

NATIONAL GUARD RESPONDS TO FOOD BANK SERVICE NEEDS



“We are here to serve and get the job done. It’s an honor to be part of this team and have a direct impact on the local community.”

EMILY

With the evolving COVID-19 situation, the need for our services has increased as well as our need for volunteers. However, we are seeing a decrease in the number of volunteers at the Food Bank due to an abundance of safety from our community. Our President and CEO, Mike Manning, made a request to the Louisiana governor’s office for the Louisiana National Guard (LANG) to help fill the absence of these volunteers. Due to our history of response in disasters, we knew we could access this resource when needed.

In response to our request, Governor Edwards deployed 10 Guardsmen to our location on March 21, 2020. After seeing the need increase and the number of community volunteers decrease, another 20 Guardsmen were deployed on March 24, 2020. We do have a few volunteers still serving your Food Bank, which allows our community members to work alongside these National Guardsmen to fight hunger in our 11-parish service area. Additionally, some National Guardsmen are also volunteering with us as community

members being deployed to our location as a member of the LANG.

“It’s been an incredible opportunity to serve as a civilian volunteer one week and return the next week as a member of the Louisiana National Guard,” said Second Lieutenant Emily Anthony. “We are here to serve and get the job done. It’s an honor to be part of this team and have a direct impact on the local community.”

LANG is packing close to 1,500 boxes a day of non-perishable food items to be distributed to those in need. This includes items like canned pineapples, canned corn, instant mashed potatoes, boxed macaroni and cheese and more. At the date of publication, the National Guardsmen have packed X boxes to help those in need.

The LANG is also helping to distribute food at our special COVID-19 distributions. These distributions are done in response to those that may not have needed our services before but have been furloughed due to the virus. Also, out of an abundance of caution for their volunteers, we do have

some of our member agencies closing down. These member agencies have clients that need to receive food despite the agency closure resulting in special distributions to take place to fill the void. National Guardsmen take the place of volunteers that would normally help with these distributions to support health and safety concerns.

“Sometimes disasters happen and people are left stranded with no hope. In a disaster like this, many people don’t have jobs and have no way of feeding themselves,” said Second Lieutenant Jesse Frazier. “Our mission to support the Food Bank in a time like this is critical for our community. I wouldn’t want to be doing anything else during this pandemic.”

To learn more on how COVID-19 is affecting the Food Bank or to sign up to volunteer visit brfoodbank.org. If you would like to follow along with the Louisiana National Guard’s journey during the COVID-19 situation, visit geauxguard.la.gov.

SPRING FOOD AND FUNDRAISING EVENTS POSTPONED TO THE FALL



SLICE OF LIFE GOLF CLASSIC GREATER BATON ROUGE FOOD BANK

Rescheduled to Monday, September 28



Rescheduled to Saturday, October 3



Postponed to the Fall
Date TBA

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED | SAFETY FIRST PROTOCOLS



In response to COVID-19, Governor John Bel Edwards issued a Stay at Home Order on March 22, 2020 directing all Louisiana residents to shelter at home and limit movements outside their homes beyond essential needs. However, it is important to note the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank's staff and volunteers provide an essential service to feed the food insecure in our 11-parish service area.

We are asking for volunteers to help us sustain our regular operations as well as the increased demand for food services. The Food Bank, along with our 100+ member agencies, provides essential services each day to some of the most vulnerable people in our community: seniors, children and low-income families struggling to make ends meet. In addition to those we currently serve, we have had an influx of clients that have never needed our services before. In response to COVID-19, many businesses have had to close their doors and now their employees need food assistance.

In 2019, our volunteers completed the work of 17 full-time employees. As the Food Bank is being called upon to ensure that our most vulnerable neighbors have access to the food they need, we cannot provide these vital services without our volunteers.

To ensure the safety of our volunteers, staff and the community we serve, we have increased cleaning and sanitizing of our facility. Volunteers are separated into groups of 10 or less. Volunteers must remain at least six feet apart from one another at all times and wear gloves while participating in volunteer activities. We are following

all safety regulations provided by the CDC, local and state health agencies.

To ensure the safety of our volunteers, staff and the community we serve during this difficult time, we have placed some additional restrictions on volunteers. You will be asked not to volunteer if you answer yes to any of the below questions:

- ▶ Have you been in Orleans Parish or Jefferson Parish in the past two weeks?
- ▶ Are you experiencing flu-like symptoms? (defined by coughing, fever, respiratory symptoms or stomach virus symptoms or have had these symptoms recently)
- ▶ Have you been in contact with anyone who is COVID-19 symptomatic or has been diagnosed with the COVID-19 virus?
- ▶ Have you traveled outside of the United States within the past 14 days?
- ▶ Have you knowingly had contact with a traveler who recently traveled outside of the United States within the past 14 days, or a person who was experiencing flu like symptoms within the past 14 days?

If none of the above apply and you are able to volunteer with us please visit volunteer.brfoodbank.org/calendar to find an opportunity to help us feed those in need.

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UNDERSTANDING THE COVID-19 IMPACT TO YOUR FOOD BANK



We have created special distributions to help those in need during this time that have previously never needed our assistance but are now faced with food insecurity.

As many of you are aware, the Coronavirus (COVID-19) has been rapidly affecting the United States. COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person with symptoms including cough, fever and shortness of breath. These symptoms can show up within one to 14 days of exposure to the virus; if one begins to develop symptoms or comes in contact with someone with the virus, they are being asked to self-quarantine for at least 14 days. Since there is no coronavirus vaccine yet, prevention of spreading the virus includes frequent hand washing, coughing into the bend of your elbow and staying at home if possible.

In response, some of our agencies have closed due to the safety of their volunteers. Seniors operate a majority of our agencies and are the most at-risk age group of potentially catching the virus. In order to fill the void of those who depend on those agencies, we have created special food distributions in those areas.

Additionally, a stay at home order was issued and many businesses have closed, resulting in furloughs. We are responding to the increased number of hungry in our community as many families are experiencing temporary unemployment resulting in a loss of income. We have created special distributions to help those in need during this time that have previously never needed our assistance but are now faced with food insecurity.

It is important to note as well that because the Stay at Home order resulted in a high number of people stockpiling food, we have seen community donations of food drop dramatically. We are having to turn to our food vendors, which in normal times, is able to donate food for the cost of transportation. Because of the lack of food on the store shelves, their supplies are also stretched and there are no donations forthcoming. We are now having to purchase these trucks of food to ensure that people in need don't go hungry.

Donations can be made online through our website to help support our mission of feeding the hungry during this evolving situation. We are also still accepting volunteers as we follow guidelines provided by the CDC, local and state health agencies. Please visit brfoodbank.org for more information.



FOOD BANK DISTRIBUTES BACKPACKS TO MEET NEEDS OF KIDS OUT OF SCHOOL

In response to the COVID-19 evolving situation, schools across Louisiana began to move their lessons to an online platform to keep staff and students safe. This step, while necessary, did present a challenge for students that rely on our Backpack program throughout the school year.

Children in the National School Lunch Program now do not have the security of two meals a day at school. Parents and other caregivers who depend on those meals for their children to manage their household budget must now factor in children in the house full time likely through the summer. Furthermore, we were unable to distribute the backpacks due to the school closures and a total of 1,500 pre-packaged bags of nonperishable food items were sitting idle in our warehouse.

Our annual Backpack Program grantor, BASF, was able to help us find a new way to distribute these meals safely.

“Nutrition plays a critical role for children as they are growing, developing and learning, and during this unprecedented time we wanted to ensure our support would continue to help the most vulnerable,” said Sarah Haneline, BASF employee and Food Bank board member. “After consulting with David Alexander with Ascension Parish Schools, the Food Bank and the Donaldsonville

Mayor’s Office, we determined the best course of action would be to distribute the remaining backpacks through the school feeding program in Donaldsonville so that children in need would have access to nutritious meals while schools are closed.”

With the meal sites being closed during the weekend, our distribution was held on Friday, March 20 at two Donaldsonville meal site locations to ensure children were fed over the weekend. This is similar to our normal distribution of Backpacks being held on Fridays when school was in session to ensure meals are met over the weekend. Also, our board member Tamiko Garrison was able to coordinate on the grounds as an Ascension Parish community member.

“On behalf of the City of Donaldsonville, I would like to thank the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and BASF for collaborating with Mayor Leroy Sullivan, the Donaldsonville City Council members, and David Alexander, Superintendent, Ascension Parish School Board,” said Garrison. “The looks on the children’s and parent’s faces receiving the food were priceless. Both drive-thru locations were a success. I am thankful to say that over 1,500 bags containing 3-4 days of non-perishable food was distributed to the youth of Donaldsonville. Thank you, thank you, and thank you!”

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SARAH

GREATER BATON ROUGE FOOD BANK CELEBRATES 35 YEARS

For 35 years, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank has been committed to feeding the hungry in Baton Rouge and the surrounding parishes. In 1984, volunteers began distributing collected food items in the parking lot of Victoria Baptist Church. From the parking lot, the Food Bank moved into a small house, to a warehouse, to an even bigger warehouse. We are now currently operating out of our current home at the Fraenkel Center, a 172,000 square-foot facility that was previously Fraenkel Furniture. Mr. Albert Fraenkel made it possible for us to acquire the Fraenkel Furniture Warehouse by donating his family's share, valued at \$2.2 million. We would not be functioning at our current capacity without Mr. Fraenkel's donation.

The Food Bank currently serves 11 parishes through outreach programs and over 100 partner agencies. Our Backpack program helps fill the void for children who are at risk of missing meals over the weekend and during holidays when school is not in session. Additionally, our Adopt-A-Senior program provides a 40-pound box of nonperishable items to seniors to allow them to stretch their limited budgets to cover other expenses, like medicine and utility bills.

In 2019, over 11.2 million meals were distributed, 61,988 children were served and 9,718 volunteers helped us execute our mission. New programs were also created, like Cooking Matters, Pick a better snack™ and the Mobile Distribution program, to help us feed those in need in a new and exciting way. Our Cooking Matters program is a six-week course to inspire families to make healthy,

affordable food choices. Our Pick a better snack program™ engages children in fun and informative lessons to influence children to choose fruits and vegetables as snacks at home. Our Mobile Distributions program brings our services to rural areas in our service area where an agency is not already established.

As part of our "from Hunger to Hope" Capital Campaign, Mr. Ron Zappe from Zapp's Potato Chips planned to support the Food Bank with a donation of one of his bulk packaging machines. When Mr. Zappe passed away, his family honored his memory by donating funds to allow us to purchase our own bulk packaging machinery to best fit our needs. Additional funding was donated by the Charles Lamar Family Foundation. We placed this packaging machine into operation before the flood, however, it was lost in the high waters. In 2019, we were able to replace our bulk packaging machine and return it to operation. This innovative bulk packaging machine allows us to repackage bulk, dry food product into individual and family size servings to efficiently maximize every donor's dollar.

"The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank continues to be guided by its mission to feed the hungry for as long as it takes until we are no longer needed and our mission is accomplished," said Mike Manning, President and CEO of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. "With the help of our donors and our volunteers, we look toward a bright future feeding the hungry in our 11-parish service area."



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