



## FLOOD FLIPS FOOD BANK DONOR TO CLIENT IN TIME OF NEED | DONNA'S STORY



“And now that I’ve seen what the food bank can do – that I’ve been on the other end – I hope that when I get through this I can go back to donating even more.”

# DONNA

At 60 years old and retired, Donna continues to work in construction to supplement her retirement and keep busy. Donna never thought that she would need help from a food bank. In fact, she’s always donated to food banks –she remembers writing a check to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank just a few months ago. But when the storm hit Southern Louisiana, she quickly found herself in uncharted waters.

Donna was home when the water started rising. About four inches filled her house. It ruined her floors and parts of her walls, but thankfully, didn’t render her house unlivable. Unfortunately, many people around her weren’t so lucky and turned to her for shelter. In the days following the storm, Donna hosted an influx of guests. She welcomed family and friends with nowhere else to go – and even friends of friends who were strangers to her.

She was glad to help, but providing extra support was creating financial strain. “In two days,” Donna said, “I spent \$300 on food for people. I wanted to feed the people staying in my home who lost everything. But I knew I just didn’t have the money.”

She may not have lost everything, but the damage she did have would cost thousands to repair, and unfortunately she did not qualify for any government help. With nowhere to

turn, Donna decided to visit a disaster-relief neighborhood food distribution held by the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. “It was such a blessing,” Donna said. “I didn’t know what to expect, but when I got there, everyone was so kind and it was such a dignified experience.”

“Out of all the places I turned after the flood, the Food Bank helped me the most,” she continued. “They didn’t ask me a million questions. They just saw that I needed help and helped me. I am so grateful that I was able to pick up stuff and feed everyone in my house who really needed food.”

Donna said her experience with the Food Bank inspired her to take further action to help people hurt by the storm. She began collecting donations for in-demand items – like blankets, air mattresses, diapers, etc. – and distributing them to families who lost their homes. “It does give me perspective, seeing people who lost so much more than me,” Donna said, “but it’s still easy to get overwhelmed.” That’s why she’s particularly grateful for the quick and generous help she received from the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

“My experience was heartwarming,” Donna said. “And now that I’ve seen what the Food Bank can do – that I’ve been on the other end – I hope that when I get through this I can go back to donating even more.”



## FOOD BANK EMPLOYEES AFFECTED BY FLOOD | CONTINUE TO SERVE OTHERS

Mrs. Wendi never expected the rain to fill the streets of her neighborhood, and she certainly didn't expect the water to make its way up her driveway and into her home. After recovering from surgery on her hand, she was resting on her couch when her son came inside and told her about the water inching closer toward their front door. That is when the family of four, decided they, along with their dog, Stanley, needed to get out and fast.

They finished putting a few things in the attic, packed a couple bags and set out for higher ground. Unable to drive their cars out of their driveway due to the flooding, they waded through waist deep water and were picked up by a neighbor in a large, industrial truck.

They were then moved to a National Guard truck who took them to meet family. Not quite two hours after arriving in a dry, safe home, they were told they needed to evacuate for a second time. Again, they walked through flooded streets and boarded a school bus, where they were taken to a church for shelter. They stayed at the shelter for two days, when finally Wendi and her family were able to find a more permanent place with her husband's family.

After a month and a half of sharing one bedroom at her in-law's, the family of four was able to return to their home. Although at first they did not have walls or furniture, they had a place to be together and that was enough. Slowly, things are coming back together for them. Despite the challenges she is facing at home, Wendi has continued to support the Food Bank's mission of fighting hunger.

Wendi has worked as the receptionist for the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank for nearly two years. She said that although the situation with her home was challenging, she knew that there were plenty of people like her who were going through the same struggles – or worse. She said, "It was difficult to work in such tragic circumstances, then to go home and see the same type of problems. There was no place to recharge, because every place I turned was affected."

The increased demand to help those in need and the commitment to fulfill the Food Bank's mission kept Wendi focused. "When you go out and see the community, where you and so many lived, and you see their needs and those that normally don't need help, it means a lot to know you're making a difference," Wendi said.

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MRS. WENDI

## A RENEWED MISSION & FOCUS

If there is one thing we have learned from the tremendous flooding event in 2016, it is that our mission to serve those in need has now become greater than ever before. At the same time, it is clear that every member of our team here at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is more committed to serving that mission than ever before.

We have seen this commitment in how our employees responded to families and to each other in the face of great adversity. We have seen this in our visits with clients who have come to us asking for help for the first time. And we have seen this in how you, our family, have responded to countless stories we shared through our media channels and calls for financial support to help us continue to fulfill our mission.

In an effort to more effectively capture the spirit of where we are today, we are moving to a new look and focus for our newsletters in 2017 that will focus specifically on the stories of people who are being served through your support of our mission, along with updates on how we are operationally responding to the growing needs through innovation and outreach programs.

We believe it is important to connect our supporters with the people we are serving in a way that puts a human face on hunger. Your continued donations of time and treasure make a huge difference in the lives of people right here in our community, and we look forward to sharing those stories with you. *Together We're Fighting Hunger.*

Michael G. Manning

President & CEO



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE: MEET TERRY CORMIER

"Volunteering is just a win-win-win situation. It's a win for the institution, a win for those who receive the service and a win to those who serve."

TERRY

One of our faithful volunteers spends many hours each month at the Food Bank, and that volunteer is Terry Cormier. Terry has been volunteering at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank for more than three years.

"Volunteering is just a win-win-win situation. It's a win for the institution, a win for those who receive the service and a win to those who serve," said Cormier.

Terry's personal beliefs and the beliefs of his faith have influenced him to volunteer. "Working at the Food Bank has allowed me the opportunity to help others.

Plus, I know that volunteer work reduces the costs of the operation; therefore, more of Donor's donations will go directly to helping the needy," he said. Terry, and three others in their group, volunteer once a week to pack bags for the Backpack program.

To anyone interested in volunteering he says, "Come and try it! Volunteering at the Food Bank is flexible. There are always food items to sort. You have everything to gain, and nothing to lose by giving it a try."

Join us! Register to volunteer at [brfoodbank.org/home/volunteer/](http://brfoodbank.org/home/volunteer/).





## NBC TODAY SHOW & WALMART MAKE SURPRISE DONATIONS TO FOOD BANK

The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and five employees received the surprise of a lifetime, all thanks to NBC's Today Show and the Walmart Foundation. On December 20, 2016 the Today Show aired a 6-minute segment highlighting the extensive flood damage to the Food Bank and the dedication of several employees despite the personal loss many of them suffered at home.

Fred, a driver, and his wife and two kids recently returned to live in their home after it was decimated by the flood; however, they are still in the process of rebuilding. Johnny, a father of seven, is also a driver for the Food Bank. They are currently staying with his mother after losing their rental home and everything else including cars in the flood.

Yvonne works as our inventory control manager. She and her husband have stayed in a friend's RV since losing their home in the flood. They have now just begun the process of rebuilding. Costello is our transportation manager. He and his 10-year-old daughter lost many of their possessions in their home due to the flood. Finally, Wendi, our receptionist, along with her husband and two children have recently moved back into their home, with many things still left to do.

Despite losing almost everything, they each continued to come to work and help fulfill the Food Bank's mission to feed the hungry in our 11-parish service area. Many hours that

could have been spent rebuilding their own homes were spent rebuilding our community. "That's our mission, to help the less fortunate," said Costello in the segment. "If we can't be there for them in their time of need, then what's the point?"

When Walmart heard about the Food Bank's story and the extensive damage in our building, they took action to help the Food Bank and our five Food Bank employees affected by the flooding. They, along with the Today Show, came up with a big surprise. Walmart supplied the employees and their families with electronics, home goods, tools and so much more. Walmart also donated food, much needed office supplies and a check for \$100,000 to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.



"This has been an incredible experience for our employees who lost so much and have focused on ensuring that our community in need has been fed. We truly appreciate what Walmart and the Today Show has done to recognize our employees' dedication in the face of their own personal loss," said Michael G. Manning, President and CEO of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. "The office supplies, food and the large financial donation will go a long way in our continued recovery and aid us in helping others in need."

To watch the TODAY Show segment, visit [brfoodbank.org/todayshowwalmartssurprise/](http://brfoodbank.org/todayshowwalmartssurprise/).

"This has been an incredible experience for our employees who lost so much and have focused on ensuring that our community in need has been fed."

MIKE

## FLOOD UPDATE | WAREHOUSE OPERATIONAL BUT MUCH OFFICE WORK REMAINS



“Your Food Bank is grateful for the support and outpouring of love we continue to receive from such a giving Food Bank family in the Greater Baton Rouge area.”

MIKE

Great progress has been made at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank since the August flooding. Hundreds of volunteers have given time, generous donations of food and funds have been received and, as a result, countless meals have been distributed to those in need.

In September, after four-weeks of mucking, cleaning and sanitizing, your Food Bank received the “all clear” for warehouse operations to move back to our facility. This process of cleaning and sanitizing was no easy task and came with a price tag of approximately \$2 million.

Volunteers worked alongside our contractors and other community partners to remove flood debris that had been scattered throughout the building. Waterlogged food, ruined supplies and destroyed equipment were moved with bobcats into piles and out onto our docks. Many hours were spent removing drywall to an 8-foot-high level throughout all offices and our warehouse.

With strict protocols and standards from the Louisiana Department of Health, your Food Bank was required to bring in a number of specialists to ensure proper sanitation, ventilation and care to, once again, put food back on our shelves safely. After the wreckage was removed, our industrial hygienist developed cleaning protocols and our cleaning and our maintenance contractors helped to bring the warehouse to code.

Fortunately, throughout this process, we have received support from our local community and partners across the country. So far, the Food Bank has applied for reimbursement of the sanitation and cleanup expenses from FEMA and has been notified of an initial \$1.368 million FEMA grant, which will help to cover a portion of total \$2 million cleaning expense.

With total financial impact of over \$7 million from the flood, there is still much work to be done; however, each day we are one step closer to getting back to where the Food Bank was before the flood. With the construction bidding process now completed, we will begin to rebuild and restore our office space. The lowest construction bid for the office restoration came in at an estimated \$1.387 million. These costs do not include replacement of trucks, forklifts, office furniture, office supplies and equipment.

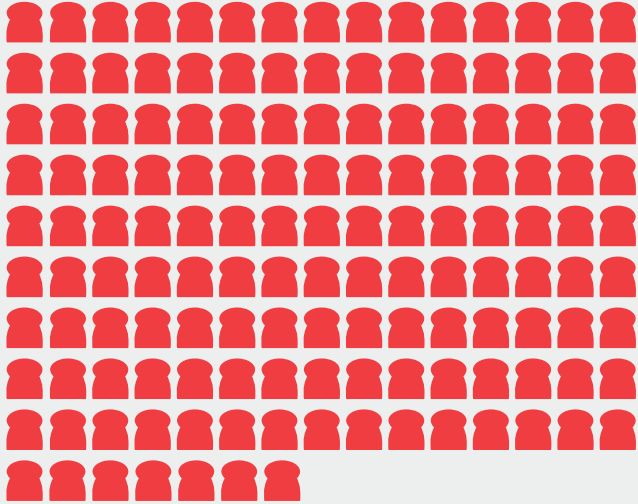
This all comes at a time where there are many who need the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank now, more than ever. Many of the people that no longer needed our assistance are now returning in need. We know we are not alone in this rebuilding process, as many have experienced their own loss during the flood. Because of this, your Food Bank is grateful for the support and outpouring of love we continue to receive from such a giving Food Bank family in the Greater Baton Rouge area.

# RESPONDING TO THE FLOOD IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY

## YEAR OVER YEAR COMPARISON OF POUNDS DISTRIBUTED DURING THE FLOOD

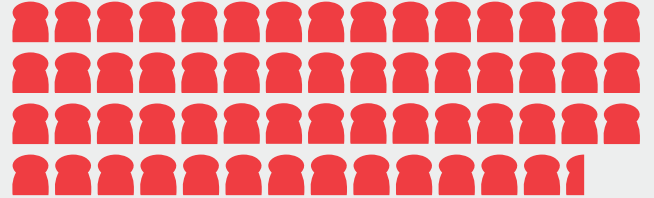
8/16/16 – 9/30/16 – **2,838,280 POUNDS**

EACH SLICE REPRESENTS 20,000 POUNDS



8/16/15 – 9/30/15 – **1,166,749 POUNDS**

EACH SLICE REPRESENTS 20,000 POUNDS



## IN MEMORIAM | TWO GREAT SUPPORTERS OF OUR MISSION

The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank mourns the loss of two treasured members of our Food Bank family who fought hunger in our community.



Mr. O.J. Landry volunteered each month with his wife, Carole, for many years. Together, they helped the Food Bank stuff, seal and stamp our monthly mail outs. In 2015, O.J. and Carole received the Legion of Merit Award for their years of wonderful service. Mr. O.J. Landry was an avid supporter of our mission to serve those in need.



Ms. Tyke Olinde was a founder and board member of the Food Bank as a representative of the University Presbyterian Church. Ms. Tyke volunteered for many years throughout Food Bank's history. In most recent years, she volunteered on Wednesday mornings packing boxes for our Adopt-A-Senior program. Employees of the Food Bank remember how, at times, food would get low in the summer, she would often send in a donation to ensure that seniors in our service area would not go hungry. Ms. Tyke was also awarded the Legion of Merit Award from the Food Bank.

We will truly miss these inspiring, faithful volunteers and their dedicated years of service to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

**DON'T FORGET TO SHARE THE FUN!**  
**TAG US IN YOUR PHOTOS**

Use hashtags #BRfamily #BRfoodbank



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*In an effort to go green and reduce costs, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank encourages you to sign up for our e-newsletter and newsflashes. Visit [www.brfoodbank.org](http://www.brfoodbank.org) to sign up and start receiving news in your inbox.*

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