



THE ROADRUNNER ROUNDUP

WINTER 2024



MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Reflections...

A new year brings the opportunity to reflect on the previous one, and it's no different at the food bank. It was a year when we were still figuring out what the "new normal" looked like just like everyone else.

Most of our food bank-hosted pandemic-era drive-through food distributions ended. Our annual soup and dessert sampling event – Souper Bowl – returned for the first time since early 2020. A thousand-plus people came to raise funds and celebrate the savory and delectable treats from participating restaurants – and are about to again with the 2024 event right around the corner.

Last year also marked the start of a new program that focuses on food distributions in high-need, low-food access communities. The Healthy Foods Express Mobile Market (HFE) provides food primarily in rural and frontier communities as well as tribal communities or communities located in food deserts. In its pilot year, 11 New Mexico communities from as far south as Chaparral to as far north as Cuba benefit. The program has allowed for the return of what is known as a client choice. Recipients walk up, shop, and select food items that

work for their household. It focuses on nutritious food options for families and provides the dignity that is so important for people facing hunger to have at least some choice in their lives.

In August, it also meant the arrival of a new leader. Dana Yost was selected by our Board of Directors to become the next President and CEO of Roadrunner Food Bank. He brings lots of food bank experience having worked at two in Arizona and will be at Souper Bowl if you want to come and meet him.

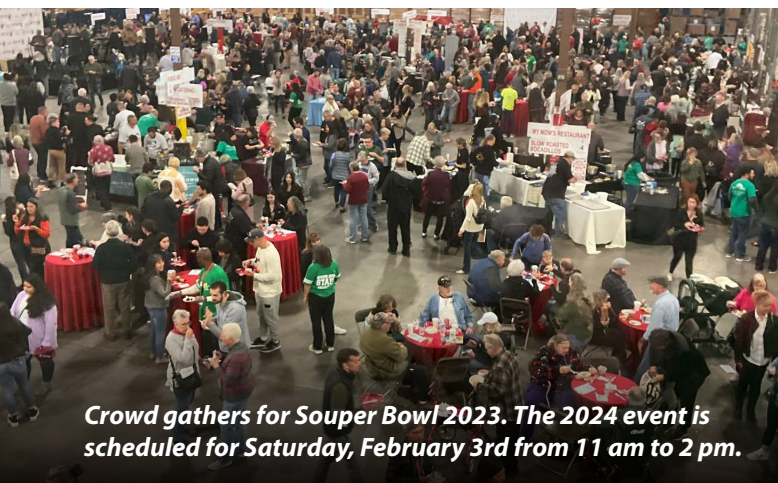


Dana Yost, new President and CEO of Roadrunner Food Bank, inside the warehouse

With costs remaining high, it also meant more people facing tough choices when their small budgets couldn't absorb the increased costs of food and other necessities. Pandemic-era federal funding for SNAP allotments returned to pre-pandemic levels in the spring, which meant far fewer groceries for families that qualify for the program. These two factors alone forced people who were already struggling back into our food lines. It meant that hunger and poverty increased steadily throughout the last year.

Even though there is a lot more work to do, the reasons to celebrate a new year with a bang are countless because of you! Through your support, we were able to provide 27 million meals last year and 12 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables. Your donations matter. Whether you give funds, time, or food, it all adds up because hunger is unacceptable, and everyone deserves access to enough food.

Thank you for being there and knowing that together, we can continue to make a difference!



Crowd gathers for Souper Bowl 2023. The 2024 event is scheduled for Saturday, February 3rd from 11 am to 2 pm.

A Dynamic Duo - Husband and Wife Volunteer Team

Meet Marylin and Rene, a husband-and-wife volunteer team with a passion for giving back. Their journey with Roadrunner Food Bank is a testament to the incredible impact volunteers have on our community.

Marylin, a retired radiologist, and Rene, a retired pastry chef and music store owner, have always had a special connection to the Land of Enchantment. They moved to Minnesota to raise their family and work, but New Mexico remained close to their hearts. In 2019, they returned to the state where they initially met in 1979.

The volunteer experience began with the desire to make a difference. Marylin was the first to volunteer in 2019. She initially helped in the Healthy Food Center (our on-site medical referral food pantry) and later transitioned to working at the front desk. Marylin and Rene now primarily dedicate their time to helping in the warehouse.

One of the highlights of their experience at the food bank is the sense of community among volunteers. Marylin and Rene appreciate the special bonds they've formed with like-minded individuals who share their commitment to addressing hunger in New Mexico. The multi-generational aspect of volunteering is rewarding for them, as they interact with young people and students, forging connections across generations.

Marylin fondly remembers her time in the Healthy Foods Center. The one-on-one interaction with the people we serve allowed her to witness the profound impact of the food bank. It was an eye-opening experience and reinforced her commitment to the cause.

For Rene, returning to New Mexico was a homecoming. Rene felt a deep connection to the state and its culture. He began volunteering in 2022, inspired by Marylin.



One of the most gratifying aspects of their volunteer work is the sense of accomplishment they feel at the end of each shift. Knowing that they have contributed to a greater good as part of a group effort is an essential source of fulfillment for the dynamic volunteer duo.

As volunteers, Marylin and Rene encourage others to join them. They shared that every day brings something new and exciting, and there is an immense need across the state that calls for passionate volunteers.

If you've been considering volunteering, don't hesitate—just do it. Join Marylin, Rene, and the incredible team of volunteers in making a difference and building a brighter future for our community.

Learn more at www.rrfb.org/volunteer.

Making food accessible, no matter what

Did you know that donating stocks and making Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) can have a big impact in our community? Roadrunner Food Bank's partnership with FreeWill helps make a difference in the lives of people struggling with hunger in every county in our state.

- **Donate Stock:** Avoid capital gains taxes and receive a charitable deduction for the full market value of

FREEWILL 

your stock. Your gift will provide nutritious meals to individuals and families in need.

- **Make a QCD:** If you're 70 ½ or older, make a tax-free distribution from your IRA directly to the food bank. When you support our mission, you can satisfy your Required Minimum Distribution.

Learn more at www.rrfb.org/unique-gifts.



Donor Support Efforts to Reach Rural Communities



Last fall, Roadrunner Food Bank had the privilege of collaborating with Oxy, an energy company. Their involvement was focused on creating impact in southern New Mexico where they helped start a new Healthy Foods Express Mobile Market Distribution in the Loving community.

- Oxy partnered with us to wrap one of our trailers. It is a part of our fleet that travels throughout New Mexico bringing nourishing food to New Mexicans, including families facing hunger in rural and frontier communities where there is often not enough access to nutritious food. This initiative helps us spread awareness and the message of hope everywhere it goes.
- Oxy sponsored a new Healthy Foods Express Mobile Market distribution in the Loving community. They generously purchased all the food items during one of the first Loving food distributions.
- It was important to their company to involve their employees in this community project by volunteering at the Loving distribution. Their employees worked tirelessly alongside our team to help provide access to groceries for families to take home.

Oxy recently shared with our team that they will continue to pledge their support by sponsoring future food distributions in southern New Mexico! Thanks to the team at Oxy for making a positive impact and together creating a brighter future with partnerships like this one so that everyone has enough to eat.



Meet Our Team Member Jennice



Jennice Torres is Roadrunner Food Bank's Donor Service Coordinator and is responsible for cultivating relationships with donors, managing contributions, and ensuring a seamless and rewarding experience for our supporters.

Jennice joined the Roadrunner Food Bank team in April, and some of the most stand-out experiences from her time at the food bank has been meeting all the enthusiastic people in the Roadrunner team who are dedicated to helping the people of New Mexico, which she says, "makes this a really fun place to work at."

An interesting fact about Jennice is that she trained as a professional jeweler, and in her spare time, she still enjoys using her skills as a jeweler.



**SOUPER
BOWL
2024**

Our soup and dessert sampling event features the delectable delights from 40 restaurants!

Sat., February 3 | 11am - 2pm

Tickets: \$50 Adults | \$15 Children

Get Tickets
rrfb.org/souper-bowl

TITLE SPONSOR



Meet Rita, She Gives in Memory of Her Dad's Experience with Hunger

Joe is Rita's dad. Joe was born in Las Cruces but grew up very poor in the rugged mountains outside of Beirut, Lebanon. As a young child, he would walk to deliver things to his grandmother's house about ten miles away. On his way, he would pass many soldiers on the road and at checkpoints. The soldiers would often tease Joe as a small boy and often took away his sandwich – the only meal he would have for the day. After one such episode, young Joe was so hungry he took a loaf of bread that he saw cooling on a farmer's kitchen window. As he ate it, he said a prayer asking for forgiveness and made a promise to always look out for those who needed help – especially those who were hungry.

Eventually, Joe returned to New Mexico, living in Albuquerque with his wife and four children. Joe worked hard and made sure his family always had enough to eat. He also spent much of his time searching for super bargains on food items he was looking to purchase. He would buy hundred-pound bags of potatoes, divide them into ten-pound allotments, and give them along with other groceries to his favorite charitable organizations which had a special place in his heart. Joe knew that his talent for getting the best pricing on food was something he could share, and he was passionate about doing so. Rita shared with us that the very last thing he did before he passed was deliver food to his favorite organization.

Rita shared that one way she carries her father's story and memory with her through life is by making contributions to the food bank. Thank you Rita for sharing your story with us! It's a gift too!

If you would like to share your story with us, visit www.rrfb.org/story or call our storyline and leave a voice mail at 505.226.5679.

How Food Banks Work

It's a phrase our team uses often to share the background and details of what makes a food bank different than other hunger relief organizations. The "How Food Banks Work" infographic and video are a quick way we can educate our supporters, donors, volunteers, and others to get an idea of how we work and operate. Take a peek at the infographic or visit www.rrfb.org/how-we-work for a short two-minute video.



HOW FOOD BANKS WORK

We collect excess food that would otherwise go to waste and end up in landfills.



And of course, you can always schedule a behind-the-scenes tour by calling 505.349.8909 or email info@rrfb.org.