

TABLESETTER

Foodbank®
St. Louis Area Foodbank

Reflecting on 50 Years of Nourishing Our Neighbors

By Meredith Knopp, President & CEO

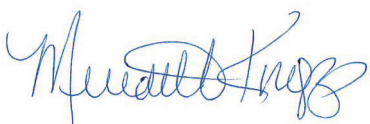
Fifty years ago, on July 15, 1975, the St. Louis Area Foodbank opened its doors with a singular mission: to nourish our neighbors. For five decades, we've stood as a beacon of hope, adapting and innovating to meet the evolving needs of our community, from natural disasters to economic shifts and global pandemics.

What began as a small office space has grown into a large distribution center and a comprehensive network of partner agencies. We've learned that truly addressing food insecurity means addressing underlying issues like transportation, access to healthy options, economic instability, and systemic inequities. Our programs, including FARMS – Food Access and Resource Markets (drive-through distributions), Food on the Move (walk-through shopping), School Markets, Grocery Rescue, and SNAP Outreach, are designed to provide fair access to nutritious food and empower individuals toward long-term food security.

As we commemorate our 50th anniversary, we are more committed than ever to our mission. The need for food assistance in our bi-state region continues to grow, and we plan to strengthen partnerships, invest in technology, advocate for policy changes, and focus on fair access for all, including veterans and our unhoused populations.

Your unwavering support has been the driving force behind our ability to nourish countless individuals and families. It's your generosity that allows us to respond swiftly in times of crisis and build long-term solutions. Join us as we embark on our next half-century of service. Your support today is an investment in a brighter, more food-secure future.

Whether you choose to be an advocate, host a food drive, or donate your time or funds, every action makes a difference. Visit stlfoodbank.org to get involved and be part of the next 50 years of hope, progress, and nourishment.



Meredith Knopp,
President & CEO, St. Louis Area Foodbank



NEWSLETTER • AUGUST 2025

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- Reflecting on 50 Years of Nourishing Our Neighbors
- Our Growth Over the Past 50 Years
- St. Louis Area Foodbank Rises to the Occasion for Tornado-Impacted Neighbors
- Partner Spotlight: Church of God Food Pantry
- Dedicated Volunteer, Jeff Tank Finds Purpose at the St. Louis Area Foodbank

Thank you to the following organizations for their ongoing sponsorship and support:

Aetna/CVS

First Alert 4

The Jayson Tatum Foundation

**Chaminade College
Preparatory School St. Louis**

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Veterans United Foundation

BJC Healthcare

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**St. Louis Disaster Relief Fund
of the St. Louis Community
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PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF

**FEEDING
AMERICA**

FIRST 25 YRS. 2000-2010 2011-2020 2025!

1975 • Food Crisis Network created

1979 • Joined Second Harvest (now Feeding America)

1980 • 150+ partner agencies

1982 • Chosen to distribute MO USDA product

1985 • Food Crisis Network becomes the St. Louis Area Foodbank
• 1st Scouting for Food Drive

1986 • 37,000-sq. ft. Facility

1990 • 250+ partner agencies

1992 • 1st Stamp Out Hunger Drive with National Association of Letter Carriers

1995 • Chosen to distribute IL USDA product
• 300+ partner agencies

2000 • New Repackaging Center opens

2002 • Chosen to distribute MO Commodity Supplemental Food Program

2006 • 193,000 people served

2007 • 94,000-sq. ft. Distribution Center purchased
• Food Fair Rapid Distribution Program started

2008 • Retail Store Pick-up Project begins

2009 • Chosen to distribute IL Commodity Supplemental Food Program

2010 • 261,000 people served
• Mobile Markets distribute 2.9 million pounds of food

2011 • 10 million pounds of food distributed

2012 • 16,000 volunteer hours served

2014 • 392,000 people served

2015 • Community support exceeds \$5 million
• 30 million meals distributed

2016 • Hunger Engagement Center opens

2018 • SNAP work results in 1,000 SNAP applications

2019 • Breakfast Beyond the Bell provides a nutritious start to Cahokia students

2020 • Service Insights launch – providing real-time data on community needs

2021 • Food on the Move mobile food pantry launched

2022 • Farm to Foodbank Program launched

2024 • Serving 14 counties in MO and 12 counties in IL
• 558 partner agencies
• 42 million pounds of food distributed
• 53,705 volunteer hours served
• 35 school markets opened
• Community support exceeds \$13 million

OUR GROWTH OVER THE PAST 50 YEARS

The St. Louis Area Foodbank has been making an impact in our community since 1975. Over the past 50 years, our operations have grown and evolved to meet the needs of the neighbors we serve. Here's a look at where we started vs where we are today.

- We **DISTRIBUTED** 135,000 pounds of food in 1975 vs **43 million pounds of food in 2024.**
- We've **EXPANDED** from 14 pantry partners in 1975 to **588 partners today.**

- Food **DONATED** by the community through food drives has grown from 17,000 pounds in 1975 vs **761,665 pounds in 2024.**
- We've **GROWN** from operating in a small, donated office space in 1975 to the **94,000 sq-ft warehouse we use today.**

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: CHURCH OF GOD FOOD PANTRY

This year, the St. Louis Area Foodbank celebrates 50 years of nourishing our community, with the Church of God Food Pantry partnering with us for nearly four decades. What began in the mid-1990s as a monthly effort has grown to a weekly lifeline, serving up to 50 families.

"When we started, we were open once a month. Now we are doing it every week. The need has grown with high prices," says Bill Campbell, a dedicated volunteer since the pantry's inception. Run by a core team of three volunteers, including

Bill who picks up orders from the Foodbank, their mission is clear: "We're a little church with a big mission. God has called us to feed people."

The impact of the Church of God Food Pantry extends far beyond filling empty stomachs. The volunteers have witnessed firsthand the difficult choices families face. "I have had people tell me they can't afford to buy medicine if it wasn't for us – can't afford food and other essentials," says Bill.

(Continued on page 3.)

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: CHURCH OF GOD FOOD PANTRY *(continued)*

The story of the Church of God Food Pantry is a powerful illustration of the enduring partnership between the St. Louis Area Foodbank and its network of dedicated agencies. As the Foodbank commemorates 50 years of service, the unwavering commitment of partners like the Church of God Food Pantry serves as a beacon of hope

and a reminder of the profound impact that consistent, compassionate action can have on the lives of individuals and families throughout our region. **When we work together, we can make a big impact in the lives of those who turn to us for food assistance, hope, and kindness.**

ST. LOUIS AREA FOODBANK RISES TO THE OCCASION for Tornado-Impacted Neighbors

The St. Louis Area Foodbank has been actively engaged in the recovery efforts following the devastating tornado that swept through our community on May 16. In the wake of the destruction, the Foodbank has swiftly mobilized to provide essential support to neighbors impacted by the storm, demonstrating the unwavering spirit of generosity that defines our region.

On May 31, the Foodbank hosted a highly successful donation drive which was **made possible through incredible partnerships with The Jayson Tatum Foundation, Chaminade College Preparatory School, First Alert 4, and KTRS.** The outpouring of support from community members was truly inspiring, **resulting in over 52,340 pounds of shelf-stable food, personal hygiene products, and household cleaning supplies** being collected. **These crucial provisions were immediately distributed to neighbors in need,** offering a lifeline during challenging times.

As an integral part of both the state and city's disaster recovery efforts, the St. Louis Area Foodbank is committed to long-term support for affected residents. The Foodbank has been participating in special distribution events specifically for impacted neighbors to receive much-needed food, water, personal hygiene products, and household cleaning supplies. Furthermore, **the Foodbank has been actively supporting**

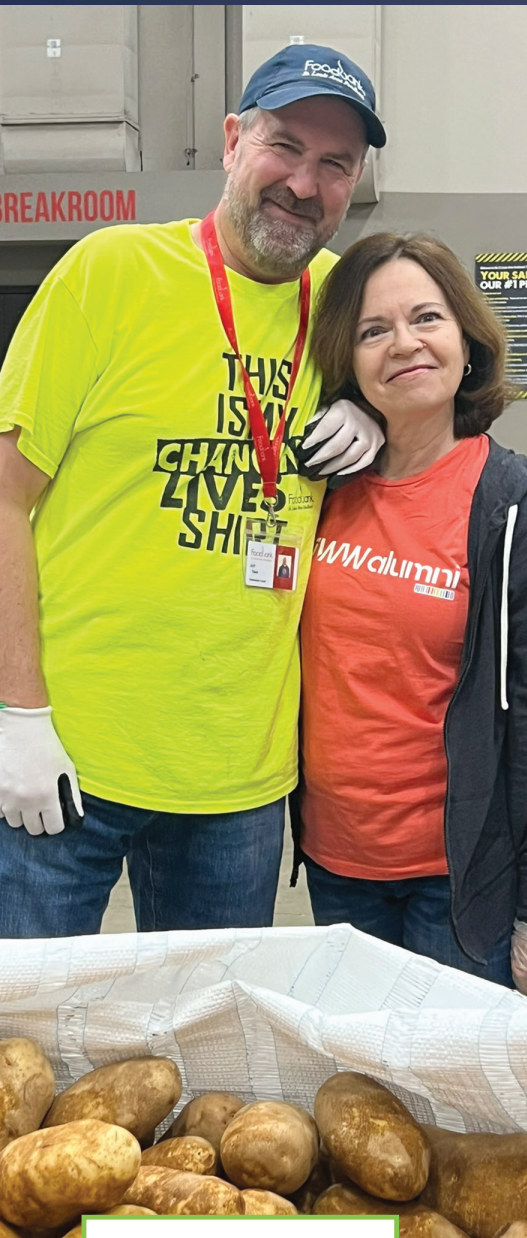
our dedicated pantry partners located in the tornado-impacted areas, ensuring they receive consistent deliveries of food and other items essential for recovery efforts.

The road to recovery is ongoing, and as such, additional donation drives and fundraising events are being planned. All proceeds and product donations from these initiatives will be directly channeled towards helping neighbors who reside in the areas hardest hit by the tornado.

For 50 years, the St. Louis Area Foodbank has proudly stood by our community through times of disaster and economic uncertainty. We are incredibly grateful to each and every individual, organization, and partner who has donated their time, funds, or items during this critical recovery effort. **Your compassion and generosity are making a tangible difference in the lives of our neighbors, helping them rebuild and recover.**



DEDICATED VOLUNTEER, JEFF TANK FINDS PURPOSE AT THE ST. LOUIS AREA FOODBANK



For Jeff Tank, retirement in 2021 was a new beginning. **He and his wife, Nancy, started volunteering with the St. Louis Area Foodbank** in January 2022, turning a corporate volunteer day into a deeply rewarding commitment.

Jeff now volunteers at multiple shifts a week, including a weekly shift with Nancy, and for the past two and a half years, he's been a lead volunteer. **"We love it," Jeff shares, emphasizing the unique fulfillment he finds in this work. He credits the "fantastic" staff and fellow volunteers for the positive experience.**

One of the most impactful aspects of Jeff's volunteering has been participating in the *Food on the Move* (FOTM) program. While he understands the importance of the work done in the volunteer center, he expressed a desire to see where the food was going. Since his first FOTM event the week before Thanksgiving, he has consistently signed up for two locations a month, including sites in Madison, Illinois, and the Veterans Community Project.

Seeing neighbors directly receive the food he helped sort and package in the Volunteer Center has been incredibly rewarding for Jeff. He recalls packing carrots and then witnessing those same carrots being distributed at an FOTM event to individuals who needed them. He's been deeply moved by the appreciation shown by recipients, even those in difficult situations.

Jeff and Nancy's dedication to the St. Louis Area Foodbank exemplifies the powerful impact of volunteering. Their commitment not only supports the Foodbank's mission but also enriches their own lives through meaningful service and connection.



Be part of the next 50 years of hope, progress, and nourishment. Your donation directly supports our programs and provides meals to neighbors in the bi-state region. Visit stlfoodbank.org/50years or **scan the QR code to donate.**



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