirit of giving that is truly establishing a legacy of making a difference in the lives of others.

Meredith Waguespack started Southern Football Tees, SFT, in 2011 as a way to share her love for football. SFT's original t-shirt designs were focused around just that but over time they have evolved into so much more.

"We're more than just football t-shirts, we're a collection of all things Louisiana," says Meredith. "I think Louisiana is a very special place and I think a lot of people who either live here or who have to move away, want something to carry with them and represent the state that they're from with pride.

A small operation with a big heart, Meredith was able to build a SFT brand that resonates with both locals and visitors of Louisiana. From the very beginnings of SFT, Meredith always believed in the importance of supporting nonprofits through her business.

"I think it's important to, immediately right when you start your business, align yourself with somebody to give back. I think it's an important way to get involved with your community and to get involved with something bigger than yourself."

When the 2016 flood hit and impacted the community – as well as the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank – SFT quickly sprang into action. SFT's designer, Sarah, created the iconic Cajun Navy t-shirt design and it quickly became a hit within the community. During the August 2016 Flood, SFT donated more than \$50,000 to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in honor of the 2016 Cajun Navy.

"We had always loved and appreciated what the Food Bank does,

so we just knew that it was in line for us to give back to them because of all the things that they do for the community," she says. "When the flood came, we decided to find a way to give back through the Cajun Navy t-shirt design and we were just inundated with sales – especially within the first 24 hours."

Over the course of two weeks, they had more than 2,000 orders. Not only was this donation an amazing contribution to the Food Bank, but it was also a significant donation for a local, small business.

"It was just really rewarding to be able to do that, to be able to give back to the Food Bank and especially that amount. It was huge... I am always shocked and still amazed, for what this shirt has done," Meredith says.

Since 2016, SFT has continued to donate to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and has continued to be supportive during recent natural disasters. The Cajun Navy tee has now helped to bring in donations of over \$80,000. With the support from small business just like SFT, the Food Bank is able to continue to fight hunger.

Going forward, SFT has merged with Sweet Baton Rouge to be a one-stop shop for all Louisiana lifestyle apparel and accessories. Meredith says she also hopes to continue to align her business with the Food Bank to help with natural disasters.

"Wherever the Food Bank in Baton Rouge is going to be pulling their resources to go somewhere, we want to be the brand that can help."

You can find out more about SFT, now known as Sweet Baton Rouge, by visiting [sweetbatonrouge.com](http://sweetbatonrouge.com) or on Facebook and Instagram.

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## MEREDITH

## THE IMPORTANCE OF NUTRITION IN FIGHTING HUNGER



“This is a whole new position and venture for the Food Bank and I am excited to be part of the planning and creation of it.”

**JORDYN**

**K**ick-starting a New Year can be an exciting time with the promise of new beginnings and a fresh start. During this time, many individuals turn their focus to creating new, healthy habits. But did you know that many Feeding America food banks across the country have not only strived to provide food to those in need, but have focused on offering nutritious food as well?

Good nutrition is so important for good health, preventing diseases as well as healthy growth and development of children and teens. However, sometimes a food-insecure household isn't always able to choose healthy food items. Many times, they are forced to cope by consuming cheaper foods that are often higher in calories, yet low in nutritional value.

An article listed on Feeding America's website, *Hunger and Health*, says, “Reliance on less healthy foods can lead to toxic stress, poor nutrition, and chronic diet-related diseases such as diabetes and obesity. In turn, these chronic illnesses can worsen existing disabilities or other illnesses or result in inability to work and increased healthcare costs, which further restrict the household food budget. Once a person or family enters the cycle, it can be increasingly difficult to escape it.”

The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank has recently hired a Nutrition Services Manager, Jordyn Barlow. She is responsible for carrying out programs focused on teaching food recipients how to eat healthy on a budget through cooking courses, grocery store tours and other educational tools. Jordyn is also helping with basic nutrition planning for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank's Farm Fresh and Adopt-A-Senior programs. Jordyn's previous work experience has been focused on health education and nonprofit work.

“I am very excited about this role because it brings my degree background and passion for nonprofit work together in one,” she says. “This is a whole new position and venture for the Food Bank and I am excited to be part of the planning and creation of it.”

To learn more about donating healthy food items, visit [brfoodbank.org/top-food-items-to-donate/](http://brfoodbank.org/top-food-items-to-donate/) or call (225) 359-9940.

# Q&A

WITH BOARD MEMBER  
**DANE BABIN**



In part of an ongoing series, we will be sharing thoughts and ideas on the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in a Q&A format so that you can get to know our board members better and also learn how we are working to better serve those in need. We recently sat down with board member Dane Babin, Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer of Investar Bank.

**Q:** What are some of your hobbies?

**A:** Golf, wood working, running and spending time with my family.

**Q:** What's one thing people may not know about you?

**A:** I enjoy working on old (what I consider classic) cars. I recently drove to Arkansas to get a 1996 Ford Bronco to restore.

**Q:** Why did you decide to join the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank's Board?

**A:** I was looking for a nonprofit to donate my time to and a good friend who was on the board suggested I join. She had told me about the feeling she had felt knowing her time and opinions would help ensure people in need would get food. I liked the way that feeling sounded.

**Q:** Why do you think the work of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is important to the community?

**A:** It is our duty as Christians to help those in need however we can. Many people struggle to put enough on their plates to feed themselves and their children. The Food Bank allows them to focus less on where their next meal is coming from and more on how to overcome the remaining obstacles in their lives.

**Q:** What are you most proud of about the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank/What excites you most about the Food Bank's future?

**A:** I'm proudest every time I see the amount of pounds of food or funds to buy food a drive or event has raised to support the Food Bank. It was also amazing to see the community help the Food Bank after the flood damage in 2016. When you see a community reach out and hold you in their arms, that's when you know you are doing good work. Overcoming that disaster and still feeding the community was a great moment for the Food Bank, one the employees should be especially proud of.

**Q:** What can the community do to fight hunger?

**A:** Donate, Donate and Donate - all year long, not just during the holidays.



## FINDING PURPOSE ONE DAY AT A TIME



“I hear people saying, ‘I don’t know what I’d do had it not been for the food pantry’ or ask ‘where would I get food to help my children?’”

# BARBARA

**M**eet Barbara Johnson. She is just one face of many who receive food assistance while struggling to make ends meet every month. Barbara has visited One Way Deliverance Ministry for a couple of years now and she says that every time she has come, the staff has treated her with complete kindness and respect.

“The people are so pleasant and have such great personalities,” says Barbara. “I’m grateful because this food has really helped me. And not only has it helped me, but it has helped other people, who I have come in contact with... This has really been a blessing and I want to genuinely, wholeheartedly say ‘thank you.’”

Barbara also says she appreciates all the staff and people who come to volunteer and help distribute food at the pantry.

“Sometimes I see that the boxes of food are full and heavy, and those people pick up the boxes and carry them to the cars – with a smile on their face. Plus the fact that they are leaving their family, they are leaving their chores to come and to help us and to give to the community. So it’s been a real blessing for me. I thank God that He enabled people to step up and give.”

Barbara says that because she feels so blessed to be helped like she is at the pantry, she often tries to find ways to give back to her community. She feels grateful to be able to give as well as receive. Barbara will often leave clothing and household supplies outside her home for others to take if they have the need. It’s all about sharing.

“I used to wonder all the time what my purpose was,” she said. “I kept praying and asking. I’m almost 77 years old and I need to know my purpose. But as I pondered on it, I realized that giving is my purpose. But I want to genuinely say thank you to Pastor Rogers and the pantry staff because I am a grateful person to have been on the receiving end of these commodities.”

Johnson says there are also so many others at the pantry who are grateful for the food they receive and in many cases the food is their last hope.

“Like myself, people are grateful. A lot of times, I hear people saying, ‘I don’t know what I’d do had it not been for the food pantry’ or ask ‘where would I get food to help my children?’ A lot of people are really grateful for this.”



## DIFFERENT WAYS YOU CAN GIVE TO HELP FEED THOSE IN NEED

While we always accept gifts of food and funds throughout the year, there are some unique ways you can donate to the Food Bank that will help support our mission. Read on to learn more about how you can invest in the Baton Rouge community to help those in need. For more information, contact us at (225) 359-9940. As always, please consult your personal tax professional before making gifts such as these.

**Gift of Cash:** You can deduct cash gifts up to 50 percent of adjusted gross income. On a \$10,000 cash gift in a 28 percent tax bracket, you save \$2,800 in taxes.

**Appreciated Stock:** Appreciated stock makes an excellent gift. You avoid all capital gain taxes, will receive a tax deduction, and can deduct it up to 30 percent of your adjusted gross income.

**Bonds, Mutual Funds:** Similar to cash in their tax treatment, these make excellent gifts. State, Municipal, and Government bonds are welcome gifts.

**Bequest Through Will:** One of the simplest ways is to give of your estate. You can make a gift bequest, after others have been provided for, of a dollar amount, specific property, a percentage of the estate, or what is left (remainder) to the organization.

**Gift of Life Insurance:** A simple way to make a significant future gift is to name the organization beneficiary to receive all, or a portion of the proceeds of an existing life insurance policy. You will receive a tax deduction for the cash surrender value, thus reducing your tax liability in the year of the gift.

**Retirement Accounts:** Retirement Account Funds (IRA's or company plans) beyond the comfortable support of yourself or loved ones may be given (like life insurance proceeds) to the organization by proper beneficiary designation.

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