

## 2020: YEAR IN REVIEW

While Louisiana kicked off 2020 celebrating a historic National Championship for LSU, it would only be a matter of months before the year would take a turn for the worse. In March of 2020 with a national pandemic officially declared, the shutdown of businesses and schools brought everyday life for families to a screeching halt.



In the months that would follow, Louisiana would experience a dramatic rise in the loss of jobs statewide and with that, families looking to the Food Bank for assistance for the first time in their lives. At the same time, many agencies of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank were also shuttered due to health concerns for a largely senior volunteer base.

Facing an increase in demand for food assistance and fewer agencies available to distribute food to those in need, your Food Bank took action immediately. With the assistance of the Louisiana National Guard, we began holding special COVID-19 distributions across our 11-parish service area.

The number of families attending these distributions skyrocketed on a daily basis and thousands of cars waiting hours to receive food assistance became the norm for several months. These pandemic-specific distributions continued through the end of the year with 182 distributions reaching over 79,000 households in need.

### FIGHTING HUNGER BY THE NUMBERS:



OVER  
**13.6 Million**  
Meals Distributed



OVER  
**16.3 Million**  
Pounds Distributed



**36,557**  
Volunteer Hours

# INVESTING IN SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESS PANDEMIC DEMANDS

While so many of us are thankful to finally turn the page on 2020, the scars of the pandemic on many Louisiana families are still very fresh. Uncertainty still looms heavy in their hearts and minds as we continue to face the repercussions of COVID-19.



Our community has seen its share of emergency situations in the past be it hurricanes or epic floods that even impacted our own operations. The difference in those situations is that we were able to solve them in a relatively short amount of time. This pandemic on the other hand has lasted a significantly longer amount of time and a return to normalcy remains elusive.

We have seen that families continue to struggle to make ends meet through no fault of their own, but with your help we have been able to be there for them in new and innovative ways by investing in operational expansions that would allow us to better serve families during the pandemic.

When it comes to operations, our main focus is to remain as productive and efficient as possible to ensure the best use of our donors' dollars. This includes expansions, like the new cooler that we recently added to our warehouse so that we could receive and maintain larger quantities of fresh produce, proteins and dairy to meet the increased demand for food assistance. Additionally, to keep our volunteers and staff safe, we installed multiple air purifying units to decrease risk of exposure to COVID-19.

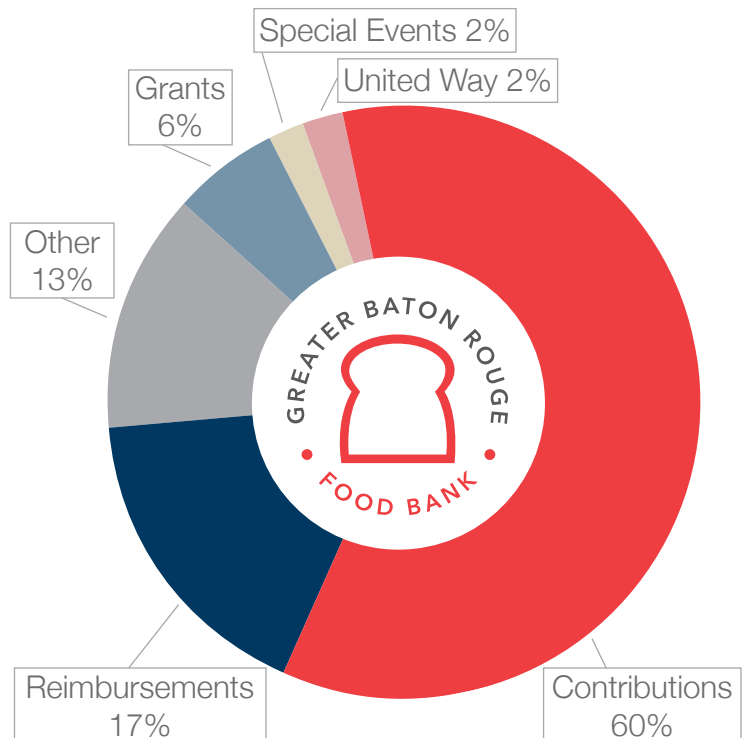
While these operational improvements were absolutely necessary and in line with our long term strategic plan of providing more nutritious food to our clients, the costs of the expansion itself comes sooner than anticipated in our plan thus putting pressure on current funding levels.

## COVID-19 DISTRIBUTIONS IMPACT



OVER  
**4.9 Million**  
Pounds Distributed  
at Pandemic Response Mobiles

## FOOD BANK FUNDING SOURCES:



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## USDA SUPPORT PROGRAM | FROM FARMERS TO FAMILIES



At the start of the pandemic, many of our member agencies suspended operations, challenging us to find new and safe ways to distribute food to those in need. The Food Bank's "drive-thru" distribution allowed minimal contact between staff, volunteers and clients to further reduce the potential risk of infection. Working with local churches and community centers, we found locations with large enough parking lots to host distributions at the magnitude that we were facing.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farmers to Families program, known early on as the COVID Food Assistance program (CFAP), allowed us to supplement product during an increase in food insecure individuals due to the pandemic. The Food Bank has always provided a box of shelf stable items. However, with these additional food boxes, we were able to provide cold items like frozen meat, milk and fresh produce.

Under normal operations, the USDA provides food to Food Banks to utilize for any client that has pre-registered. As the pandemic progressed, this program was developed and restrictions were loosened. Items that originally were only to be given to pre-registered clients became available for use in aiding the need.

In total the Food Bank distributed over 4 million meals at our pandemic specific distributions. With the effects of the pandemic still being felt in our service area, the Food Bank is continuing to find ways to get food to those that need it in our community. The challenge ahead is that it is unknown how much longer this USDA program will be available as a vital food resource for clients in our service area.



**THIS EVENT IS  
POSTPONED**

## CANCELED EVENTS ADD STRESS TO FUNDRAISING EFFORTS

The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank has always enjoyed the support of a generous community of businesses, organizations and individuals who step up to ensure our long term financial stability.

While there are so many different ways to give, time and time again our community events have been a valuable avenue for raising funds while also engaging families and individuals in our mission of service. In the spring, we host events such as Empty Bowls, Stamp Out Hunger, and the Slice of Life Golf Classic to raise critical funds that support our operation.

With the shutdown coming in the middle of March, we were faced with having to cancel all of those events in 2020 and subsequently now in 2021 as well. Fall fundraising and food drive events were also shelved in 2020 which dramatically impacted our overall budget goals.

We are hopeful these events will return in 2022, but in the meantime we have remained committed to keeping our sponsors and donors informed on the status of their favorite community projects and what to expect in the months ahead. Faced with these shortfalls, your Food Bank continues to explore new partnerships and creative ways to generate funds that will help us address the needs of our friends and neighbors in need.



## HIGHLIGHTING OUR CLIENTS & AGENCIES



*"I was a hairdresser and I lost my job due to COVID. I had attended a food distribution before, but now I go more often."*

**- Elaine Simms | Food Bank Client**

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*"The unemployment hit a spectrum of people. We all have our pride but you could see the shock on their faces that they were here."*

**- Eelin Golan, Executive Director | Zachary Food Pantry**

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*"I think it is a blessing and an honor that this food is given to help people. We appreciate it from the bottom of our hearts."*

**- Julia Thomas | Food Bank Client**



We learned so much about the human spirit in 2020. We learned of its tremendous strength in the face of adversity and its ability to both see and be the good in our world. Through the kindness of our most committed supporters, we were reminded that Baton Rouge and our surrounding community care deeply for our neighbors who may need a helping hand.

Inspired by those individuals who have made a significant difference and will continue to do so in the future, we are honored to announce three newly created giving societies. Comprised of past, current, and future donors, membership in these societies intends to serve as a way to express our sincerest gratitude.



Nourish 365 members are special donors who commit to recurring monthly gifts which allow us to plan for the year ahead and give us the opportunity to feed as many people as possible. Become a member and

have access to fun promotional items such as t-shirts and bumper stickers so that you can proudly show the community that you support the fight against hunger!

Janet Pace would be happy to answer any questions and can be reached at 225-308-4899.



The Fraenkel Society was established to recognize supporters who count the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank among their most treasured philanthropies. By leaving a legacy through an estate provision, beneficiary

designation, or life income gift, you become part of a treasured group of forward-thinking individuals who value and support our long-term success. You need not be wealthy to leave a legacy, as there is no minimum. Members of the Fraenkel Society will be invited to events with our leadership staff that will keep you updated on our efforts toward our fight against hunger.

The society is named in honor of Mr. Albert Fraenkel and the Fraenkel family. Mr. Fraenkel has been a long-time member of our Food Bank family, donating both his time and financial support. In the greatest example of his generous spirit, Mr. Fraenkel made it possible for the Food Bank to acquire the Fraenkel Furniture Warehouse land and building. It is because of this transformational opportunity that we are able to function at our current capacity. We are forever grateful to Mr. Fraenkel for empowering us to serve thousands of our hungry neighbors each year.

Contact Sandy Colvin to learn more details about joining the Fraenkel Society. Sandy can be reached at 225-341-8050 or [sandy@brfoodbank.org](mailto:sandy@brfoodbank.org).



Our Hunger Action Council was formed to elevate fundraising

efforts in order to sustain our mission. Members are community-minded investors who take a leadership role by making a multi-year financial pledge, which can be submitted in annual, quarterly, or monthly payments. As a valued member of the council, you will be invited to engage with our leadership staff and be kept updated on our efforts in our fight to end hunger.

Contact Sandy Colvin to learn more at 225-341-8050 or [sandy@brfoodbank.org](mailto:sandy@brfoodbank.org).