

MARY'S HOUSE OF BREAD PROVIDING HOPE TO NORTH BATON ROUGE



In the community of North Baton Rouge, sits a unique kind of house that has been helping those less fortunate for over two decades. It's not a traditional family home, but rather a home where hundreds of families come for food, clothing, and most of all - hope.

Mary's House of Bread, located on Plank Road north of the airport, has been serving those who are food insecure since 2001. As recently as November of 2021, Mary's House of Bread was facing closure after two decades of serving the community.

Steve Bridges saw a great need for food assistance in the area, so he answered the call to breathe new life into the pantry.

"This area of north Baton Rouge is hurting, and we see it firsthand," said Steve. "I pastor the church up the road and seeing the needs of people made me want to get involved and do this. We want people to know that there is someone who cares. We had to step up to keep it open."

Steve along with his brother and other community volunteers worked to revitalize the pantry and over time, turned what was once a dilapidated old grocery store, into a food pantry that also serves as a thrift shop. The thrift store helps defray the costs of

rent and electricity so that donated funds can be used to purchase more food.

Mary's House of Bread serves 320 families per month by distributing roughly 15,000 pounds of food. Of the 1,200 individuals served monthly, hundreds are children.

"In the summer, we see children knocking on our back doors looking for food," stated Steve. "We do what we can to help them as much as we are able to. We see the need is great and we understand that."

Steve is most thankful for both the food the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, which provides food at no charge, and the host of community supporters who help them thrive.

"We've just been blessed with a lot of people who want to get involved, donate financially, bring in supplies and things. We don't have any paid staff or paid volunteers, just people who have a heart for other people. When someone walks through the doors, they aren't going to be looked down upon. They are going to see a friendly face and someone who really cares for them. And our purpose is to help people get back on their feet."



ALBERT FRAENKEL | A LEGACY OF GIVING BACK

We at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank are heartbroken at the passing of Mr. Albert Fraenkel. He was a dedicated friend to the entire community, and he will truly be missed by everyone here at the Food Bank. As we continue to keep his family and dear friends in our thoughts and prayers, we remember and honor his legacy of philanthropic efforts to make this community better.

Mr. Fraenkel's entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to serve others began in 1959, when he founded Fraenkel Co. in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. What began as a \$50,000 start up from savings, loans from friends, and a pay-as-you sell agreement with a bedding manufacturer, quickly began to grow into a budding business. Over the years, more and more employees were hired, and the operation expanded to add upholstery and furniture distribution.

Fraenkel Co. served the Greater Baton Rouge area for decades as a successful, 100% employee stock owned company with over 1,000 employees at its peak. As much as Mr. Fraenkel believed employees should have ownership in the business they worked to support, he equally stressed the importance of taking care of those who are less fortunate in the community.

Mr. Fraenkel was an active supporter of so many great organizations and entities here in Baton Rouge. He served as president of the Rotary Club of Baton Rouge along with board positions for Baton Rouge Area Foundation, Chamber of Commerce, United Way,

LABI, Audubon Council Girl Scouts, Community for the Arts, and Junior Achievement. He was also inducted into the Baton Rouge Business Report Hall of Fame and named Outstanding Philanthropist by the Baton Rouge Association of Fundraising Professionals in 2014.

As years passed, Mr. Fraenkel continued to hold the Baton Rouge community near and dear to his heart. After manufacturing at the Baton Rouge office location was replaced with newer facilities in Carrollton, Texas and Branch, Mississippi, Mr. Fraenkel saw an opportunity to breathe new life into the existing, unoccupied Baton Rouge warehouse.

With giving back to those less fortunate in mind, he made the decision to donate a major portion of the facility to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank so that more food could be processed, packaged, and distributed - helping thousands more families in need. It was an absolute game changer for your Food Bank, quintupling our operating space from our old location.

For nearly a decade now, the refurbished 172,000 square foot facility has allowed us to expand operations and grow our mission, distributing millions of pounds of food annually to help families in need. Our continued growth was possible because of the vision and philanthropic spirit of one man, Mr. Albert Fraenkel, who simply wanted to find a meaningful way to help struggling families in his community.

BULK PACKAGING: HOW IT WORKS & WHY IT MATTERS



Companies often look for ways to do more with less. Acquiring more product at lower costs or offering more services using less resources. When it comes to distributing food, your Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is using innovation to do exactly that – acquiring thousands of pounds of bulk food product at a lower cost per pound and then repackaging that food into sizes appropriate for efficient food distributions.

Meet Mark McCormick, Senior Packaging Technician in our Zappe Bulk Packaging Room. Mark and his team of volunteers work daily packaging up a myriad of bulk products including rice, beans, pasta, and more. So how does it work?

The high-tech machinery uses a high-pressure hose to funnel the bulk product from its shipping container onto the conveyor belt with trays that help sort the amount of product in each tray as

they move vertically to the top of the machine. From there, the product drops into a mechanical chamber of pockets with specifically sized portions that are then automatically dropped into bags, sealed, and labeled before hitting the conveyor belt for packing by volunteers.

A high-tech computer runs the entire machine and has individual ingredient settings by product that automate the labeling process. While the machine does most of the work, Mark is uniquely equipped and trained to manage all aspects of bulk packaging. From troubleshooting parts, navigating sophisticated computer software, and keeping all food safety measures in place for both machines and working volunteers, Mark does it all and makes sure product stays on the move.

Mark leads a team of volunteers to execute industry leading standards in quality

inspections from bag integrity via a leak detector, metal detection to help identify foreign materials, and additional hourly shift quality checks to ensure our food safety and quality standards are maintained at the highest levels.

It is important to note that our bulk packaging operation is one of the only of its kind being used in the Food Bank industry. This allows us to cut costs for our own operation of course, but it also gives us the opportunity to barter with other food banks for items we may need which also lowers our costs to acquire food.

We would love to show you in person how it all works. Stop by for a tour of the Food Bank or maybe volunteer for the bulk packaging room on your next volunteer shift. You can volunteer online at brfoodbank.org.



ENGAGING YOUNG PROFESSIONALS IN OUR MISSION OF SERVICE

For decades now, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank has been blessed to have a strong base of supporters who volunteer their time, talents, and treasures to support our mission of serving the hungry across our 11-parish service area. We are truly grateful for our supporters who span generations. From school-age children to retired adults, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is blessed to have dedicated advocates for our vital feeding programs.

One of the cycles that we see at the Food Bank is that our supporters start out as volunteers at an early age either in youth groups or earning community service hours through their local schools. As they enter the workforce, they visit us again as volunteers through team-building exercises or company sponsors sort-n-repack projects in our warehouse. It's when people become young professionals that they really start to feel a connection with their community looking for ways to give back and be a part of something special.

To engage more young professionals in the cause, your Food Bank has been holding Sip-n-Sort events that bring young working individuals together from different places and backgrounds to both socialize with new people their age and to sort and pack food in a team environment.

The event starts with a few hors d'oeuvres and light spirits where people can get to know each other through a meet and greet, and then they move on into the volunteer area to work together sorting food and packing boxes for distribution.

It is a great time to connect with others and expand both business and social networks here locally. With each event that is held, we have continued to see more and more people attending and talking about how much they enjoyed the experience and meeting others while also giving back.

On the heels of the success of these events, we have taken the engagement a step further by creating a Young Philanthropists Society (YPS) which offers young professionals an opportunity to make an impact in the fight against hunger in a financial way if they are so inclined.

The Young Philanthropists Society includes those who are open to making an annual gift of \$500 or more to the Food Bank as they work to create their personal legacy of giving back over time. YPS members can participate in many hands-on volunteer projects throughout the year, serve on our young philanthropist's advisory council, and are recognized on our website and in social media spotlights. Are you a young professional looking to get more involved in a great cause? Contact us today at (225) 308-4899 to learn more how to get started.



THE WAY OF THE SHEPHERD | NOURISHING THOSE IN NEED

Shepherd's Market, as its name suggests, provides food to those in need and follows the three responsibilities of the Shepherd: lead by offering guidance, make sure those under its care are fed, nourished, and nurtured, and tend to those who need to be restored to fullness of health.

The shepherd's second and arguably the most important responsibility is to make sure those under its care are fed, nourished, and nurtured. This is in full force at Shepherd's Market, a client-choice pantry where clients can select foods from shelves much like a shopping experience in a store. Clients are allotted a certain number of pounds of food based on household size.

"We serve the first 45 families that come through," says Theresa Sandifer, director

of Shepherd's Market. "And if they come in a little late, we give them an emergency bag and we tell them when they can come back."

No client is turned away at Shepherd's Market. If a client is out of the pantry's service area or they may not have all the needed paperwork to qualify for USDA-supplied food, the client is able to select from food choices purchased by Shepherd's Market. Even though the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank supplies 20,000 pounds of food per month, the need far outweighs the supply. Through grants and donations made to Shepherd's Market, additional food is purchased to fill the gap to meet the need.

This one pantry provides food for an estimated 400 clients in just one month

in East Baton Rouge Parish. To meet this need, food is distributed twice per month. One food distribution is solely product from USDA which clients must meet criteria to receive. The second food distribution is product purchased by Shepherd's Market.

Volunteers at Shepherd's Market handle everything from signing up clients who receive food to loading food into clients' vehicles, and even uncrimping and folding donated plastic bags to save on operational costs.

"I don't know what some of these people would do," says Theresa. "So as long as I have the donation and grant money, I'll keep buying stuff, you know? To try to keep us going."

AREA COMPANIES MAKE MAJOR DONATIONS TO SUPPORT CRITICAL PROGRAMS



With Louisiana leading the country in child food insecurity, Nutrien is stepping up to fight hunger both in local schools and on the front lines across three parishes in the Greater Baton Rouge area. Nutrien announced in January a \$600,000 commitment to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank to give a much-needed boost to a host of critical feeding programs.

The financial commitment aims to fund the Senior Grocery, Mobile Distributions, Farm Fresh, and Backpack programs in East Iberville, Ascension, and Pointe Coupee parishes. The Backpack Program alone will serve roughly 530 children per month over the next two years.

“For more than 35 years, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank has been fulfilling its mission of feeding the hungry,” said Richard Holder, General Manager of Nutrien’s Geismar plant. “At Nutrien, our purpose is Feeding the Future. We are honored to support them in their mission through this donation, and to strengthen our long-standing relationship with the food bank and our local communities.”



Many children in Louisiana face the harsh reality that hunger will play a major role in their ability to learn and excel in school. With child food insecurity in mind, Mosaic has made a substantial commitment to support children in St. James Parish schools in the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank service area.

Mosaic announced a multi-year pledge of \$200,000 to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. This contribution has allowed for the launch of the Backpack Program in St. James Parish and will allow for roughly 750 children to be served per month over the school year.

“Mosaic is proud to collaborate with the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and St. James Parish Schools on this key initiative,” said Sarah Fedorchuk, Mosaic’s Vice President – Government and Public Affairs. “Zero hunger is a key focus of ours, and we want to help ensure all students in St. James Parish have the nourishment they need to be ready to learn.”

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