

## OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS DRIVE OPPORTUNITIES TO REACH MORE PEOPLE IN NEED



We are pleased to report that the funds we invested in equipment and programs last year to improve our operations is having quite an impact in our ability to reach more people who face food insecurity. This investment has resulted in improvements in key areas of the Food Bank operations, and so we wanted to share some of those successes with supporters who make our mission possible.

Our partner agencies across our 11-parish service area are essential to carrying out our mission of feeding the hungry. In the last year alone, 86% of our clients were served through agencies. We also witnessed a 31% growth in clients served from January through October.

Our operations department has not only improved their overall performance, but they have also piloted new programs to address the issue of food insecurity in our community. This year, we began the Summer Food Service Program to ensure that children living in low-income households can receive nutritious meals when they are not in school.

We have also started partnering with the Louisiana Department of Education to begin the Child and Adult Community Feeding Program, which allows us to be reimbursed for purchasing nutritious snacks that we provide to our agencies to disperse to clients.

Not only have we started new programs, but we have also seen growth in existing programs. Our Food is Medicine program, a partnership with hospitals and clinics to identify patients who are food insecure and provide them with a box of non-perishable, nutritious food, grew by 32% in 2023. The creation and expansion of these programs allow us to expand our reach to new

groups of people who are facing food insecurity but previously didn't know where to turn for help.

Internally, we have also seen an improvement in efficiency that allows us to move more food and reach more people. The investments we made to improve our operations have paid off, resulting in a 23% increase in inventory accuracies and a 42% increase in warehouse picking efficiencies. These improvements directly reduce our operating costs which allow our funds to work harder.

We have also seen achievements in the amount of food donated to the Food Bank. We began the year with a goal of having 6.3 million pounds donated, and we ended the year with 8.6 million pounds donated, putting us 2.3 million pounds over our initial goal. A portion of the donated pounds comes from retail donations, which have increased by 16% in the past year.

One of the largest changes we have made is the expansion of our bulk packaging capabilities. Our bulk packing machine allows us to take large amounts of dry goods and package them in smaller packages to distribute to our clients and partner agencies. Investing in pre-printed bags and improving our systems has given us the ability to pack 70 bags in 1 minute, resulting in a 204% increase in production.

Ultimately, these improvements and efficiencies in our operations department allow the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank to reach more people in the community and address the issue of hunger. We look forward to continuing to meet the needs of the individuals in our community as we move into the new year. ■



# WHAT TO EXPECT IN 2024

"Here at home, Louisiana unfortunately is number 1 in food insecurity among both children and seniors."

**MICHAEL**

As we look back on 2023, we are extremely grateful for all our supporters who gave of their time, talent, treasure, and resources to help us serve food insecure individuals and families across our 11-parish service area. Your generosity helped us reach new milestones including distributing over 9.6 million meals and reaching a record number of volunteer hours with over 56,000 hours and over 14,500 volunteers who gave time to support our mission.

That kind of added impact came at a great time, in a year where families continued to struggle to make ends meet due to higher food costs, gas prices, and the inflationary impact on most other expenses. Some families found themselves facing having to visit one of our local food pantries for the first time just to provide food for their household.

In the face of these challenging times, we are truly grateful that you were there to support us to make sure as many families, seniors and, most importantly, children had access to healthy, nutritious food and reliable meals as possible.

As we move into 2024, we learn that new economic research from the USDA has revealed a 26% increase in food insecurity nationally with 12.8% of households struggling to provide enough food for their families. Here at home, Louisiana

unfortunately is number 1 in food insecurity among both children and seniors. 1 in 6 children just in our 11-parish service area are food insecure.

Even though inflation has moderated, the significant increases over the past year continue to impact the working poor and seniors on fixed incomes. While we are hopeful that the economy will rebound in 2024 to a point where some families can begin to recover financially, we fully understand that food insecurity will continue to be a real factor in the lives of thousands here in our area. The good news is that hunger has a cure.

With your help, we will continue to be there when families need us most. We are truly grateful for those who volunteer time, collect food, and donate funds to help us meet these challenges. Together, we can be the catalyst for change that improves family outcomes across our community.

Michael G. Manning

President & CEO, Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank

# 2023 IMPACT REPORT



**11.1 Million**  
Meals Distributed



**14.4 Million**  
Pounds Distributed



**56,000+**  
Volunteer Hours

**14,500+**  
Volunteers

\*2023 Operations Data as of 1/20/24



“We have more and more people coming for food. The people right now, many are still without a job. More than once when we come with food, people have cried. They say, Thank you.”

■ **Pastor Maria**, New Ruach Food Pantry



“This area of north Baton Rouge is hurting, and we see it firsthand. In the summer, we see children knocking on our back doors looking for food. The need is great, and we want people to know there is someone who cares.”

■ **Steve Bridges**, Mary's House of Bread Pantry

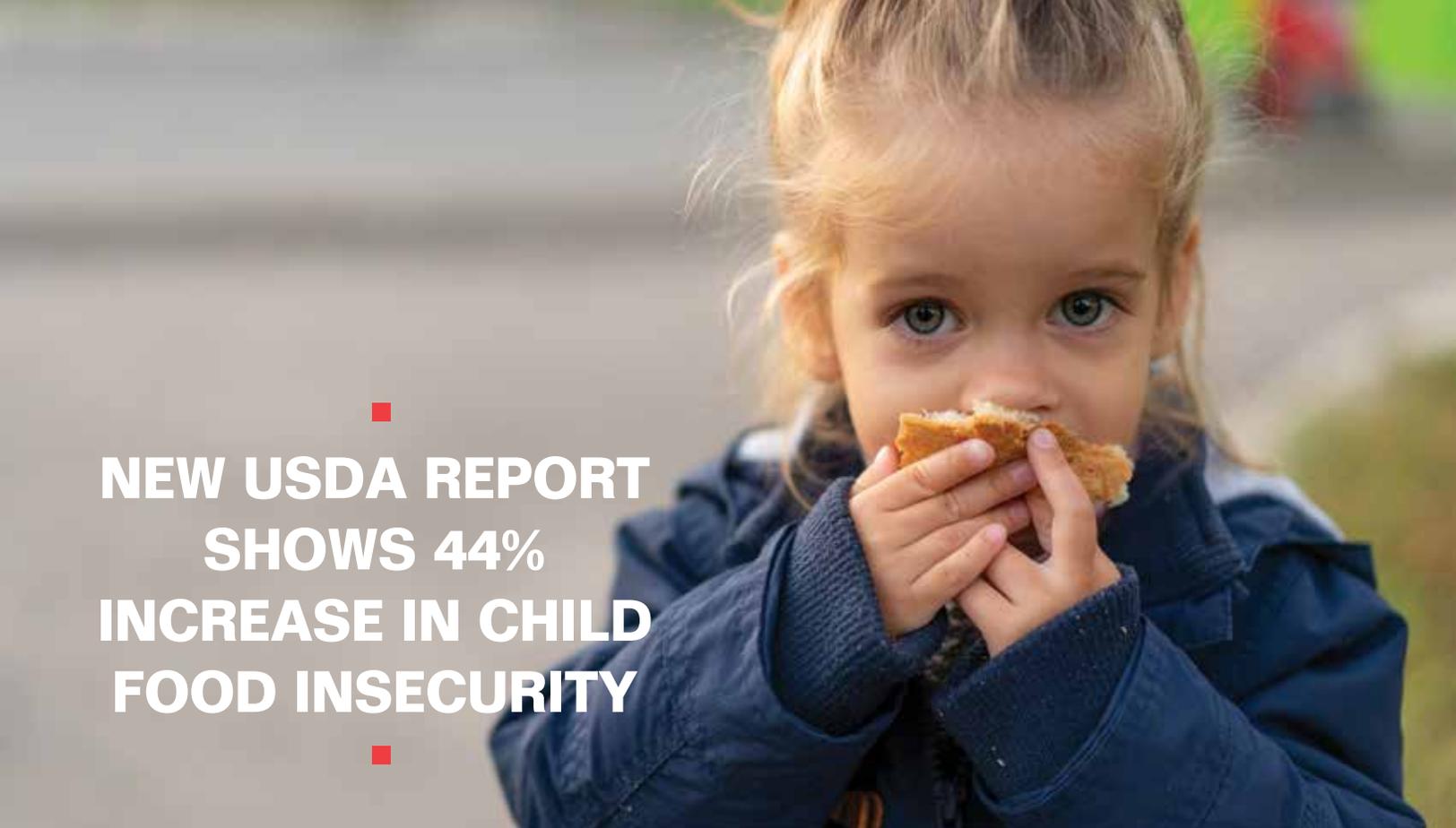


“We're seeing the same families that we've always seen, but we're now also seeing a lot of new people come in. I think the economy has had a huge impact on it. It's a great atmosphere here though. People are always surprised that it's not a sad or depressing place. They know our staff and volunteers, and we know them by name.”

■ **Christy Davidson**, Hope Ministries Food Pantry

## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to feed the hungry in Baton Rouge and the surrounding parishes by providing food and educational outreach through faith-based and other community partners.



## NEW USDA REPORT SHOWS 44% INCREASE IN CHILD FOOD INSECURITY

In October of 2023, the United States Department of Agriculture released economic research that showed alarming statistics relating to food insecurity in the United States during 2022. The research revealed this is the highest rate of food insecurity the United States has seen since 2014, with food insecurity increasing in almost every population studied.

In 2022, 44 million individuals were food insecure, with 13 million individuals being children, meaning they had limited or uncertain access to enough food for everyone in a household to live a healthy, active lifestyle. This is a staggering 44% increase in child food insecurity from the prior year.

Much of this quick increase is due to inflation and the cancellation of programs that existed during COVID-19. The government funding provided to food relief programs during the pandemic had a positive impact on our communities and

caused food insecurity to decline. The erasure of these programs, along with rising inflation, has put families back into a difficult spot financially, and many are having to seek help from food assistance programs again.

While poverty is a driver of food insecurity, many other circumstances can result in individuals facing hunger. This is made evident by the fact that two-thirds of people who experienced food insecurity in 2022 had incomes above the poverty line. Research from the USDA also revealed the upsetting statistic that 36% of people experiencing food insecurity may be ineligible for federal programs.

Food insecurity at the state level is also alarmingly high, with Louisiana ranking #1 in child and senior hunger. Research from Feeding America indicates that 1 in 5 children in Louisiana are food insecure.

The data that the USDA provided shows how widespread the issue of food insecurity is. It affects both rural and urban communities. In the past year, food insecurity has increased among every group of race and ethnicity. Children, adolescents, adults, and seniors all face hunger. Food insecurity can affect anyone, and many of our neighbors face it daily.

The Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank is committed to meeting individuals and families wherever they are and when they need us most. We will be there to meet the challenge and fill the void. To learn more about food insecurity and view food insecurity statistics by parish in our 11-parish service area, visit [brfoodbank.org](http://brfoodbank.org).

*"With the increased need, we are actively seeking out new partner agencies and trying to make people aware of where they can go to receive food assistance," said **KiEtha Gage**, Programs and Agencies Manager. "We are focusing on working with agencies in parishes that have higher rates of food insecurity."*

# BRIAN HIGHTOWER & MINDY SMITH JOIN FOOD BANK SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM



**Brian Hightower** began at the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank in September of 2023 as the Chief Development Officer and General Counsel. Upon graduation from LSU Law School in 2004, Brian entered a private civil litigation practice with a focus on workers' compensation, construction law, education law and insurance defense. In 2009, Brian returned to his alma mater, Catholic High School, where he served as a teacher, Assistant Principal, and Director of Alumni Relations during his 14 years there. In his six years as Director of Alumni Relations, Brian worked on building relationships and creating donation opportunities for the school's constituents, including serving as director of the school's latest capital campaign. Brian brings his background in law, donor relations and strategic planning to the mission of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank. He is a graduate of Catholic High School, LSU and LSU Law School.

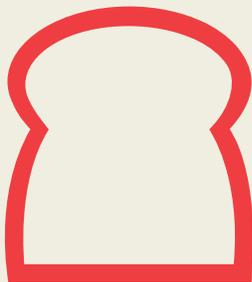
"Growing up in Baton Rouge, I have always been aware of the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank and its mission. But now that I am a part of the team, I have been astonished by the scope and magnitude of the operation. Our Food Bank is one of the most generous, efficient, and productive food banks in the country. This is something that all of us in the community should be proud of – it is the result of nearly 40 years of generosity of thousands of individuals and corporations."



**Mindy Bartholomew Smith** joined the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank team in April 2023 as the Chief Financial Officer. Mindy has spent 13 years of her career in accounting with non-profit organizations. Her extensive experience is augmented by her degree in accounting from Louisiana State University. Mindy is responsible for the development and implementation of financial strategies, operating budgets, and the system of financial reporting and controls that support the overall mission and objectives of the GBRFB.

"Being a part of the GBRFB team has allowed me to see the impact we have on the community firsthand. I am proud of the work being done."

## THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 BOARD MEMBERS



### EXECUTIVE BOARD:

**Em LeBlanc Cooper:** Chairperson  
**Doug Stewart:** Vice Chairperson  
**Alicia Robertson:** Secretary  
**Vance Gibbs:** Treasurer  
**Leslie Magee:** Member-At-Large  
**Shanna Noble:** Member-At-Large

### BOARD MEMBERS:

<b>Tana Boudreaux-Allen</b>	<b>William E. Johnson</b>
<b>Bruce Chaffin</b>	<b>Jackie McCreary</b>
<b>Ed Collins</b>	<b>John Murrill</b>
<b>Chip Coulter</b>	<b>Brian Parker</b>
<b>Mike Crawford</b>	<b>Mukti Patel</b>
<b>Rita Darensbourg</b>	<b>Kieffer Petree</b>
<b>Edward Doomes</b>	<b>Javier Presas</b>
<b>Doug Drummond</b>	<b>Devin Roy</b>
<b>Tricia Screen Elliot</b>	<b>Seth Schilling</b>
<b>Timolin Ferdinand</b>	<b>Olivia Olinde Schoen</b>
<b>Renee Graff</b>	<b>Leslie Tilley</b>
<b>Ed Halphen</b>	<b>Russ Wheeler</b>
<b>Patrick Henry</b>	

# EXXONMOBIL PIPELINE HOSTS HOLIDAY DISTRIBUTIONS



The holidays are always a tough time for families struggling with food insecurity. We are always grateful when we can distribute special holiday meals that include family portioned proteins. We would like to thank ExxonMobil Pipeline for sponsoring four separate holiday food distributions in Ascension and Assumption parishes. The team at Exxon held two distributions prior to Thanksgiving and then two more prior to Christmas so that families could have access to a full holiday meal. Over 60,000 meals collectively were distributed through mobile distributions in Vacherie, St. James, Napoleonville, and Donaldsonville.

## HOLIDAY FOOD BAGS CAMPAIGN

Associated Grocers and Baton Rouge Coca-Cola teamed up with the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank to help feed families over the holiday season through the Red Bags Holiday Food Drive in local grocers. With your support, the campaign was able to raise just over \$109,000 which will provide the equivalent of more than 327,000 meals.

## PRICE LEBLANC \$100,000 MATCH CHALLENGE

We would like to extend a sincere thanks to the Price LeBlanc Family for generously donating \$100,000 as part of a holiday match fundraising challenge and food drive. Donations were accepted at Price LeBlanc Toyota, Lexus and Nissan dealerships in December and the effort in total was able to provide over 325,000 meals!

## ONE-POINT-FIVE EXPANDS BACKPACK PROGRAM

We would like to extend a special thank you to 1PointFive, a carbon capture, utilization, and sequestration company, who committed to fund the expansion of our BackPack Program in Livingston Parish. Through this commitment and partnership with the Mighty Moms organization, more than 500 elementary school children per month can receive food assistance over weekends when they may not have access to school meals.

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

Use hashtags #BRfamily #BRfoodbank



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@brfoodbank



PICTURE US  
@brfoodbank



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