

# Harvest News

A publication of



## FOOD BANK OF NORTH ALABAMA

Artwork from children in summer meals 2017.



## Hunger CHAMPions in the Shoals

Thanks to our partners, now children in the Shoals have more access to meals outside of school. In 2017, we partnered with the City of Florence and the YMCA of the Shoals to expand meal programs in the area...and doubled our reach!

We started hosting meal programs for kids in the Shoals in 2014 with three summer sites. We grew our presence each year, adding partners, and new this year, we engaged further by partnering with the City of Florence on the CHAMPs project.

Cities combating Hunger through Afterschool and summer Meals Programs (CHAMPs) is a national initiative to expand year-round access to free meals for children in need. CHAMPs engaged cities because of their understanding and influence of local needs. The initiative was funded by Walmart and spearheaded by the National League of Cities and the Food Research Action Center. Florence City, in partnership with the Food Bank of North Alabama, was one of 12 cities across Alabama to win funding through CHAMPs.

The highlight of our CHAMPs project was our partnership with the City and the YMCA. The City of Florence publicized the meal programs with ads in the Mayor's Newsletter, billboards, and Facebook Ads. According to Sarah Cabler of Safeplace, **"All of the attention, in the words of one of our site coordinators, means, 'Parents feel like someone cared about them enough to provide meals'"**

The YMCA not only hosted programs year round, but hosted our celebratory produce giveaway. As part of the pilot program designed by our Child Hunger Corps member, Laurel Moffat, we gave out over 500 pounds of fresh fruit and vegetables to families at the YMCA. The event celebrated the end of summer and beginning of afterschool meals, and featured volunteers big and small! Lyndsey Borden, Community Development Planner from the City of Volunteer, as well as children from the YMCA helped give away local tomatoes, fresh peaches, homegrown peppers, and more.

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Thanks to our partners, we connected with three new summer meal sites, expanding from four to seven and serving over 6,300 meals to 160 children. Then children attending the YMCA after school gained access to seamless snacks when the YMCA became the newest afterschool meal sponsor in Florence. Between the YMCA and the Boys and Girls Clubs, we expect to double the snacks served in the 2017-18 school year to over 30,000. According to Catherine Schiesz of the YMCA of the Shoals, "When lunch is taken care of... parents are much relieved. The kids? They're thrilled."



Local tomato tasting at the produce giveaway at the YMCA of the Shoals, features tomatoes from J. Calvert Farms, a partner of the Food Bank's Farm Food Collaborative



Lyndsey Borden, Community Development Planner from the City of Florence, and Laurel Moffat, Child Hunger Corps Member at the Food Bank, help give away produce to families at the YMCA of the Shoals in August 2017.

### Save the date!

**The Shoals Child Hunger Summit is March 8th in Florence.**

Learn more and register at [www.hungersummit2018.org](http://www.hungersummit2018.org)

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## AGENCY SPOTLIGHT:

# Carpenter's Cabinet of Holly Pond and Falkville



Carpenter's Cabinet Director Chris Warnick's drive to ensure people in his community don't go hungry is fueled by his own experience as a child with an empty stomach.

"I made a promise to God when I was 12 that if I was ever financially stable and could do it, I would help others find food so they wouldn't be hungry like we were," Warnick said.

## Both Carpenter's Cabinet food pantries have received an incredible amount of community support.

Carpenter's Cabinet, with locations in Falkville and Holly Pond, feeds dozens of our neighbors in Morgan and Cullman counties each week. The first location, in Falkville, was founded in 2009 when Warnick and a group of 10 community members came together to start the nonprofit. The Falkville location grew rapidly and now feeds about 1,500 people each year.

The second location, in Holly Pond, opened in 2016. Warnick explained, "In 2014, we were approached by a church in Holly Pond that saw a big need there. We explored the area and performed a needs assessment with the help of the Food Bank. We were able to obtain grants and then we opened in Fall 2016." In the first year of service, the Holly Pond location fed over 300 people. Now the facility is looking to expand. "We are trying to grow Holly Pond to become an emergency response center. The town has received money to build a storm shelter so Carpenter's Cabinet Ministries would also like to build an emergency kitchen," added Warnick, a train engineer by trade.

Both Carpenter's Cabinet food pantries have received an incredible amount of community support. Each location is completely volunteer-run. They are also both debt-free, due to a combination of generous community members and grants. The Food Bank helps provide much of the food for both locations and is proud to support Carpenter's Cabinet as one of our partners.

## Great Diaper Drive A Success for Fifth Year!

The Great Diaper Drive was a huge success. The initiative, founded five years ago by a partnership between WHNT News 19 and Rocket City Mom, is a huge diaper drive that benefits the families served by the Food Bank's partner charities.

This is the second year the Food Bank has participated, and benefitted. This year, iHeart Media Huntsville also got involved, doing on-air broadcasting all day from the Diaper Blitz Day location at the Walmart on Madison Boulevard. That extra push and publicity helped. The Great Diaper Drive collected 149,345 diapers, up by over 24,000 from the previous year. The day after the diaper drive, a group of Lawrence County High School seniors volunteered at the Food Bank, helping sort and count the diapers.

Many of the families who struggle to have enough food to eat also struggle to buy diapers.



"We are very thankful for this partnership and the commitment to helping families in need," said Food Bank Executive Director Shirley Schofield. "And we are very thankful to the generous people who donated to ensure babies have clean diapers."

Babies that don't have access to clean diapers have more health problems such as diaper rash. If families don't have diapers, then they can't take their children to daycare, as most daycares require that families provide their own diapers. By supporting the Great Diaper Drive, the North Alabama community helps families in times of financial crisis. The Food Bank looks forward to the next Great Diaper Drive this Fall!



# Farm Food Collaborative Apple Crunch Day

Pink Ladies were the stars of the Farm Food Collaborative's first Apple Crunch Day celebration, though Cameos and Dixie Reds also were favorites. Third-graders from Walnut Grove Elementary had a chance to try these varieties of apples, as well as Granny Smith, Red Delicious and others, during the October morning event at Scott's Orchard in Hazel Green. The students gushed about the sweetness of the Pink Lady apples and compared those to the tart Granny Smith apples all under the canopy of apple trees at the orchard. The day was designed

to celebrate National Farm to School, where schools highlight fresh, locally grown produce on lunch menus. Scott's Orchard supplies locally grown apples to all 1,500 schools in the state. The kids were joined by many food and farming advocates and officials from across the state, who also got to try the apples and pick favorites. Those in attendance included: Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture John McMillan, Alabama Farm to School Director Don Wambles, Madison County Schools Child Nutrition Program Director Barb Haugtvedt, Food Bank of North Alabama Executive



Director Shirley Schofield and Madison County Commissioner Roger Jones. Fifth-generation apple farmer Will Scott hosted the group. The students joined the officials on a covered wagon ride around the orchard. Farmer Will led the tour and explained how his family grows and picks the apples. Afterward, everyone enjoyed a sampling of 10 varieties of locally grown apples. We are already looking forward to Apple Crunch Day 2018!



# Food Bank Wraps Up 18 Senior Mobile Pantry Deliveries Thanks to Enterprise Grant

The Food Bank team just wrapped up a busy year of 18 senior mobile pantry deliveries, funded through a generous grant from the Enterprise Foundation. At each distribution, the Food Bank distributed more than 3,500 pounds of nutritious food and fresh produce to low-income senior housing facilities in Morgan, Lauderdale and DeKalb counties. The locations were targeted because of the high levels of senior food insecurity at each place. In addition to delivering food, the Food Bank also had staff members on hand

to help the seniors enroll in benefit programs, such as SNAP (food stamps). The Food Bank enlisted between 6-10 community volunteers to assist with packing and delivering the food at each location. This program received very positive responses. Many of the residents, most whom are on fixed incomes, said they look forward to each of the deliveries since it helps them stretch their limited dollars while receiving healthy items such as pineapples, mangos, or avocados that they usually couldn't afford to purchase.

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Special thanks to the over 100 schools, organizations, business and neighbors who held food drives and donated food during the holiday season.

**Would you like to help the Food Bank by volunteering in our warehouse?**

Signing up is easy—  
call 256-382-0296 or  
email [Laura Fincher at communityrelations@fbfna.org](mailto:Laura.Fincher@communityrelations@fbfna.org).

