



HARVEST TIME

OZARKS FOOD HARVEST - THE FOOD BANK | NEWSLETTER FROM THE O'REILLY CENTER FOR HUNGER RELIEF



"I'd never been so relieved and grateful. Thank you Ozarks Food Harvest for everything you do! Thank you so much for being a light of hope in such a dark time!"

- Kathryn, *Mobile Food Pantry* recipient

FINDING HOPE DURING A PANDEMIC

Kathryn is passionate about education and has served as a full-time substitute teacher in the Ozarks for several years.

"I love my students. I plan to be a classroom teacher in the near future, but even as a substitute, I'm proud and overjoyed to go to work each day," she shared.

When she took a few much-needed days off for spring break in mid-March, she never dreamed that she wouldn't return to the classroom for the rest of the year. She—along with thousands of others in the Ozarks—was suddenly unemployed and without income.

Due to the furloughs caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Missouri's unemployment rate rose to 9.8 percent in April, up from only 3.7 percent in February. Many filed for unemployment benefits and food stamps as they made tough decisions between paying bills and feeding their families.

Prices at local grocers skyrocketed and cabinets quickly emptied as kids stayed home from school. With nowhere else to turn, many families looked to Ozarks Food Harvest to find food assistance. An estimated 60 percent of these people were getting help for the very first time in their lives.

ozarksfoodharvest.org

To meet the increased need, The Food Bank began scheduling *Mobile Food Pantries* around the Ozarks. Members of the Missouri National Guard were assigned to help pack boxes of veggies, milk, bread, meat and pantry staples into the trunks of hundreds of cars week after week.

"I'd never been so relieved and grateful," said Kathryn after receiving food through a *Mobile Food Pantry*. "Thank you Ozarks Food Harvest for everything you do! Thank you so much for being a light of hope in such a dark time."

Those who were struggling also began to visit our hunger-relief partners to get groceries.

"The Food Bank is working around the clock to provide food for people in this community. The staff remains friendly and helpful during this time and goes above and beyond to provide for each agency they serve," said Johnathan Key, Boys & Girls Clubs of Springfield Musgrave program director.

The Ozarks has started to re-open, but the need for food assistance remains. Thousands are still furloughed from their jobs. Many businesses have been forced to close their doors. Children who are staying home from daycare or summer school are hungry.

"I have three kids and one on the way," said Nicole, who found help through one of our pantry partners. "My hours got cut. I was working 47 hours and now I only have 17."

Thanks to kind donors like you, our hungry neighbors are able to find a glimmer of hope in a difficult time. Driving home with a backseat full of groceries helps ease the burdens that so many are feeling right now. We are committed to feeding these families, and we will continue to help them for as long as they need assistance.

No one should be hungry, even in the midst of a pandemic. But we need your help to make that happen. Consider making a gift to our COVID-19 Hope fund by visiting ozarksfoodharvest.org/donate. Thank you for your continued support during these challenging times.





Missouri National Guard and SPS staff members distribute food at Glendale High School during a Mobile Food Pantry.

REDUCING HUNGER AT HOME THROUGH LOCAL SCHOOLS

Thousands of children in the Ozarks rely on the free and reduced meal programs at their schools. These kids begin each morning with a nutritious breakfast and receive lunch to fuel up for an afternoon of studies—all for free or a very small cost. This program gives students and parents peace-of-mind when it's hard to keep food in the refrigerator at home.

This all changed when COVID-19 caused class cancellations in late March. We immediately began reaching out to our school partners to see how we could help make sure children could eat while continuing their studies at home.

We quickly began hosting multiple *Mobile Food Pantries* at Springfield public schools. School faculty and staff came alongside Ozarks Food Harvest and the Missouri National Guard to help distribute the food.

"We knew that many of our families would need additional food support," said Jean Grabeel, director of health services for Springfield Public Schools. "Along with the provision of district school meals for drive-through pick-up at school sites, Ozarks Food Harvest stepped up to the plate to provide multiple mobile food distributions for families. Thank you for providing hunger relief for our families. You truly do *Transform Hunger into Hope!*"

Across nine different distributions, students and families from 34 schools were able to receive food in just a few short weeks. Justin was just one of many who stopped by our distribution at Reed Middle School to get food for his family.

"When the kids were in school, our grocery bill was about a quarter of what it is now. This is much appreciated," he shared.

We also teamed up with organizations in smaller towns to help children and their families outside of Springfield. Hundreds in Branson, Lacquey, Monett, Plato and Republic were able to receive free groceries from an Ozarks Food Harvest *Mobile Food Pantry*.

Across Springfield and outlying areas, these distributions provided more than 193,000 pounds of food for 3,984 families in April and May.

While we are not sure what the 2020-2021 school year has in store, Ozarks Food Harvest will be there to make sure every family in need has enough to eat.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS STEP UP TO MEET INCREASED NEED

While Ozarks Food Harvest was busy purchasing more food, numerous caring community partners rallied around The Food Bank to ensure we had the resources we needed to continue feeding families.

We were extremely blessed by the tremendous support from the food and beverage industry in the Ozarks. Best of Luck Beer Hall in partnership with Great Escape Beerworks, CarGO, Culver's, Greek Belly, Hold Fast Brewing, Primas and Springfield's chapter of the United States Bartenders' Guild all collected donations on behalf of Ozarks Food Harvest. This gave patrons the opportunity to support The Food Bank and local businesses simultaneously. We could not be more grateful for these friends!

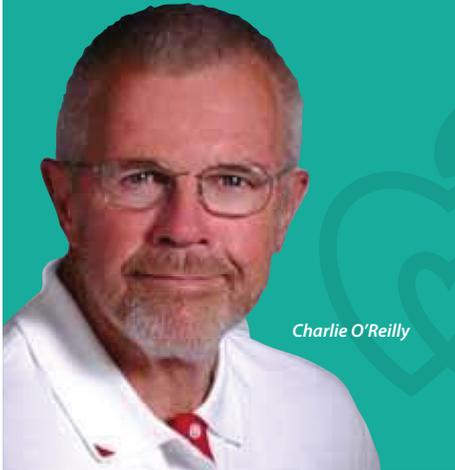
Supermarkets in the Ozarks also stepped up to help provide meals. Woods Supermarkets and Hy-Vee both collected donations for The Food Bank at their registers. Hy-Vee matched donations, raising a total of \$14,800, and funds were used to purchase Hy-Vee products that filled emergency food boxes. These partners came at a critical time as the food supply chain experienced delays and food prices increased exponentially.

Other generous businesses and organizations include Arvest Bank, the Downtown Springfield Association, Fast n' Friendly convenience stores, Macy's, the Medical Center for Federal Prisoners and Pampered Chef. The compassion of these partners means so much to The Food Bank and to the people we serve each and every day.

Community partnerships helped raise \$30,866 over the last few months. That's nearly 123,500 meals for food-insecure families! Thanks to everyone who supported both area businesses and Ozarks Food Harvest.

We still need help to keep families in the Ozarks from going hungry. Is your business or organization interested in joining us in the fight against hunger? Contact Sarah Byrd at sbyrd@ozarksfoodharvest.org to set up a fundraiser.

Charlie's CORNER



Charlie O'Reilly



The coronavirus continues to greatly affect families.

THE ECONOMICAL EFFECTS OF CORONAVIRUS

There's still a tremendous amount of uncertainty about how COVID-19 will affect our economies and communities in the long run. We've already seen the immediate effects: people furloughed or laid off from their jobs, permanent closures of businesses, shortages of food items, supply chain backups, school closures, the increased need for food assistance and so much more.

Our economy—and our neighbors—are suffering. This health crisis is quickly turning into a hunger crisis. According to Feeding America, food insecurity and poverty rates are only expected to increase over the next six months. Several counties in southwest Missouri recorded a jobless rate of 9.1 percent in April, an increase from 3 percent in February. Unemployment rates are worse than during the Great Recession, and we've only just begun the long and challenging road to recovery.

Right now, many families are getting the help they need through pandemic-related assistance. Additional SNAP dollars, extra USDA food provisions, the government stimulus and unemployment funds are helping families stay afloat. But what happens when these programs are no longer in place? How will parents who lost their jobs or depend on summer meal programs continue to feed their kids?

This creates the perfect storm for families who are already struggling to make ends meet. We've seen evidence of an increased need in southwest Missouri. Since the end of March, Ozarks Food Harvest has provided an additional 1.1 million meals to people in need across the Ozarks. They plan to provide additional meals for as long as the increased need and funds will allow, but they need some help to do that.

Today, I'm asking for your help to support the good work of Ozarks Food Harvest. As I said, the road to recovery is long and challenging. The Food Bank will need additional funds for months to come. A little goes a long way, and you can trust that your donation will be used to help as many people as possible.

Are you willing to join me in stepping up to meet the increased need? If so, visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/donate and select "COVID-19 Hope Fund" from the dropdown menu. If you have questions about The Food Bank's ongoing response, feel free to give Bart a call at 417-865-3411.

Thank you for your continued support of hunger relief in the Ozarks. Your help is sincerely appreciated.



Businesses are reopening and in need of local support.

Give time, food or funds at ozarksfoodharvest.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

As the state of Missouri opens back up this summer, Ozarks Food Harvest will continue to take extra precautions to keep staff members, volunteers and donors as safe as possible. Increased sanitation practices, social distancing and mask-wearing will be implemented during our upcoming in-person events. Please note, all of these events are subject to change as we continue to navigate the current health crisis. Keep an eye on our website and social media channels for the most up-to-date information.

MACY'S ROUND UP FROM THE HEART

Now-August 31

Planning some summer shopping? Round up your purchase at the register during your next trip to Macy's. Since 2012, Macy's has helped provide 46,498 meals through Round Up from the Heart, volunteerism, food drives and employee giving.

HUNGER ACTION MONTH

September

September is Hunger Action Month! Join us for a month full of fundraising, raising awareness and feeding the community. Some of our events may look a little bit different this year, so please bear with us. Details coming to hungeractionmonth.info soon!

HUNGERTHON

September 11-14

Support the *Weekend Backpack Program* with iHeartRadio during our annual Hungertthon radio-thon. Tune in to Alice 95.5, KGBX 105.9, The Wolf 100.5 and US 97 Sept. 11-14 to listen for dollar-for-dollar match challenges that will double your impact. A \$360 donation will help provide a full school year of meals for an at-risk child. Contact Jennifer Sickinger at 417-865-3411 or jsickinger@ozarksfoodharvest.org to learn how you can sponsor a child or host a fundraiser with your office or church.

GIVE BLOOD AT COMMUNITY BLOOD CENTER OF THE OZARKS

Anytime

CBCO needs your help! Blood donations have severely decreased, as the majority of blood drives at area businesses have been postponed or canceled. Each day, the organization delivers more than 250 donations to 38 hospitals. You can still help the community by donating blood at one of their centers. CBCO is taking stringent precautions to keep donors safe. If you are healthy, please consider giving blood. Remember to donate your LifePoints to Ozarks Food Harvest after giving blood! Visit cbco.org to learn more.

DONATIONS NEEDED AS COMMUNITY RECOVERS

The last few months have been quite challenging for our communities here in the Ozarks. Our friends and neighbors—many who have never been in need of food assistance before—have struggled to stay afloat.

We've seen an increased need across the Ozarks and have distributed a record-breaking 6.5 million pounds of food in the last three months. That's 527,400 more pounds than this time period last year. More than 193,000 of those pounds have been distributed through *Mobile Food Pantries*, which are geared toward furloughed workers and those experiencing other hardships related to COVID-19.

So many families have found the help they need through Ozarks Food Harvest and our hunger-relief partners, but our work is far from done. Due to declines in food donations, The

Food Bank needs to purchase \$2.2 million worth of additional food to help local families. We know we need an additional \$500,000 each month to continue to respond to the pandemic.

These donations help provide meals for people like Amy, a single mom who's trying her best to take care of her 14-year-old daughter. She received food at one of our *Mobile Food Pantries* last month.

"We need food in our family, it's hard. It's amazing you're able to do this and help families because right now there's a big need for help. Thank you," she shared.

The majority of funds needed will purchase food items that will be distributed through our network of 270 hunger-relief partners and through *Mobile Food Pantry* distributions across southwest Missouri.

This increase in distribution has also led to the need for additional staff and resources. In order to deliver the food, our transportation and equipment expenses have also increased.

We're making progress, but the road to recovery will be long and challenging. We're adapting to a "new normal," but many friends and neighbors will continue to need help paying their bills and affording groceries for months to come. Ozarks Food Harvest needs your help to continue serving the community through whatever comes next.



Bart Brown,
President/CEO

BART'S *Hope Note*

Your generosity will help families directly affected by the pandemic. Ninety-six cents of every dollar donated helps support our food programs and hunger-relief partners, so you can trust that your gifts are used wisely.

Please consider making a gift to the COVID-19 Hope Fund today. And remember, this year, the CARES Act will allow you to deduct up to \$300 of your gift over your standard charitable deduction if you do not itemize your taxes. If you do itemize, the existing cap on annual contributions has been raised from 60 percent of adjusted gross income to 100 percent. Please consider taking advantage of this opportunity.

I invite you to join us on the road to recovery in southwest Missouri. Your compassion will bring hope to so many who are struggling!



Donating to The Food Bank will help serve the community.



Denise Gibson,
Development Director

From DENISE'S DESK

SUPPORT NEEDED FOR WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM

Every school year, more than 1,600 at-risk children in the Ozarks receive food through our *Weekend Backpack Program*. After classes were canceled, we worked closely with our school partners to ensure that these children would continue to receive weekend meals.

This food is absolutely critical for children who may not get enough to eat on the weekends. Each food bag consists of two breakfasts, two lunches, two dinners, snacks and beverages. Unfortunately, because of interruptions in the supply chain, the food items are difficult to find right now. And when we are able to find them, the price of the food has nearly doubled. Your support is needed now more than ever.

Much of the funding for this program comes from Hungerthon, our annual radiothon with iHeartRadio. The event helps sponsor more than 400 children with weekend meals for an entire school year. This year's event will be critical to make sure we can continue providing

the food these kids depend on. We're currently planning the September event, and we know it will look different than it has in the past. Contact Jennifer Sickinger at 417-865-3411 or jsickinger@ozarksfoodharvest.org to learn how you can sponsor a child or host a fundraiser with your office or church.

We're working hard to make sure these food bags are available for the 2020-2021 school year, but we need your help to make that happen.

Please consider making a gift to the *Weekend Backpack Program*. For just \$360, you can help provide a full school year of weekend meals to an at-risk child.

To donate, visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/donate and choose the "*Weekend Backpack Program*" designation from the dropdown menu. Consider turning this into a monthly gift to offer even more support for local kids. Thank you for caring for children in the Ozarks!

SPECIAL THANKS TO THESE FRIENDS OF THE FOOD BANK

COOK FAMILY FOUNDATION SUPPORTS COVID-19 RELIEF

We're incredibly grateful for the generosity of the Cook Family Foundation! As the need for food assistance increased with the onset of coronavirus, the foundation quickly stepped up to make a \$50,000 gift to The Food Bank. The Cook Family Foundation serves as both a resource and a catalyst for positive community change. This gift helped us purchase food for thousands of families facing hunger in the Ozarks.



Local mothers receive food support from Ozarks Food Harvest thanks to partners like the Cook Family Foundation.

HULSTON FAMILY FOUNDATION HELPS FEED THE COMMUNITY

Thank you to the Hulston Family Foundation for its \$50,000 gift to The Food Bank! The foundation supports efforts to improve the quality of children's health, education and welfare services, to alleviate hunger and homelessness and to protect and preserve the natural environment in our communities. We are so thankful for this continued partnership!



The Hulston Family Foundation donates to hunger relief.

JOHN DEERE MAKES GIFT TO WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM

Heartfelt thanks to the John Deere Foundation for its \$14,000 gift for the *Weekend Backpack Program*, which will provide a total of 1,600 bags filled with nearly 10,000 meals for students who might not get enough food on the weekends. Over the past five years, the foundation has donated \$49,000 to Ozarks Food Harvest. We are so grateful for how gifts like this impact the lives of local children.

THE MUSGRAVE FOUNDATION HELPS LOCAL FAMILIES

Thanks to the Musgrave Foundation, hundreds of families affected by the pandemic were able to receive food assistance. The foundation's \$25,000 gift helped provide \$250,000 worth of groceries for families in need. This partner has touched many lives in the Ozarks since 1983. We're very thankful for our friends at the Musgrave Foundation!



Donations from the Musgrave Foundation support families.

J.R. ALBERT FOUNDATION DONATES \$25,000 FOR HUNGER RELIEF

Big thanks to the J.R. Albert Foundation for its generous donation! This partner donated \$25,000 to The Food Bank's COVID-19 Hope Fund. The J.R. Albert Foundation supports organizations that create and protect local, healthy food systems throughout the Midwest. We are so thankful for this gift!



The J.R. Albert Foundation donation helps support COVID-19 relief.

TYSON SUPPORTS LOCAL CHILDREN IN THE OZARKS

Tyson donated \$10,000 to support The Food Bank's *Weekend Backpack Program* for students attending Central Park and Monett Elementary School, where Tyson employees' children attend school. This will help provide weekend meals for the 1 in 5 children who may go to bed hungry in Barry and Lawrence County. Thank you for this generous donation, Tyson!

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Alexa Poindexter, Full Circle Gardens Manager
Kevin Richardson, Volunteer Coach
Marcus Seal, Volunteer Supervisor
Jason Terry, Volunteer Coach
Jolene Thompson, Volunteer Engagement Manager
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Natalie Regenold, SNAP Coordinator
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Shada Travis, Agency Support Specialist

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Trisha Heflin, Warehouse Supervisor
Mike Hesebeck, Transportation Supervisor
Eddie Hicks, Compliance Manager
Steve Roberts, Operations Manager

Due to growth and limited space in the newsletter, all warehouse and transportation associates on the Operations team are now listed online at ozarksfoodharvest.org.

HUNGER HERO NEWS

FEEDING FAMILIES ACROSS THE OZARKS

“I am super thankful to have even been offered this opportunity because it’s definitely changed me. I’ve shared with my family, and I know after all this is over, we are going to volunteer.”

- Emily Tompkins, Ozarks Food Harvest Temporary Employee



Emily works in the garden preparing plant beds, weeding and harvesting.

OPENING EYES AND OPENING HEARTS

Before Emily Tompkins spent her days sorting food at Ozarks Food Harvest and helping out at our garden in Rogersville, she worked at a title company and a local restaurant. The coronavirus left Emily without a job and left The Food Bank without volunteers.

Thanks to a grant from the Missouri Foundation for Health, we were able to hire 30 temporary employees who had recently been furloughed from their existing jobs. Emily was excited when she discovered this opportunity. She says her eyes have been opened to the need in the Ozarks during her time at The Food Bank.

“I didn’t realize how many people were going hungry or relied on somebody else to help them put food on their table,” Emily shared.

Seeing how impactful her work has been on the community has been memorable for Emily.

“We’ll get the rundown of how many pounds of food we have either harvested at the gardens or sorted at the warehouse, and it amazes me,” Emily expressed.

After her work at Ozarks Food Harvest is done, she plans to volunteer on a regular basis.

“I am super thankful to have even been offered this opportunity because it’s definitely changed me,” Emily said. “I’ve shared with my family, and I know after all this is over, we are going to volunteer.”

Luckily for Emily’s family, we are opening our doors back up to volunteers beginning July 6. Check out the story on the next page to learn more about what this will look like. We’re excited to see you. Sign up to experience what Emily has seen at The Food Bank by visiting ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer.

Hear from The Food Bank’s temporary employees and the Missouri National Guard

“It has been and will always be an honor and a privilege for the Soldiers of the 1241st Transportation Company to support the citizens of Missouri in any way needed. The Food Harvest missions have directly impacted our communities and we take these tasks very seriously.”

*- CPT Jonathan Swyres,
1241st TC Commander*

“I think that everyone should take time to get familiar with the ways that people help other people in their communities.”

- Jason Terry

“Knowing that a lot of people are relying on this right now is a big deal. I’m glad I got the chance to be here. I know how important it is, and I see what I’m doing to help the community.”

- M Stauffer

FOOD & FUND DRIVES

Below is a list of Food & Fund Drives that have provided 1,000+ meals from March 20 – June 11, 2020.

Lent Fish Drive — 11,042	Scouting for Food -	CNH Reman — 3,004
Anonymous group collection for COVID-19 relief — 8,500	Boy Scouts of America — 4,509	Arvest Bank - Million Meals — 2,820
Pick-n-Pull — 6,463	Lauren Roberts -	Springfield Lutheran School — 2,089
United States	Porch Portraits — 4,480	University Tees — 1,338
Bartenders’ Guild — 5,200	James & Barbara Squires — 3,334	Rent-A-Center — 1,000
Primas Mexican Grill — 4,936	Macy’s Bag Hunger — 3,278	

Thank you so much to our ongoing food and fund drive hosts.



Ozarks Food Harvest staff are excited to work with volunteers again.

Volunteer program resumes July 6

We're excited to share that Ozarks Food Harvest's volunteer program will resume on Monday, July 6! Thank you so much for your patience throughout this process.

While volunteer sessions were suspended, 35 members of the Missouri National Guard and 30 temporary employees helped us continue with our daily operations and respond to the pandemic. They spent more than 13,000 hours with us. These Hunger Heroes sorted more than 743,350 pounds of food, assembled 8,670 *Senior Food* boxes, packed 6,840 *Weekend Backpacks* and put together 5,175 emergency food boxes. We are so grateful for the help of these amazing men and women.

Are you ready to join us for a volunteer session? At this time, volunteer sessions are taking place from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday through Friday; 1 to 4 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 6 to 9 p.m. on Tuesdays. Thursday evenings are closed

for the months of July and August, but we will be evaluating our needs as we move forward.

For the time being, sessions are limited to 10 to 12 volunteers to help maintain social distancing. Visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer to apply and self-schedule.

If you are interested in scheduling a group and there are not enough openings available, please contact Jolene Thompson at jthompson@ozarksfoodharvest.org or 417-865-3411.

The health and safety of our volunteers are extremely important to us, and we will continue to adjust our plans as necessary. You can be assured that all protective measures will be strictly followed for volunteer safety. To schedule your next session, visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer. We can't wait to see you!

Gardening for good

Summertime brings many great opportunities for gardening. With the loss of volunteers due to COVID-19, we relied on the help of our temporary employees and members of the Missouri National Guard to keep up with *Full Circle Gardens* duties over the past few months.

These Hunger Heroes have been involved in all aspects of the garden: composting, mulching, weeding, planting and harvesting.

"So far in 2020, our volunteers and employees have harvested 3,857 pounds of local food," Alexa Poindexter, *Full Circle Gardens* manager, said.

Through a partnership with Grow Well Missouri, we were able to distribute nearly 2,600 garden to-go kits throughout our network of agencies. These kits contained a variety of common seed packets and a how-to gardening booklet for our specific region. This partnership also facilitated direct garden distributions,

servicing more than 230 families and organizations with a variety of plant starts, many of these from generous local nurseries and garden supply companies.

Summer is The Food Bank's busiest time growing and harvesting produce. Joining the Glean Team is a great way to support our mission and learn about gardening. Beginning July 6, volunteers will be able to help maintain the home garden and harvest crops.

"We look forward to welcoming our volunteers back, and we will make sure that all appropriate steps are taken to ensure their safety and the safety of those who receive produce from the garden program," said Cady Goble, the glean coordinator.

Have a garden at home? Consider planting an extra row of veggies and donating it to Ozarks Food Harvest. To learn more about these opportunities, visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer.

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES AND THE MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD

Members of the National Guard and our temporary employees spent more than 13,000 hours with us. These Hunger Heroes sorted more than 743,350 pounds of food, assembled 8,670 *Senior Food* boxes, packed 6,840 *Weekend Backpacks* and put together 5,175 emergency food boxes.

PENMAC TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES

Harold Alvarez	Tracy Kennedy
Ruth Anger	Richard Madrid
Stephen Backer	Rob Medlin
Amanda Baird	Andrew Myers
Mark Bunge	Keith Ogle
Megan Caddy	Daniel Pattyson
Jailey Carter	Marci Petru
Jason Terry	Kevin Richardson
Chelsea Cornassel	Jordan Smiley
Grace Grebel	M Stauffer
Samantha Groshong	Emily Tompkins
Julie Hamilton	Joseph Vallez
Kobe Hammers	Jennifer Velten
Carl Horton	Tammy Wilhelm
Tiffany Hunter	Phil
Kayla Jenkins	



Temporary employees pack food into boxes.

MISSOURI NATIONAL GUARD

We are grateful for the help from the soldiers from the 1241st Transportation Company.



Missouri National Guard members pack a car with food at Watkins Elementary School during a Moille Food Pantry.



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