



The Story:

Solving hunger today for a hunger free tomorrow.

Spring 2025



**Thank You for
Strengthening
Lives**

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Dear Friend,

2025 marks the Brazos Valley Food Bank's (BVFB) 40th Anniversary. For four decades, BVFB has provided tens of thousands of Brazos Valley neighbors with millions of pounds of food annually across Brazos, Burlleson, Grimes, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties.

When I started at what was then the Brazos Food Bank in 2005, hunger indicators relied heavily on poverty statistics. Diving into the data, I was shocked at how deeply poverty affected two age groups: children and seniors. Sadly, this remains true – both are disproportionately impacted, with rates higher than the Texas average.

At the time, food aid was distributed exclusively through Partner Agencies, primarily food pantries. These pantries have always been key in supporting children and seniors, alongside programs like SNAP and school meals. Yet supplementing food aid for these populations became a personal goal. In 2007, with foundational funding from the Beaumont Foundation of America, BVFB launched the Senior Outreach Program (SOP), also known as Senior Bags. This partnership with senior meal programs provides weekly, nutritionally balanced food for older adults, often homebound and on fixed incomes.

Today, seniors at risk of hunger in the Brazos Valley have more access points for food aid than ever – whether through food pantries, Senior Bags, Fresh Food Drops, Mobile Food Pantries, Project GotEM, or health-focused interventions. Thanks to community support, these strategies have only strengthened.

Anniversaries are a time to reflect. While we wish seniors didn't need help, those who do now have more options than ever. Read on to learn more.

Gratefully,

Theresa Mangapora
Executive Director

You Support Seniors and Families

Mary and her stepdaughter aren't afraid to be creative in the kitchen. In fact, a recent bounty of cabbage the family received from a Brazos Valley Food Bank (BVFB) produce distribution became a hearty meal of cabbage and sausage that the whole family enjoyed.

"I tell people to come here and get some help."

Currently, Mary lives with her adult stepdaughter and two grandchildren. Like many older adults, Mary relies on Social Security income to pay her bills now that she is retired.

Unfortunately, Mary's fixed income rarely stretches enough to afford enough healthy food, especially with the high cost of food right now.

Thanks to partners like you, Mary can visit a BVFB Fresh Produce Drop, like the one that the



Seniors throughout our community can pick up healthy produce at Fresh Produce Drops.

Reach Project hosts to pick up fresh fruits and vegetables for her family.

Mary says her visits to the produce drop also help her eat more vegetables — which she knows ultimately keeps her healthier. And not only does she pick up produce for her family, but she tells her neighbors that might need a hand up to also visit.

"I tell people to come here and get some help," Mary says.

Thank you for helping ensure seniors and neighbors of all ages have ongoing access to nutritious food. Your generosity is a beacon of hope for so many people across the Brazos Valley.



Seniors at Highland Villas can receive healthy food through the BVFB Senior Outreach Program.

Your partnership with Brazos Valley Food Bank (BVFB) provides ongoing support for older adults — like seniors living at Highland Villas, an adult living complex for neighbors ages 55 or older — through the Senior Outreach Program (SOP).

Each week, 40-50 residents receive a supplemental bag of nutritious food delivered right to their door via wagons pulled by site coordinator... Laura Irwin, Highland Villas manager, who says the food distributions have been a big help to the residents.

"The seniors seem happier and healthier," Laura says. "Food insecurity makes them anxious, and the SOP bags help them feel less stressed."

Highland Villas Seniors are Grateful for You

Since the Highland Villas is a 100% tax credit apartment, all residents fall 30-60% below the low-income threshold, meaning all qualify for the SOP program.

Highland Villas residents also enjoy BVFB's Nutrition Education Program where they observe cooking demonstrations in their community room and learn economical and convenient ways to eat healthy on a tight budget.

"[These programs have] fundamentally improved the lives of people at Highland Villas," Laura shares.

Thank you for your support which helps provide consistent access to healthy food for older adults experiencing food insecurity throughout our community.



Linda picks up groceries at BVFB's Madison County Mobile pantry.

You Care for Caretakers

*Linda, 68, is a caretaker at heart. She enjoyed a lengthy career as a full-time home health nurse and even in her retirement helps care for a friend, 86, who lives with her.

"This is a blessing."

Thanks to friends like you, Linda has extended a little help for herself.

Like many seniors right now, Linda can struggle to stretch her Social Security retirement income far enough. She doesn't qualify for SNAP benefits, but her fixed income in this economic environment often falls short.

"Social Security is just not enough these days," Linda shares.

Every day, Linda takes a pain medication to help with the arthritis in her knees. While the medication is expensive, she says the pain is

unbearable, so the medication is a necessity.

But thanks to you, Linda can visit BVFB's Madison County Mobile Pantry monthly to supplement her groceries so she can fill her prescription and have enough healthy food at home. It also helps fuel her active lifestyle — including her latest hobby of gardening.

"This is a blessing to us both," says Linda for herself and her friend. "It's such a blessing for older folks to have someone who's caring for them like this."

Your partnership with BVFB is a lifeline for so many seniors in our community. Thank you for investing in our neighbors of all ages.

**Name has been changed to protect identity.*

SAVE THE DATE (April 10): BVFB's New Event: Pantry to Plate Chef Challenge

Join us for an unforgettable evening at BVFB's first annual *Pantry to Plate Chef Challenge*! On April 10, at the A&M Hotel & Conference Center, local chefs will face off in a thrilling cooking competition, using ingredients straight from the food bank warehouse to craft delicious creations. Local celebrity judges will crown the winning chef — all in support of our vision of a hunger-free Brazos Valley.

Sponsorships and tables are available, with more details coming soon. Save the date and get ready to support a great cause in the most flavorful way!

40 Ways to Get Involved with BVFB for its 40th Anniversary



In honor of our 40 years of service, BVFB invites everyone to learn more about and/or get involved in BVFB's mission. Our **40 Ways to Get Involved with BVFB** idea list has accessible projects, resources, opportunities and ideas for individuals of all ages and available time.

Explore the options at the link below and find the perfect way to celebrate this milestone with us!

www.bvfb.org/40-ways-get-involved



nourishing neighbors in need since 1985



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