Several years ago, I was in The Dalles where I met a person seeking food assistance at a food pantry – I’ll call her Mandy. Mandy was a single mom with three kids, working full time, but barely making ends meet. Mandy told me that every time she got her paycheck, she would take her children to the grocery store. In addition to the staples and the bare necessities, she would buy four apples. Then they would all sit in the car enjoying their apples, knowing that it would be two weeks before they would eat another crunchy, juicy, fresh piece of fruit.

I looked up into the hills. Some of the best apples on this planet are grown just a few miles south of downtown The Dalles, and not all of those apples make their way into grocery stores. There had to be a way to share this bounty with our neighbors in need.

So we did.

Thanks to you, Oregon Food Bank now receives a weekly truckload of apples for distribution around our network of food banks.

Thanks to you, Mandy and her kids can get bags of apples from their local food pantry.

And this is just a small part of what you have done. Thanks to you, health care providers are asking patients if they get enough to eat and connecting them to food assistance. Thanks to you, Oregon Food Bank can step up to help in the event of natural disasters. And thanks to you, thousands of people who struggle with hunger have found their voices.

While there is still much to be done, with your ongoing support, we will make Oregon the first state to end hunger.

Susannah Morgan
Chief Executive Officer
Fulfilling the needs of a growing family

Jessica’s house is lively. She lives with her son from a previous relationship, her fiancé, and their young twins. Her fiancé’s daughter also lives with them part time. A chronic health problem means Jessica needs to be careful about what she eats and avoid processed foods. She’s proud of the fact that she can create meals from simple ingredients.

“I get what basics I can at the food bank, so I can use my SNAP benefits (food stamps) to get the other things at the store,” Jessica says. “If you can get your rice and beans and all those things you have the basics covered. So, when I go grocery shopping I get the food that I don’t always get at the food bank.”

In addition to SNAP, Jessica used WIC (Women, Infants and Children Nutrition Program) to buy infant formula, eggs, milk and cheese. Her son uses the school lunch program that helps with expenses too. She adds, “One thing I try to do is feed my son breakfast before school. He gets the nutrition he needs in the mornings. And then the school provides lunch.”

“I’ve learned a lot about food by going to the pantry and learning what to do with different things I’d never eaten before,” says Jessica. “Whatever food I get, I use for my household and I take it to my other family, my mom and my grandma. I get home, I make what I can and I share; that makes me feel good.”

“I only come to the food bank if I have to. I don’t use it every month; lately it’s been averaging once every other month,” says Jessica. “You know, I see so many people and I want them to get the help they need. We’re all in this together.”

Jessica and her family are just a few of the people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington who need food assistance. Your generous support of Oregon Food Bank means families, individuals, seniors and people with disabilities are able to receive the nutritious food they need to live active, healthy lives.

“I only come to the food bank if I have to.”
Oregon growers put their hearts and souls into producing a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and grains. From apples and pears to potatoes and onions, these nutritious foods are available in abundance at grocery stores and farmers markets around the state. For the produce that isn’t quite fit for market, many farmers chose to donate to Oregon Food Bank to feed their neighbors struggling with hunger.

Your support helps children play and learn, parents work, and seniors and people with disabilities lead healthier lives.
Most apples distributed by Oregon Food Bank come from Hood River and Hermiston, Oregon and Yakima, Washington. Oregon Food Bank helps make the donation process as simple as possible, sometimes providing support for handling or packing to help create a cost-neutral transaction.

Oregon Food Bank distributed more than 48 million pounds of food to our network of regional food banks and partner agencies last year. About 38% of that food was fruits and vegetables, much of it grown here in the Pacific Northwest. In a year, we receive about 50 truckloads of apples – that’s equal to two million pounds.

Volunteers come through the doors of Oregon Food Bank six days a week. They don hairnets, gloves and aprons to repackage bulk food donations, like apples, onions, oats and beans. Last year, volunteers repacked 19 million pounds of food.

Food is picked up by or delivered to pantries and programs throughout the Portland metro area. By working with growers of all sizes throughout the region, Oregon Food Bank is able to funnel produce to communities in need.

Apples are available year round to help feed more than 740,000 people who visit pantries and take part in programs every year. Clients also access other fresh produce, meat and dairy, along with pantry staples such as rice, beans, oil and flour. By providing clients with meal building components, they are able to make nutritionally-balanced and culturally-specific meals for their families.
Health clinics – a line of defense to keep hunger away

Since its implementation in 2010, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) has increased health care access for low-income families and individuals, and it has helped health care providers look at health care differently by focusing on preventative approaches. Food insecurity and poor nutrition can imitate other health conditions or be masked by disease. About 300 health care sites in Oregon have implemented screening procedures for food insecurity. Patients who are at risk are guided through the process to apply for SNAP (food stamps), connected with a nearby pantry or encouraged to sign up for a budget cooking class. Many clinics and hospitals are choosing to go beyond screening activities by offering produce distributions, VeggieRx programs and garden plantings.

“We love this screening and intervention because our patients love it! We feel steps have been taken to improve the situation when patients leave the clinic.” – Kate Norman, clinic manager, Women’s Health Associates, Portland
A networked response to disaster

On July 12, 2017, a lightning strike started a fire deep in the wilderness on the Southern Oregon Coast. It quickly grew and threatened Brookings, a community of 6,000 residents. About 300 people were evacuated with little notice. Knowing that the evacuations would put increased stress on food pantries in the area, Regional Food Bank Manager Laura Hunter of South Coast Food Share jumped into action. At her request, Oregon Food Bank sent extra food and water on the next delivery. When the community needed bread, a phone call to Food for Lane County ensured that more would be sent. Other regional food banks offered donations if needed. Even though the fire continued through the summer, the quick initial response by Oregon Food Bank and others reminded the community that neighbors near and far were there to help.

"Lending a hand to hurricane victims"

Oregon Food Bank staff stepped up to help after hurricanes and flooding impacted fellow food bankers. Feeding America coordinated the travel and logistics.

Six staff went to Texas to assist with food delivery, warehouse management, volunteer coordination, partner agency support and donor stewardship.

Two staff fluent in Spanish went to Puerto Rico to help with intake and coordination of food resources and support partner agencies.
“Children and families go to bed hungry every night in Oregon, and we have the means to stop that.”

Giving back and spreading the word

Each year, thousands of volunteers and donors help Oregon Food Bank in our work to end hunger and its root causes. Gifts of time and money are offered in big and small amounts – and it is the combination of these generous donations that ensure thousands of people in Oregon and Clark County, Washington have enough to eat.

For Lubna Qureshi, giving to Oregon Food Bank has become an integral part of her family's life. Growing up in the Midwest, Lubna sometimes found herself a beneficiary of the local food bank. These days, you’ll find her giving back in the volunteer action center and the learning garden. Along with her husband Fawwad, they’ve connected their daughter Nisma’s school to projects at Oregon Food Bank. This has resulted in more families contributing time and money to end hunger.

“While giving to Oregon Food Bank we've found ourselves to also be a beneficiary,” explains Lubna. “When you help others, your own life becomes enriched as well. We feel empowered to do something about one of the many problems facing people in our state.”

Lubna and her family have also made friends through their service to Oregon Food Bank and say it is a blessing to be with people who share in the mission.

“My family and I feel strongly that alleviating hunger is not only possible, but a responsibility for all of us as a community to take on and contribute toward. In a country as rich as ours, no one should go to bed hungry.”
Strengthening the Columbia Gorge

After recently signing a lease for a new warehouse space in The Dalles, Oregon Food Bank is working with community leaders from Wasco, Hood River and Sherman counties to help reestablish a regional food bank. This new facility will improve food safety compliance, allow for service expansion in the region and improve efficiency for partner agency pick up.

As the Columbia Gorge Food Bank expands, it is critical to determine the best options for distribution in rural areas and to marginalized communities – especially Native Americans and migrant farm workers. The ultimate goal is to establish a local team who will develop, plan and take control of the food bank.
In 2018 the Agricultural Act, commonly known as the Farm Bill, is up for reauthorization. This legislation contains critical provisions for people struggling with hunger. It contains two important assistance programs – Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP).

SNAP and TEFAP help Oregonians in temporary crisis access food they need to live better lives. These programs have proven to lift people out of poverty and are a critical safety net. Oregon Food Bank will work with advocates and partners in Oregon and around the country to protect these programs from cuts or harmful structural changes.

Ensure that you make a lasting impact on those struggling with hunger by building your family’s legacy through a planned gift to Oregon Food Bank. You can designate a percentage or specific dollar amount and revise at any time.

Contact Jill Beidler, Individual Giving Manager at 503.439.1950 or jbeidler@oregonfoodbank.org for bequest information or other options for including Oregon Food Bank in your estate plan.

Join our Legacy Circle