



The Story:

*Solving Hunger Today
for a Hunger-Free
Tomorrow*

Holiday 2024



***You're Sharing
Hope for
The Holidays***

Page 3 DANIELA IS GRATEFUL FOR YOU

Page 3 TAMU ATHLETICS LENDS
A HELPING HAND

Page 4 YOU GIVE BOB AND ENOLA NOURISHMENT



Theresa Mangapora
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

Marcus Alsup, President, Branch
Manager, Wells Fargo

Theodore George, Vice

President, Professor, Department of
Philosophy, Texas A&M University

Deborah Wright, Treasurer, Associate
Vice President Budget & Planning,
Texas A&M University

Joni Cook, Secretary, Retired Community
Volunteer, (Burlleson County)

Allan Clayton, Immediate Past
President, Retired, Community
Volunteer, Brazos County

MEMBERS AT LARGE:

John Cowan, Senior Vice President,
Simmons Bank

Janet Briaud, CFP, Chief Investment
Officer/Partner, Briaud Financial
Advisors

Jimmy Byrd, Executive Dean, Blinn
College (Bryan Campus)

Dora Cruzan, Retired, Community
Volunteer (Brazos County)

Alex Egan, Director of Special Projects,
KBTX Media

Leland Gibson, Project Manager, Office
of Facilities Planning & Construction,
Texas A&M University System

David Gilbert, Store Manager,
Brookshire Brothers (Caldwell)

Ann Gilmore, Unit Director, H-E-B (Bryan)

Andrew Kilzer, General Manager, Maroon
& White, LP

Ken Krueger, City President, Extraco
Banks

Pat Patrick, Sales Center Manager,
Coca-Cola Southwest Beverages

Phillip Rodriguez V., Attorney, Doss &
Rodriguez

Gus Roman, Assistant Director, City of
College Station Community Services
Department

Charlie Shear, Retired, Community
Volunteer, Robertson County

Byron Sommerlatte, Retired, Community
Volunteer (Burlleson County)

Arthur Watson, Executive Director,
Transition Academic Programs, Texas
A&M University

Dear Friend,

'Tis the season of giving! No matter who you are shopping for, tracking down the perfect present is not easy.

Just for fun, I googled 2024 popular gifts. Based on viral trends, shopping data, online reviews, *and* product testing, this list included gadgets such as custom neon signs, 3D printing pens, wearable neck fans, electric hair scalp massagers, and ice cream makers. To be honest, I am not familiar with all the items, and while tech-focused, trendy, and full of convenience, most of the items are pretty *nonessential*.

There is nothing wrong with that, right? Gifts are not meant to be practical. They enrich lives and provide happiness — but right here in the Brazos Valley, food is an *essential* gift to the thousands of neighbors facing hunger every week.

Going into my 20th year as the Executive Director of the Brazos Valley Food Bank (BVFB), I still find myself tearing up when a neighbor tells us that the food distributed by BVFB is a gift.

In this newsletter, read about a local Bryan-College Station mother who supplements her groceries weekly with free items from a BVFB supplied Fresh Food Drop.

Yes, the practical and impersonal gift of food from strangers is a true blessing that enriches lives and provides happiness. For many of our neighbors, food from BVFB and our partners is the perfect gift.

Please dig deep and give big to BVFB this year. The number of neighbors accessing free food programs locally is still higher than during the pandemic. We cannot meet the need this holiday season or into the new year without you. Happy holidays and thank you!

Gratefully,

Theresa Mangapora
Executive Director



Daniela Is Grateful for You

Thanks to the support of friends like you, Daniela's family has access to plenty of nutritious food at BVFB's weekly Fresh Produce Drop operated by the Reach Project..

"It's a blessing to have every week," Daniela says.

Her children, ages 10 and 12, especially enjoy apples from the distribution and take an apple to school to enjoy as a snack on its own, or with a little peanut butter added. The siblings are also grateful for the occasional pastry!

Daniela says she is especially thankful for the large bags of salad mixes the family receives — especially the Caesar salad mix — that she often prepares with chicken or fish for her family.

Because of generous supporters like you, families like Daniela's have somewhere to turn for health and hope this holiday season and into the new year. Thank you!

**Name has been changed to protect privacy.*

*Daniela works hard to ensure her family has enough healthy food on the table — and she's thankful for friends like you who help her supplement her grocery budget with fresh fruits and vegetables for her growing children.

"It's a blessing to have every week."

Daniela works a full-time job to support her two children, but with the price of food having been so high, she's grateful for a little extra help when she's unable to afford enough healthy food.

TAMU Athletics Lends a Helping Hand

Students and advisors from Texas A&M Freshman Athletics — including the track, volleyball, and swimming teams — volunteer together and support the community at Brazos Valley Food Bank (BVFB) several times a year.

From sorting through donated food that is distributed through Agency Partners to putting together bags of food for BVFB's Backpack program, TAMU athletes are always ready to lend a helping hand in whatever way they can.

As pictured, these TAMU athletes also assist BVFB by packing Project GotEM boxes, which will be delivered throughout Bryan-College Station.

Project GotEM is a home delivery service created to reach our neighbors who may not have access to traditional food pantries. Each week or month (depending on the needs of the neighbor) a box



filled with nutritious, shelf-stable food, and a bag of seasonal produce is dropped off directly to our neighbors' doorsteps.

"We love having the support of these young people," says a BVFB representative. "Seeing their commitment to service during their college years is inspiring!"

With the support of these TAMU Athletes and friends just like you, we're creating a hunger-free Brazos Valley.

To join our volunteer team, please visit www.bvfb.org/volunteering.



Bob and Enola smile together in the car while picking up food from the Grimes County Mobile Pantry.

Mark your calendars for...



KBTX Media's Annual Food For Families Food Drive on Wednesday December 4, 2024

Join KBTX Media in supporting BVFB and its agency partners this December! KBTX Media's Food For Families Food Drive is Wednesday December 4th, and we need you to participate to make this event a success!

Collect non-perishable food items and/or monetary donations to drop at any one of these convenient locations:

- **The Brazos Center**, Bryan
- **SonShine Station**, Madisonville
- **Pidgeon Community Center**, Franklin
- **First Baptist Church Family Life Center**, Hearne
- **St. Mary's, Lady of the Lourdes Catholic Church Hall**, Caldwell
- **MidSouth Electric Co-op Operations Facility**, Navasota
- **Washington County Expo**, Brenham

For more details, visit <https://www.kbtx.com/food-for-families/>

You Give Bob and Enola Nourishment

Bob and Enola are proud and loving grandparents. Together, they share 11 grandkids, and both Bob and Enola enjoy spending even more time with family since retirement.

Most of the couple's children and grandchildren live nearby in Grimes County, and often stop by after school or work, and for weekend gatherings.

As a retired teacher, Enola is used to having the flurry of activity around the home that comes with such a large family. She's currently teaching her granddaughters to braid their hair just like hers!

Bob is a retired auto mechanic, and the couple now receives Social Security retirement income. But while the cost of living is so high, their combined income is often still not enough.

While Bob and Enola are both in good health, the couple does rely on a medication or two – which is yet another expense for the couple's fixed incomes.

Thankfully, Bob and Enola can visit BVFB's Mobile Pantry in Grimes County, to supplement their grocery budget. The two live in the country and cannot easily get to a traditional food pantry, but the Mobile Pantry brings fresh food closer to their door.

And with better nourishment, Bob and Enola will continue to have the energy to spend more quality time with family.

Your support is making a vital difference in the lives of children, families, and seniors throughout the Brazos Valley this holiday season and beyond.

