Smith’s Helps Expand Food Pantry at Garfield Middle School

Smith’s Food & Drug Stores helped expand a school-based food pantry at Garfield Middle School in Albuquerque, and we celebrated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on December 12. The program is part of Roadrunner Food Bank’s Childhood Hunger Initiative which specifically addresses both family and child hunger simultaneously. The on-site food pantry provides food twice a month to low-income families whose children attend the school. It operates throughout the year including summers when children are out for summer break.

Roadrunner Food Bank’s Childhood Hunger Initiative provides a combination of hunger-relief options at nearly 90 low-income schools across New Mexico including Garfield Middle School. It is one of many ways Roadrunner Food Bank provides food throughout its statewide hunger relief network in New Mexico. Smith’s is sponsoring this school and the food pantry to help solve childhood and family hunger. Their support includes providing equipment and food donations to provide to families visiting the on site school pantry. Plus, it includes utilizing waste reduction as part of Smith’s Zero Hunger | Zero Waste campaign to increase access and availability of food items unable to be sold in stores. These food items are then contributed to charitable hunger organizations such as Roadrunner Food Bank. The food pantry at Garfield Middle School will be primarily stocked with a variety of healthy and nutritious food options including fresh produce, dairy, meat and other food items.

Alissa Barnes, director of community initiatives at Roadrunner Food Bank said, “The partnership with Smith’s opened the door for us to offer increased services to the families at Garfield Middle School. The really unique aspect of the partnership is it will provide insights that will pave the way for new innovation and improvements to the entire Childhood Hunger Initiative in all our partner schools, positively impacting families across the state.”

Childhood hunger in New Mexico is a serious issue. Healthcare associations have stated the health implication of childhood hunger. The Academy of Pediatrics reports that children experiencing hunger are likely to be sick more often, recover from illnesses slowly, and are hospitalized more frequently. In addition, the Academy reports that the lack of adequate food impairs a child’s ability to concentrate, perform well in school and contributes to higher rates of behavioral and emotional problems.

To learn more about the Childhood Hunger Initiative, visit rrfb.org/childhunger.

Stamp Out Hunger 2019

It’s back! The largest single day food drive in the United States is making its 2019 debut on Saturday, May 11. It’s the easiest event to participate in thanks to the National Association of Letter Carriers and the United States Postal Service. Fill a bag or two with non-perishable food and leave it out by your mailbox before your letter carrier arrives. Your letter carrier will pick it up on our behalf.

In addition to donating food, please ask others you know to join in and help “Stamp Out Hunger.” Share a message on social media encouraging friends and family to participate with, “Donate food on Saturday, May 11. Leave your donation at your mailbox.” You can also share the food bank’s posts from our Facebook, Instagram or Twitter pages.

Interested in volunteering? Register at rrfb.org/volunteer or call 505.349.8841.

The annual food drive is happening in roughly 10,000 U.S. communities. Food raised in Albuquerque benefits Roadrunner Food Bank. If you want to know if your community is participating, please call your local post office.
Lower Food Inventory in Our Distribution Center

In our large distribution center, you don’t often see rows and rows of empty pallet racking. However, it’s a trend Roadrunner Food Bank has been seeing for the past six to eight months. While we have been keeping an eye on this issue, it is something we are paying closer attention to each month.

Typically, we are able to secure donated tractor trailer loads of food nationally and regionally available to us from food industry partners. While we do pay for freight to get it to our distribution hub in Albuquerque, the multiple and large-scale food product availability has not been quite as accessible to us.

It has meant that less food product is in our warehouse and available to our statewide network of partners made up of food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, schools, senior sites, health care partners and others. It also means that the variety of foods we provide isn’t what we would like it to be right now. This issue is impacting proteins, canned good items and even perishable products such as meat and produce. With less variety, less nutritious food could be available across the state to our network.

Over the last month our staff has been meeting internally seeking creative methods to bring new sources of food into our warehouse. As our closest supporters, we wanted to make you aware of this hopefully short-term issue. We ask you to consider giving in a variety of ways including donating both food and funds. As this situation shakes out, both food and funds will be necessary to accommodate for any new methods we use to seek food for our network.

Thanks for your generosity and your partnership! You help improve lives every day with your support! To help, host a food and fund drive. Visit rfb.org/ofd to get started.

Competing to Feed Hungry People

When Silvia Jewell and Carlo Bachechi compete against each other, hungry New Mexicans win. Silvia, Roadrunner Food Bank’s Office Manager, and Carlo, Roadrunner’s Facility Manager, downloaded the Charity Miles app that enables users to turn a run, bike ride, walk, or hike into a fundraiser for the charity of their choice. For every mile Silvia or Carlo bike, Charity Miles donates 10 cents to Feeding America, which forwards it to Roadrunner Food Bank. For every mile they run or walk, Charity Miles donates 25 cents.

The competitive pair is neck and neck in their accumulated miles. They started logging their miles on October 2, 2018. By February, they each had a total of 1,150 miles. “If I’m behind in miles, it gives me an incentive,” Silvia said. “Same for me,” Carlo echoed. Both acknowledged they are also motivated by the health benefits of exercise. And both are lovers of the outdoors. Weather and daylight permitting, Silvia usually runs six miles before work; otherwise, she runs after she gets home. She is also a new cyclist and especially likes the Tingley Beach trail in Albuquerque. Weekly, she usually totals 72 miles for running and biking combined. She has also run the Buffalo Thunder half-marathon.

Carlo, on the other hand, is a seasoned cyclist who enjoys mountain biking as well as riding to work. “I will go 50 miles some days. It differs, depending on the weather. Biking from home to work is nine miles. The trip home is all uphill,” he said. The rush hour traffic also adds a challenge to that ride. “It’s all fun,” he observed. “I don’t have a favorite ride. But I like riding in the mountains.”

If you are inspired by Silvia and Carlo, you, too, can download the app. Visit charitymiles.org. Start running, riding, or walking to raise funds for a national charity of your choice. When you select Feeding America, the funds you earn go right back into helping solve hunger right here in our state. And, as an added bonus, you’ll also find you’re maintaining your health and enjoying the wonderful outdoors!

April is National Volunteer Month – Thank You!

We wanted to send out a special thanks to the tens of thousands of volunteers who walk through our doors every year raising their hand to get involved and help. Whether you prep food for distribution inside our warehouse, help our neighbors in need apply for assistance, serve on a committee of ours, or help clients receive food at our distribution points, we thank you.

Your tremendous gift of time touches lives. It makes a difference every day! On behalf of our staff, thank you volunteers!
AmeriCorps Comes to Roadrunner Food Bank

SeedCorps members are creating closer knit, stronger communities across Central and Southern New Mexico.

During their service year, the SeedCorps members become experts at their sites, advocates for the needs of the site and are a much-needed connection back to Roadrunner. The ability to provide this kind of unique support to our partners is a first for the food bank. Closer partnerships with our sites will allow the hunger relief network as a whole to transform and improve the services we are collectively able to offer to our neighbors in need.

It is our hope that our AmeriCorps members will come away from this year of service learning three things. First, a deep understanding of the issues causing food insecurity and poverty in the United States. Second, experience within the existing hunger relief network coupled with a respect for the countless individuals who are doing the work of feeding our neighbors daily. Third, establishing the professional know how and personal passion to continue the work of ending hunger after their service year is completed. With their understanding of the issues and the work already being done to help our hungry neighbors, it is our dream that a future generation of hunger relief advocates will be inspired to action.

Thank you AmeriCorps members! We are grateful for your service to our neighbors struggling with hunger!

Government Shutdown Impacts Some Families for the First Time

During the longest federal government shutdown in our nation’s history, which ended after 35 days, furloughed government employees went without paychecks as bills piled up and savings were depleted. Our furloughed neighbors (some utilizing our programs for the very first time) felt and experienced uncertainty and anxiety as the shutdown lingered on. Many of these New Mexican families turned to Roadrunner Food Bank and our network of partner agencies for emergency food assistance. Meet one of the families affected by the shutdown:

Joan, she was on the brink of tears as we helped her apply for SNAP (food stamp) benefits. When she spoke with us in late January, Joan shared with us they were depending on the income her teenage daughter brought in. Her daughter works a part-time after–school job and they counted on it now to get by, but it wasn’t nearly enough. During the call Joan said that she had finally called us for help. They had run out of food and she was worried about the lack of food for her daughter.

Without enough food she knew it would impact her abilities in school and sports.

Thank you to everyone who made additional donations to support those affected by the shutdown. Your generosity made a tremendous difference for families like Joan’s!

You can continue to support our efforts to provide food, regardless of the reason someone needs it, year-round.

See page 4 for a list of ways to help.
Anonymous Donor Helps Build Dynamic Donor Data System

Each year, Roadrunner’s development (fundraising) data team processes important donations with timeliness and accuracy being of the utmost importance. However, an outdated database used since the early 2000’s, made processing incoming contributions less and less efficient. It is just like updating a personal computer. Technology changes and no longer supports the demand we place on it.

While we knew our old database had outlived its use six to eight years ago, it took a while to find the right partner for securing this critical donor system upgrade. And, in 2016, good news arrived! A generous donor granted Roadrunner Food Bank the means to update and invest in a new donor database. We immediately began the process of undergoing the multi-year conversion. We launched our new state-of-the-art database called Salesforce in mid-2018.

Since its implementation, Salesforce has improved efficiencies up to 40 percent and allowed us to unite and integrate different technology systems. In the long run, Salesforce will improve and guide us in how we capture, report and steward support from our donors.

“The system’s faster processing and improved data management allows us to now dedicate more time to projects that will improve budgeting, analytics, and donor stewardship,” said Shannon Adragna, who oversaw the multi-year conversion to Salesforce. “The anonymous gift made to support this conversion will create so many new possibilities to improve our work. We are extremely grateful for this technology investment.”

Get Involved

- **Donate Funds.** Every $1 gift could allow us to distribute up to 5 meals in communities across the state. Mail in a check, give online or text a donation to 505.933.7732. Visit rrfb.org/give for a list of ways to make a donation.

- **Donate Food.** Drop off non-perishable food on a regular basis at any of the sites found at rrfb.org/dropoff or right at our warehouse at 5840 Office Blvd NE.

- **Donate Time.** Volunteer in our warehouse to help prep food for distribution. Volunteers are also needed on a regular basis for very specific tasks from application assistance, to helping clients at distributions and more. Visit rrfb.org/volunteer for more information.

- **Donate a Vehicle.** We accept all types of vehicles as donations. It doesn’t even have to run! Visit rrfb.org/cars for more information on how to donate your vehicle.

For People Like Nathan, a $1 Gift Means Up to 5 Meals – National Walmart and Sam’s Club Campaign Helps Food Banks

When a $1 gift can help distribute up to 5 meals, every dollar matters for people like Nathan. He is a student in a school we supply food to through our Childhood Hunger Initiative a couple counties away. He told us recently, “When we can’t afford food you help me eat so I don’t go hungry. My mom can bring the food home so I can eat dinner. I really like the fresh fruit, veggies and yogurt. They are my favorite.”

For children like Nathan, the food we bring to his school for his family is life changing. It means he has regular and more consistent meals at home. It means he can sit in a classroom and learn because he has food in his stomach to comprehend what his teacher is saying. It means he doesn’t have a headache or stomach-ache after the lunch period because the food he ate earlier in the day made him feel better.

It’s for children like Nathan and his family that campaigns like the one Walmart and Sam’s Club are undertaking this spring are vital in our ability to send food to communities across the state.

Together, Walmart and Sam’s Club are joining forces with their customers and suppliers to raise funds for nearly 200 Feeding America food banks located in communities across the United States. As part of their Fight Hunger. Spark Change campaign, the community can get involved and help in two ways April 22 – May 20:

1) **Donate at the register.** Customers can donate at any Walmart or Sam’s Club register in increments of $1, $2, $5 or any amount.

2) **Purchase** participating items with the Fight Hunger. Spark Change graphic. Each purchase made unlocks a donation equivalent to one meal for member food banks from that supplier.

Give the gift of hope for the thousands of Nathans in our statewide community who have a chance for a better tomorrow because they had access to a basic necessity - food. Thank you for helping make a difference!

For more information about the campaign, visit rrfb.org.