

Winter 2023

VIRGINIA PENINSULA  
Foodbank

Food  
first

*Inspiring Hope, Feeding Families*



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## 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 & JONATHAN



*Dear Friends,*

Thanks to your steadfast support, the Foodbank recently passed a major milestone. We have distributed over 200 million meals in the community! This remarkable achievement could only happen through the efforts of great staff, hardworking volunteers, and generous donors who all believe in our mission. We appreciate your partnerships in making sure that no one in our community goes hungry.

Providing nourishment to children remains an important part of our mission. When Congress passed the National School Lunch Act in 1946, they acknowledged that feeding children was necessary as an issue of national security to safeguard their health and wellbeing. As it was then, it is today. A healthcare issue...an equity issue...an educational achievement issue.

Our work together continues...As we move past the pandemic, we find that there are individuals, families, and seniors that are still struggling. The higher costs of rent, transportation, and groceries has created another crisis in households across the greater Peninsula. We are seeing that those who donated food in the past are now spending this extra money on food for their own families as inflation has caused us all to dig deeper into our wallets each time we visit a grocery store. As a result of fewer food donations from individuals and grocers, we will continue to purchase more food so that our neighbors, and especially our children, have the nourishment they need to thrive.

With deep appreciation,

Karen L. Joyner  
Chief Executive Officer

Jonathan Toms  
Board President

*"Money was very tight when I was a child. However, I don't remember being hungry. I can't imagine such a condition. As I needed to consider my financial legacy, Virginia Peninsula Foodbank is now one of the beneficiaries of my will. I'm unlikely to regret that designation. I hope that, because of my decision, recipients of my legacy will one day say, 'I don't remember being hungry,'" said Sandra L. Clements.*

*We serve children, families, seniors, and individuals in the cities and counties of  
Newport News, Hampton, Williamsburg, James City, Gloucester,  
Mathews, Poquoson, Surry and York.*

## SALUTE TO MARGOT AND JOEL

We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to Margot and Joel Moore for their many years of continued volunteer service to the Foodbank and its Culinary Training Program. Retiring from volunteering in December 2022, Margot started serving the community in 2009 by making sandwiches for our Kids Cafe Program at our former Foodbank location. In 2010, she became chair of the Nutrition Advisory Council and was instrumental in launching the Culinary Training Program under the leadership of Jacquelyn Linder, the Foodbank's Director of Nutrition Programs. Joel, a retired Army Lt. Colonel, became our first life skills presenter for the program, teaming up with his wife to instill the values of leadership and professional success. In addition, Margot spoke at every program graduation ceremony for the last 11 years. Both Margot and Joel were passionate about the success of the culinary students. Their remarkable contributions have made an imprint in numerous lives. We thank you.



Asked to reflect on her service, Margot humbly says, "It was an honor to support this program, both as a developer and instructor. As the program matured, so did my understanding and knowledge that poverty is not a voluntary state of being. The Culinary Training Program was filled with individuals willing to work hard to improve their lives; all they needed was a little help. I attended almost 45 graduations to celebrate what those graduates accomplished. As a result, my personal reward was much greater than the sum of my efforts."

## TEAMING UP TO END HUNGER

Food Lion Feeds and Lionsbridge Football Club are teaming up to help kick out hunger for the 2023 season and Virginia Peninsula Foodbank will be their biggest cheerleader. "We are beyond thrilled to take our partnership with the Virginia Peninsula Foodbank and Food Lion to the next level in 2023. This partnership is going to be a fantastic example of what happens when a community rallies together for a common goal - to solve hunger," said Mike Vest, Co-Founder and Chairman, Lionsbridge FC. Food Lion Feeds will donate 1,000 meals for every goal that the Lionsbridge FC makes this season, helping thousands of families struggling with food insecurity across the greater Peninsula. Hunger is closer than one might think. It could be a family member, your neighbor, or a coworker.



Stephanie Oakley, Community Relations Specialist for Food Lion states, "Food Lion believes no one should have to choose between dinner and rent or gas and groceries. Food Lion and Food Lions Feeds are proud to partner with Lionsbridge FC on several events throughout the 2023 season to give back to the Virginia Peninsula Food Bank and our local community. Our Food Lion Feeds initiative works to create a better tomorrow and eliminate the choices families are forced to make when they are hungry."

The Foodbank is excited about this impactful partnership that will highlight the Foodbank's mission at each game and extend the goal far beyond the field. We are honored that the Foodbank's logo will be displayed on the Lionsbridge Football Club's jersey, along with Food Lion and other impactful community members.

Lionsbridge FC plays at TowneBank Athletic Field, 702 Adams Drive, Newport News. Visit [www.lionsbridgefc.com](http://www.lionsbridgefc.com) for this year's game schedule.



## MLK DAY OF SERVICE

On January 16th nearly 100 NASA employees volunteered at Virginia Peninsula Foodbank to honor Dr. King's legacy with a Day of Service.

The NASA volunteers expressed enthusiasm about volunteering. Several of the volunteers also highlighted the importance of giving back on MLK Day of Service. Keith, a Senior Material Research Scientist at NASA said, "I try to remember what was done during the Civil Rights era, so it means a lot to give back in memory of what [Martin Luther King Jr.] did." Keith then referenced an important quote from Dr. King: "Everybody can be great because anybody can serve."

Angela, a NASA Manager Analyst, was also proud to volunteer. "This is the vision, the dream. Dr. King wanted us to help each other," she said.

Overall, NASA volunteers contributed 240 hours of service, and helped pack 1080 food boxes, fill 669 Backpack Program food bags for children, and prepare 5,614 pounds of produce.

The Newport News Sheriff's Office also honored Dr. King by continuing former Mayor McKinley Price's annual MLK Day of Service Food Drive for a 7th year. Sheriff Gabe Morgan and Police Chief Steve Drew ran the four-hour event, collaborating with the Newport News Police Department and other civic organizations.

"Times are tough and high food prices are stressing people's budgets. Thousands of Peninsula families can now count on having healthy meals because of your generous contributions to the Foodbank," Sheriff Morgan said. By the end of the day, over 12,000 meals were donated to the drive.

We are grateful for the support of NASA, the Newport News Sheriff's Office, and all other organizations that volunteered their time and resources. The relief provided by the volunteers on MLK Day of Service honors Dr. King and the work he did in an evident way.



# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS

In November 2022, the Newport News Shipyard hosted its annual food drive to support Virginia Peninsula Foodbank. During their month-long drive, they were able to raise over 50,000 meals! Not only did they host an in-person food drive, but they also hosted two online drives. By utilizing our connections with online giving platforms, they were able to increase the impact they made.

Judy Fundak, who has been working with the Shipyard for 14 years, let us know why this drive is so important:

"Hundreds of people in our community face hunger on a daily basis, and our local food banks rely on the donations they receive to keep its shelves stocked. Executing a food drive at Newport News Shipbuilding not only collects non-perishable items and monetary donations but is a great way to raise awareness about hunger in our community and inspire action by our employees. Newport News Shipbuilding participates in an impactful food drive each year by creating fun and effective fundraisers and competitions. The drive not only supports our local foodbank but builds community within our workforce as we all work together for the cause. We are proud to be aligning ourselves with such a noble cause!"

Yes, Newport News Shipbuilding is a large company. However, even the smallest organization can host a successful food drive and provide meaningful donations to those in need. Every can and every dollar makes a difference.



## MILESTONE REACHED

We are proud to announce that we just hit a remarkable milestone! With your support, we have officially distributed 200 million meals to our neighbors in need across the greater Peninsula community. Thank you to the staff, past and present, who worked tirelessly each day to grow and strengthen our organization over 36 years. We also thank our generous and compassionate community for donating food, funds, and time to sustain and expand our food assistance programs during both calm and challenging periods. In addition, we wish to express tremendous gratitude to our network of dedicated partner agencies who extend our reach and impact far beyond what we could achieve alone. Finally, we appreciate all of our community partners who stand by our side, sharing our commitment to helping others and alleviating hunger. This achievement would not be possible without the work and contributions of numerous individuals and organizations. We share our success with you, and we are grateful for your support.



## TOWARDS A STRONGER FUTURE

The Culinary Training Program, sponsored by Kroger, continues to change lives and empower its graduates.

Angelina, who experiences a hearing impairment, was referred to the program by VersAbility Resources and appreciates how the program accommodated her. "The instructors and my classmates would point or gesture, repeat things, speak up, and make direct eye contact. Your classmates are your biggest rope, and working together with them is key," she says. Angelina notes that the program "feels like the military," but she learned patience, how to listen better, and to get all important information first to prevent making incorrect, even unsafe, assumptions in the kitchen. Her eventual goal is to open a bakery that prepares food made from traditional Dutch recipes. For now, Angelina says, she is grateful for her experience. "I am actually a better daughter and friend to people because of what I learned in this program," she says.

Jakorey grew up in the kitchen with his grandmother. After dropping out of school, he says he went through "a lot of ups-and-downs trying to stay focused." He always enjoyed cooking, so he came to the program with a commitment to improving his future. Jakorey states that he loved "going to job fairs and getting job training and resources. The chef instructors care about you, too." He also says he learned about ingredients, kitchen management, and proper cutting practices. "The most important thing for my success was to listen rather than talk and to pay attention to directions," Jakorey says. One eventual career idea is to become a chef at Disneyland, but he also admits that he may apply the discipline and skills he learned to further training as a nurse or firefighter.

Every graduate of the Culinary Training Program arrives with a unique story and leaves with a wealth of career and life skills that will lead them to a vibrant, fulfilling future.



## JÉSUS' STORY

When Jésus walks in to Five Loaves Food Pantry, a Virginia Peninsula Foodbank partner agency in Newport News, he is smiling. Retired since 2017, he tells us, "The people here are so nice, and they give good help." Although he receives Social Security and a small pension, he has essential medication that is expensive. He says he comes to the food pantry because it "helps when I don't have enough income." Struggling with spinal stenosis and a leg that is always numb, he walks with a cane but continues smiling as he notes that he will be receiving meat on this day. "I love it when they have meat," he whispers excitedly. "I love making meat and rice. My doctor wants me to choose the right foods because of my diabetes, so I also use the food to make salads and soups."

The one moment his smile fades briefly is when he mentions that his wife died of breast cancer years earlier. Living alone for now but anticipating his daughter joining him soon, he says, "Everybody here is kind. They always treat me so well. The volunteers are here working for no pay. I consider this place like a prescription. If you need help, you come here to get it, and they help you." He smiles once again.

As volunteers help carry his food, Jésus stops suddenly, slowly picking up a bundle of fresh flowers that have been donated from a local store. Playfully asked if he has someone special in mind to receive those flowers, he says that whenever he has the chance to get flowers, he places them on his late wife's memorial. Flowers and food in hand, he starts to leave – still smiling.



## WOW-ING OUR COMMUNITY

World Outreach Worship (WOW) Center has served as a partner agency of the Foodbank since 2004. This agency is one of several who serves the Denbigh community in Newport News, and they are an active participant in our Neighbor to Neighbor Program that rescues food that would otherwise be discarded from retailers. They also collaborate with other organizations to ensure that food is available to those in need as often as possible.

"I understand the feeling of shame from needing to ask for help," says Debbie Lefebvre, WOW's Director of Community Outreach. "It's not just about food. Some people need someone to look them in the eye, notice when they are not themselves, listen when they need to talk, and envelop them in our arms when words are not enough." Debbie also notes that, "Providing food restores some degree of dignity to shoppers. When everything else feels out of control, they can feel confident that they contributed food for those in their households."

Our Foodbank's work is only possible with the support of service-oriented, community-focused partners like WOW, working each day to provide nourishment and hope throughout the greater Peninsula.



# Healthy Happenings

It is no secret that our neighbors face issues regarding access to a wide variety of things every day. From transportation to housing, there is no shortage of challenges in front of them. Unfortunately, one of the obstacles confronting our neighbors in need come on a daily basis is their own health. According to a Feeding America study, at least 58% of the neighbors served at food banks have high blood pressure, and at least 33% have diabetes. With this huge looming problem hanging over our communities, what are we doing to help alleviate this pressure and empower our neighbors to live a healthier, better quality of life?

In partnership with area healthcare organizations, we are introducing the concept of "food as medicine." This simply means using the foods that we eat every day to elevate our health and promote wellness. Using fresh produce, frozen meats and poultry, and shelf-stable canned and dry goods, we have been tailoring our food offerings to meet our neighbors' individual dietary needs, creating a healthier community. In one such initiative, we have partnered with Riverside Health System to offer food as medicine distributions, as well as nutrition classes tailored towards the DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) diet and heart health.

Hudson, an enthusiastic participant in one of the classes, says he appreciates that "the classes are easy to understand. I came in thinking I knew a lot about nutrition, but I was eating the wrong stuff." He was experiencing hypertension but proudly announces that his blood pressure is now more stable. "My mind is now open to new foods, and I know better what to choose. I also now know how important it is to eat in moderation, and these classes exposed me to a lot of the myths around healthy eating so I can be more accurate about my diet," he says. Receiving healthy food at the end of each class, Hudson states, "I am doing so much better in my life because I came here and really listened."

# Upcoming Events

## Every Saturday, April 15 - October 14

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

## April 17th – April 28th

Statewide Legal Food Frenzy - [legalfoodfrenzy.com](http://legalfoodfrenzy.com)

## April 25th

Give Local 757 - Online

## April 29th

Youth Volunteer Corps Hampton Roads Constructure  
Contest Patrick Henry Mall

## May 13th

National Association of Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger  
Food Drive

## May 27th

Chick-Fil-A 10K, 5K & Fun Run at Mariners' Museum  
[www.cfa5k.com](http://www.cfa5k.com) to register

## FOOD DONATION DROP-OFF LOCATIONS

*With Less Than 20 Items*

AAAA Self Storage, Newport News locations

Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Stores Newport News,  
Hampton and Williamsburg

Dr. LeJeune Dentistry, Hampton

E-Commerce Center of Hampton

Fulton Bank, Newport News

Goodwill, Hampton

Habitat for Humanity ReStore, Newport News

Keith E. Vaughan, DDS, Yorktown

Pearson Toyota, Newport News

Primis Bank, Hampton

Old Point National Banks

Casey Auto Group Locations

Starbucks, selected locations in Newport News,  
Hampton and Williamsburg



This issue is dedicated to the memory of a cherished employee, Mona Crump. Mona worked with our Child Nutrition Programs team for 13 years and was highly valued for her strong work ethic, caring heart, leadership of our SHARE Program, festive outfits, and a willingness to pitch in for any task when asked. Mona will be missed, and we honor her contributions to our Foodbank and to those in need across our Peninsula community.



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