

Summer 2024

VIRGINIA PENINSULA  
Foodbank

Food  
first

*Inspiring Hope, Feeding Families*

PARTNER  
FOOD BANK OF  
**FEEDING  
AMERICA**

## 2023 - 2024 Board of Directors

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**Jonathan Toms**  
Smithfield Foods

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#### **Erik Mills**

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#### **Patrick Murphrey**

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#### **Ira Williams**

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#### **Joseph Witt**

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#### **Jeff Verhoef**

Community Volunteer

## MISSION

The mission of the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank is to distribute food effectively through collaborative efforts that minimize hunger, promote nutrition, and encourage self-reliance through education.



## A NOTE FROM KAREN

*Dear Friends,*

By the time you receive this newsletter, I will be on the verge of retiring after more than eleven years at Virginia Peninsula Foodbank, nine years at Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia, sixteen years at Dollar Tree corporate headquarters, and four years in public accounting. Although I have enjoyed all my career choices, working to alleviate food insecurity has by far been closest to my heart.

There have been tremendous changes in foodbanking during my twenty years in the industry. There are now newer, more efficient ways to distribute food, but we are no longer just concerned with handing out food. We are intentionally purchasing and distributing fresh produce and other healthy food choices so that we are not contributing to the rise in obesity and chronic diseases. We are listening to the voices of our neighbors in need. We are working to help end hunger through workforce development activities that lead to self-reliance. We are collaborating with many types of organizations outside our previous circle to ensure that our neighbors have what they need to live healthy and fulfilled lives.

I am proud of the accomplishments we have achieved together and the positive impact we have made on our community over these past eleven years. Sadly, the work is not finished. Food insecurity has increased again over the past few years as inflation has made it more difficult to put food on the table for people at all income levels. After my retirement, I intend to continue the fight through volunteering and by continuing to make financial contributions to the Foodbank. At a recent conference I attended, an agency from the other side of the country used the following words in their presentation, "Your fight is my fight and together it's our fight." I hope you will continue to join me in this fight for our neighbors!

Thank you for your support over the years.

Gratefully,

Karen L. Joyner  
Chief Executive Officer

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNOUNCEMENT



Jonathan Toms, Senior Community Development Manager for Smithfield Foods, joined Virginia Peninsula Foodbank's Board on January 30, 2018 and held the position of Board President from July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2024. He will now hold the position as Immediate Past President until June 30, 2026.

"It has been my honor and privilege to serve as president of the board of directors for the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank. Our community is blessed to have the staff, volunteers, and partners who make the Foodbank's mission to feed our neighbors possible. A special thank you goes out to our Foodbank Board of Directors for their friendship and support these past years, and to VPFB CEO Karen Joyner for her steadfast leadership that has made serving with the Foodbank a true pleasure. I'm proud of the Foodbank's efforts during my tenure as Board President, and look forward to continuing to support the organization for many years to come."



Erik Mills, Senior Project Manager for W.M. Jordan Company, joined Virginia Peninsula Foodbank's Board on July 1, 2018 and will become the Board President effective July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2026.

"Having been on the Board of Directors since 2018 I have seen the Foodbank rise to many challenges and make positive impacts on the lives of those in need within our community. I have also witnessed incredible leadership from both the Foodbank Staff and Board of Directors. I am honored to have been asked to serve as Board President and look forward to continuing to provide steady leadership and encourage the Foodbank to continuously improve our service to those who need us the most."

## PARTNER AGENCY SPOTLIGHT

The Mount Peninsula is not just a church; it's a beacon of community service and transformation. With their establishment in 2013 in one of the theater rooms of the Kiln Creek Movie Theater, they strive to demonstrate that church isn't merely just a place of worship but a catalyst for positive change in the lives of individuals and the community.

Constance Davis, the Outreach Ministry Team Leader, has led with love, joy, peace, and hope for all to experience since 2019. Volunteers love helping out at food pantries because Constance provides a positive atmosphere, encouraging everyone to smile and be friendly. The monthly mobile food pantry at the church serves 70-100 families. The influx of families brought challenges, such as the need for greater storage capacity and language barriers that accompany an increasingly diverse population. To overcome these challenges, the Foodbank supplied a commercial freezer and refrigerator for increased storage and volunteers utilize multilingual translation technology for communication with families.

Through their efforts, they serve our neighbors, strengthen the community, and increase food access on the Peninsula.





# TASTEFULLY YOURS

Thank you for joining us at the 28th Tastefully Yours, the Foodbank's largest fundraiser, on April 11, 2024. The event was generously supported by Presenting Sponsor Kroger, and Grand Sponsors BayPort Credit Union, Ferguson Enterprises, and Smithfield Foods along with other local businesses and corporate sponsors. Established in 1987, Virginia Peninsula Foodbank has served the greater Peninsula for 37 years. We created a 1980's theme to look back and reminisce about the accomplishments we have made together with our community throughout these years.

Because of our dedicated sponsors, our food-tastic samplings from local food establishments, culinary programs, and catering companies, the music from Colonial DJs and Hotcakes Band, the photo booth from Boardwalk Photos, and the contributions of our volunteers and guests, Tastefully Yours was a BIG HIT. This

one evening of giving back will help provide the equivalent of 450,000 meals.

One of the new participants in the event this year was the Blue Phantom Inn - Academies of Hampton with Hampton City Schools. It was great to see the students applying the skills they are learning in class to an actual event. They proudly took home the People's Choice Award. However, everyone was a winner that night in the fight against hunger.

Hunger is a reality for over 61,000 Peninsula residents, and the support from this event enables us to ensure that every neighbor has a plate at the table. Without your help, we would not be able to sustain and grow our much-needed food assistance programs and work towards our vision of a hunger-free community.

## Foodtastic Participants 2024

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 29th and Green (Vegan)                         | Blue Phantom Inn - Academies of Hampton |
| Backyard Bar-B-Que                             | Plaza Azteca                            |
| Bean's Ice Cream                               | Rajput Indian Cuisine                   |
| Cookie Text Company                            | Salsa's Mexican Grill                   |
| Foodbank's Culinary Training Program           | Sate' Kitchen                           |
| Grouchy B's                                    | Savor of Elegance                       |
| Hampton Roads Convention Center SAVOR          | Smithfield Foods                        |
| Hayashi Sushi and Grill                        | SMOKE BBQ                               |
| Licking Lipps Catering                         | Starbucks                               |
| Mango Mangeaux                                 | Taste of Port City                      |
| Monsoon Eclectic Modern Indian                 | The Baker's Wife                        |
| Newport News Marriott, City Center Kitchen 740 | The Cobbler Cafe                        |
| Nothing Bundt Cakes                            | The Grey Goose Kitchen & Catering       |
| Park Lane Tavern                               | UNO's Pizzeria & Grill                  |

# The Peninsula's Premier Food Tasting Event



# TASTERFULLY YOURS



THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!



Boardwalk Photo Booth  
Coliseum Central  
Colonial DJs  
Encore Global  
Exhibits, Inc.

Patti and Terry E. Hall  
Hampton Convention Center  
Holiday Ice  
Jeff's Flowers of Course  
M Price Distributing

Oyster Pointer  
PepsiCo  
Riverside Paper Supply  
SignMedia  
Worth Higgins & Associates

## SUMMER OF HOPE

When school is out, hunger might be in session for many Peninsula children. Without access to the school-provided meal programs that they rely on during the year, these children could be experiencing food insecurity instead of focusing on the fun moments and friendships that the summer months provide.

Our Summer Food Service Program delivers breakfast and lunch to children at 20 summer program sites across our community from June through August, including three local YMCA programs and two daily deliveries to low-income housing sites through our mobile feeding van. The hard-working students in our Culinary Training Program are preparing up to 1,000 meals each day from Monday through Friday, offering them an opportunity to give back to their community as part of their culinary curriculum. The entire community receives a benefit when all local children can return to school in the fall healthy, hopeful, and ready to learn.

## BUILDING HOPE

On April 27, students from 17 schools across Newport News, Hampton, and York County gathered at Patrick Henry Mall for the Youth Volunteer Corps of Hampton Roads' (YVCHR) 14th Annual CANstructure Competition. This event brought together elementary, middle, and high school students in a remarkable effort to combat hunger and food insecurity in the Hampton Roads area. The goals of this competition are to engage K-12 students in a project that helps combat hunger and food insecurity in Hampton Roads and to have teams use real-world STEM concepts to design and build a "canstructure" from canned goods they collect.

This year's competition was a resounding success. Thanks to the hard work and generosity of the participating students, faculty, and staff, over 18,000 pounds of canned and dry goods were collected and donated to the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank. The event not only showcased the students' creativity and engineering skills but also highlighted their compassion and commitment to making a positive impact in their community.



## FOOD AS MEDICINE

### ***Nutrition Ranking and HER Guidelines:***

The Healthy Eating Research Guidelines (HER) is an evidence-based nutrition ranking system designed to provide staff, volunteers, donors, users, and other stakeholders in the charitable food system with a common metric for identifying foods that are more or less desirable for distribution based on their nutritional quality. It utilizes an 11-category food system determined by levels of saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. Food products fall under one of three categories: green, yellow, and red. Green foods represent the most nutrient-dense, health-promoting options, while red foods provide less nutritional value. This system ensures that we can bridge the gap not only in food insecurity but also in nutritional security by sourcing food items that will support the health and well-being of our neighbors. Our inventory is currently 66% green, 25% yellow, and 9% red. At Virginia Peninsula Foodbank, we are also intentional about ensuring that we are helping our neighbors foster a good relationship with food by encouraging the consumption of mostly 'green' and 'yellow' foods and not demonizing 'red' foods. Our motto is, some foods provide nutritional value, while others provide joy!



## LOVE TO BE INVOLVED

Love Christian Church, located in Newport News, has supported Virginia Peninsula Foodbank since 2019, both financially and through volunteering. Members of the congregation and the pastoral staff have volunteered for a total of more than 350 hours, filling food bags, packing boxes, and preparing fresh produce for distribution.

To Love Christian Church, it's not a burden. They say it is an honor to be involved, and they view service as a means of fulfilling their calling as a church and building fellowship among members. "Pastor Ivan Harris and Love Christian Church are honored to have the privilege to give donations and volunteer at the Foodbank," said Pastor Sylvia Harris. "We really enjoy giving and serving at the Foodbank because it provides us the opportunity to fellowship, to serve, and to build relationships. It all about making a difference in our community."



The Foodbank is grateful for our partnership with Love Christian Church and all of the churches, shelters, agencies, soup kitchens, and nonprofit organizations that support our mission. We wouldn't expect any less from a church named Love!

## WHATEVER IT TAKES

Jamil used to do whatever it took to get access to drugs and alcohol. Today, after 25 years of being clean, sober, and healthy, he uses his "whatever it takes" attitude to persevere and succeed for himself and his family.

Originally from Haiti, Jamil moved to New York in the 1970s where he worked in his mother's dry-cleaning business. He knew he wanted to own a business of his own one day. Arriving in Virginia after powerful addiction counseling and with a dedication to personal growth, he worked as a garbage collection assistant and moved through the promotion pipeline at Walmart until he heard about the Foodbank's Culinary Training Program. He enrolled to challenge himself to become even better.

"The program showed me the intensity of kitchen management," Jamil says. "It could be a little like learning from Chef Gordon Ramsey at times because they keep you accountable and focused. But if you show up ready, stick to it, and stay grounded, you will gain so much valuable experience."

Jamil also notes that the program instilled in him a desire to give back to the community. He regularly mentors young men and relates to their experiences. "When someone tells me, 'You don't know what it's like,' I can assure them that I actually do know about their challenges. I lived them. I can also motivate them to keep going and stay on the right path."

Today Jamil proudly owns and operates his own food truck called Jaytiy Eats, finally realizing his goal of being a business owner. The name of his company is a combination of the first names of his son and daughter, whom he calls his "angels." "For a while in my life, it was tough to feed my kids," Jamil says. "But now I can give them a good life. The name is symbolic to me. My kids don't go without. My two children - 'Jaytiy' - always can eat."



# Upcoming Events

## Every Saturday through October 12

Classic Cruisers Car Club Cruise-Ins  
Coastal Community Church, Yorktown 4:30pm to 8:00pm

## June 26 - July 23

Food Lion Feeds Summers without Hunger Campaign  
Round-up at the register

## June-August

Feds Feed Families Food Drive  
Federal departments and agencies collect food donations  
to support their local food banks

## September

Hunger Action Month

## November 22-24

106.9 the Fox & FM99 Mayflower Marathon Holiday Food  
Drive

**THANK YOU POSTAL CARRIERS AND OUR  
COMMUNITY FOR DONATING CLOSE TO 36,000  
POUNDS OF FOOD FOR THE STAMP OUT  
HUNGER FOOD DRIVE HELD ON MAY 11TH.**

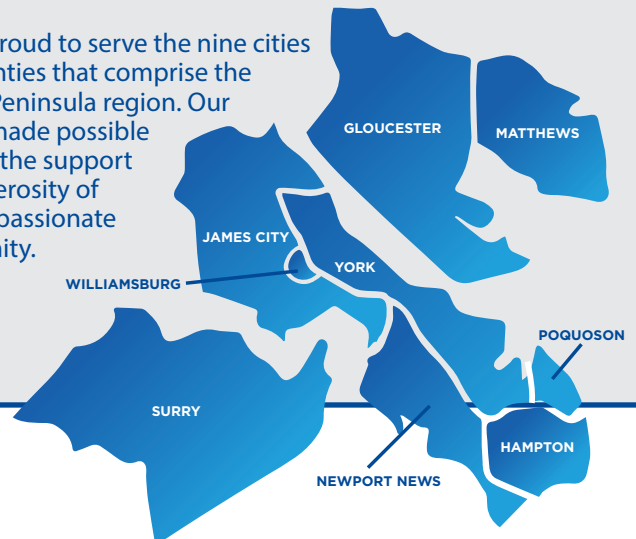


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FEDERATION OF  
VIRGINIA FOOD BANKS

We are proud to serve the nine cities and counties that comprise the greater Peninsula region. Our work is made possible through the support and generosity of our compassionate community.



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