



A Quarterly Publication from the  
Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana

# FOOD FOR *Thought*

Fall 2017 Newsletter

## MARIA, FOOD BANK CLIENT, SHARES HER STORY

I am a Navy veteran. I was honorably discharged after serving my country for four years on several detachments and deployments. I loved my time in the Navy. Sure, it was hard work but I got to see the world and I was always taken care of. It wasn't until after I got out that my struggles really began.

couldn't make it on my own. My daughters were the only reason I ended up asking for assistance. Their needs motivated me to put my pride aside and visit a nearby food pantry – served by the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana. By giving us food, the pantry restored a sense of normalcy to our lives and gave us the strength and inspiration we needed to keep reaching for a better day.

I now know that a better day will be here soon. When Hailey is old enough to attend full-time kindergarten, I can work enough hours to make ends meet. I'm not sure I'd be as hopeful about the future without the Food Bank's support. To me, the people there are angels, and I can't thank them enough for everything they've done.



I'm a single mom to two beautiful girls – Hailey is four and Hannah is six. My husband and I split up a few years ago and unfortunately I don't receive any support. I want to work hard and earn a living, but right now my daughters' school schedule doesn't allow it. Hailey is too young to attend school all day, and I can't afford the daycare I'd need to work full time. I do everything I can to make the most of the few hours she is in school – I clean homes, landscape

lawns; anything to make a little money to keep the shelves stocked. But as you can imagine, it's not enough. There have been times when I didn't eat so my daughters could.

As a veteran, it's really tough to ask for help. The Navy taught me to be independent. I was ashamed to admit that I





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You can visit the  
Food Bank of  
Northwest Louisiana  
online anytime at:  
**www.foodbanknla.org**

*Check out our website  
to learn more about events,  
volunteer opportunities, to make  
safe, secure online donations  
and to learn more about  
the Food Bank.*



# Letter

## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Martha Marak**



I can't say it enough — THANK YOU! I've always believed that there is a tremendous amount of compassion and philanthropy in Northwest Louisiana, and the generosity during the aftermath of Hurricane Harvey has proven this several times over.

Together, we hit the ground running by providing over \$275,000 in food, water, household items, cleaning supplies and pet food to our struggling neighbors in Southeast Texas. And we continue our work in Northwest Louisiana to help the 35,000 individuals that turn to the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana each month.

Because friends like you care about the well-being of our community and the victims of nature's disasters, the Food Bank is on task to distribute nearly 1,000,000 pounds of food, enough food for 765,000 meals each month.

Thank you for your generous the support of our community. Together we have continued to provide food to 150 non-profit organizations, homeless shelters, soup kitchens, church pantries, and schools. With even more people in our community needing our assistance, we hope we can count on your continued support.

With gratitude,

*Martha Marak*



## THANK YOU!

Danella Ware, Specialist Health System Marketing Director presents \$5,000 for disaster assistance to the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana.

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In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA.

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# HIGHEST RATING FROM CHARITY NAVIGATOR AND GUIDE STAR ACHIEVED FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Once again, the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana's sound fiscal management practices, financial health, accountability and transparency have earned the highest rating from two leading charity evaluators—Guide Star and Charity Navigator. In recent publicized reports, the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana earned the highest 4 Star Rating from Charity Navigator, America's largest independent charity evaluator. Only 16 rated charities in the state of Louisiana received the 4 Star Rating. The Food Bank is the only non-profit organization in Northwest Louisiana to achieve this award. This is the fourth year in a row that the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana has earned this top four star distinction.



Similarly, the Food Bank earned the highest rating of Platinum Level from Guide Star, world's largest source of information on non-profit organizations. The Food Bank is one of only nine organizations in the State to have the rating of Platinum level.

"It's important our donors trust that we are using our funding wisely to accomplish the over-whelming task of trying to stabilize the lives of those facing hunger issues in northwest Louisiana," said Martha Marak, Executive Director. "Our 4-star Charity Navigator rating demonstrates to our supporters that we take our fiduciary responsibilities very seriously."

## DISASTER SERVICES

After Hurricane Harvey made landfall and dropped more than 40 inches of rain, thousands of people in southeast Texas and Houston have been displaced.

One of the many services the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana provides is disaster aid during difficult times. Disaster response has been a core part of our mission for 20 years. The Food Bank has a history of supporting sister food banks many times in the past following disasters.



Whether a local flood, or when the rains flooded Baton Rouge in 2016, the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana responded with food and household items.

Responding to the disaster of Hurricane Harvey was no different. Thanks to our local partners, Brookshire's, Super 1, Bossier Sheriff's Office, Ivan Smith Furniture, First Baptist Church School, Horseshoe Casino, Minden Chamber of Commerce, Specialist Health System and, Saia Transportation, we have already sent three 53' trucks filled with 66 pallets of water, 22 pallets of Meals Ready to Eat (MRE) and assorted foods, cleaning supplies, blankets and pet food valued at \$208,800 to the Southeast Texas Food Bank in Beaumont.

## PLAN YOUR OWN BOWL PAINTING PARTY



Host a bowl painting event to benefit the Food Bank's Empty Bowl Event. Bowls are only \$20.00 each. Bowls, glazes, and supplies will be provided for your event. Contact Meg at 318.675.2400 ext. 111 or [development@food-banknla.org](mailto:development@food-banknla.org) to arrange your event at your location.

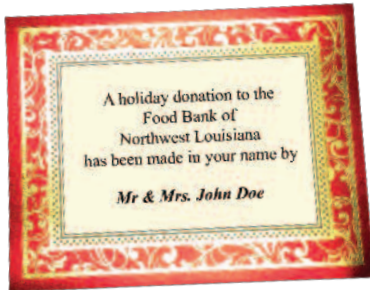
Our goal is to have 400 hand painted ceramic bowls completed for our Empty Bowls Hunger Awareness and fund raising event in June 2018. Guests at the Empty Bowls event choose a bowl as their "Thank You" and as a reminder of the empty bowls that need to be filled in our community.



# HONOR YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

## Give a Gift with Lasting Impact with a “Hope” Honorarium Holiday Card

Your honoree will receive a special custom made holiday card acknowledging your gift to the Food Bank in their honor. Your donation enables our Food Bank to provide food to community by supporting our programs. Your gift is tax deductible.



How does it work?

1. Send us your contribution (Minimum \$15 donation per card; price includes postage and handling).

You may pay by check and/or cash, or by credit card.

2. Email, mail, or fax a list of those you would like to honor by December 15th and we will do all of the work for you.

3. The Holiday “Hope” card will be personalized with your name and/or your company’s name. The “Hope” card will be mailed to the recipient in time for the holiday season.

Please be sure to send in your contribution and list by Monday, December 15th in order for us to have them mailed on time to your families and friends.

Please mail to: Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana, 2307 Texas Avenue, Shreveport, LA 71103

You may fax lists to 318-675-2440. Call us at 318-675-2400 ext.100 for more information.

Relax and enjoy the holiday season knowing your gifts will touch your family and friends in a very meaningful way—by helping the food insecure families and children of Northwest Louisiana.

## Food Bank Facts

As a hunger-relief organization, the Food Bank of Northwest Louisiana acquires, stores, and distributes food and other essential items to low income children and individuals through 150 community non-profit and faith-based organizations within Caddo, Bossier, Webster, Bienville, Claiborne, Red River and DeSoto Parishes. These organizations consist of homeless shelters, soup kitchens, residential centers, churches, pantry programs, and schools. We save these agencies millions each year by providing free and low cost food and products.

## OUR PROGRAMS INCLUDE

### Food and Emergency Distribution:

In our last fiscal year, we distributed 9 million pounds of food with a value of \$14,500,000 to more than 75,000 children, women, men, seniors, the homeless, disabled, unemployed and underemployed individuals living below the federal poverty level in our seven parish service area of northwest Louisiana.

### Disaster Relief:

As a disaster responder we provide immediate assistance to our member agencies, pop-up and faith based shelters and other individuals. During the 2016 Spring flood we distributed food, water, MRE’s and supplies to disaster victims.

### Senior Box Program:

Each month we deliver a box of pantry staple foods to over 1,000 low income seniors throughout our seven parishes.

### Mobile Pantry:

Perishable and non-perishable food are distributed to rural clients on a monthly basis.

### Kids Cafe®:

Through a partnership with the Volunteers of America’s Lighthouse Program, FDDOC Winner’s Circle, Shreveport Libraries and David Arines Community Center, meals and nutritional education are provided to hungry children in after-school programs.

### BackPack™ Program:

Chronically hungry children are provided with a weekly backpack of food to take home for the weekend and holidays. Each 7-10 pound bag includes items such as cereal, milk, fruit juice, and pop-top canned food.

### Summer Food Service Program:

Nutritional breakfasts and lunches are provided for hungry children that have no access to free food during the summer months when school is not in session. Food is distributed through summer programs such as Boys and Girls Clubs, libraries and faith based summer programs.

## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

*Pack food boxes for Senior Program  
Help administration with clerical duties  
Organize a food drive or virtual food drive  
Deliver senior food boxes monthly*

Contact Gene Hayes, Community Resource Coordinator, for information on volunteering with the Food Bank 318-675-2400 ext. 115 or [ghaynes@foodbanknla.org](mailto:ghaynes@foodbanknla.org)