



HARVEST TIME

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



“Our partnership with Ozarks Food Harvest is vital to making sure families in Christian County don’t go hungry.”

– Kristy Carter, executive director of Least of These

A 6 MILLION MEAL MILESTONE IN CHRISTIAN COUNTY

In a time of unprecedented need, ongoing challenges and new successes, Ozarks Food Harvest is celebrating milestones as a reminder of just how important our mission to *Transform Hunger into Hope* is for the future of our communities. In December, The Food Bank held our first milestone event to celebrate donating our 6 millionth meal to Least of These and 25 years of partnership.

When Least of These started in 1998 as a church community outreach project, they provided food for seven families in the first month. By the end of their first year, the pantry was serving 100 families, and today, Least of These has grown to provide food for 1,500 families in Christian County each month. That kind of growth is a testament to the dedication of staff and volunteers with a passion for feeding their community – and why Ozarks Food Harvest has been able to provide over 6 million meals to our neighbors facing hunger through Least of These.

It’s also a glimpse at just how many people still need help.

Like much of the hunger-relief network, the demand for food assistance at Least of These has increased to be higher than during the peak of the pandemic. Kristy Carter, executive director for Least of These, shared that the charity is seeing more new clients and dual-

income families seeking food assistance for the first time. She explained, “There are many families who are reeling from rapidly rising expenses. More working middle-class families are struggling to stretch food budgets while also covering skyrocketing costs of rent, utilities and transportation.”

As more people worry about their grocery budgets, Least of These recognizes that compassion and a sense of dignity are more important than ever to give our neighbors hope. Their client-choice pantry model allows neighbors to choose which groceries they receive monthly from the pantry. Choice makes the experience more personal and compassionate, accommodating for each person’s different needs and circumstances while also reducing food waste.

But sustaining their service has proved challenging recently because while the number of people seeking help from Least of These is up, the amount of donations has dropped, putting the pantry in a tough spot. “Least of These relies solely on donations,” said Kristy. “We’re having to make changes to be strategic and conservative, all while maintaining a sense of dignity and compassion for the people who rely on us.”

The concern is echoed across Ozarks Food Harvest’s network of faith-based and

community charities – and Ozarks Food Harvest is listening. The Food Bank remains committed to supporting our hunger-relief network with nutritious food and programs, including a series of ongoing grants to increase their capacity and meet demand. The Food Bank has awarded more than \$500,000 worth of grant funds since last year, and Least of These was recently awarded \$15,000 to supplement food purchasing for the pantry.

“We know choice and dignity go hand-in-hand for clients,” Kristy shared, “So we want to make every effort to maintain strong relationships with our partners to allow us to continue to preserve the dignity of those we serve. Our partnership with Ozarks Food Harvest is vital to making sure families in Christian County don’t go hungry.”

Since 2010, Ozarks Food Harvest has provided more than \$100,000 in grant funding and 9.5 million pounds of food to Least of These. Our partnership has resulted in hope and nourishment for thousands of our neighbors facing hunger and would not be possible without continuous support from our generous donors. Through unprecedented challenges, your compassion makes it possible to *Transform Hunger into Hope*.

SENIORS ON FIXED INCOMES MAKE NUTRITION TRADE-OFFS TO STRETCH BUDGETS

Did you know that one-third of the people served by Ozarks Food Harvest’s hunger-relief network are age 65 and over? It’s a group the Food Bank has taken a closer look at in recent years as thousands of seniors living on fixed incomes find themselves wondering if their food budget will last the month.

Fixed incomes limit the amount of flexibility in a budget, meaning any small change in circumstances, like medical issues or price increases, can create unexpected hardships. The recent climb in basic necessity costs has put stress on retirees whose fixed incomes often don’t keep pace. Many seniors compensate by skipping meals or choosing cheaper, less healthy food options to prioritize expenses like medication.

Inadequate nutrition can exacerbate disabilities and health conditions, making it more difficult to grocery shop or cook – and in turn may lead to even more medical expenses. Good nutrition can help defend against many medical issues, but purchasing healthy food isn’t always affordable on a limited budget.

With help from donors like you, Ozarks Food Harvest ensures seniors don’t have to make trade-off choices due to a limited budget. Organizations like senior centers and pantries receive food from The Food Bank to supplement hot meals, home-delivered meals and grocery assistance. Ozarks Food Harvest also provides USDA food through the *Senior Food Box* program, and in 2022, The Food Bank began the *Senior Mobile Produce Pantry* – a *Mobile Food*

Pantry program that brings produce, protein and pantry staples to seniors in rural areas.

“We’ve used the food pickup twice, and it has been a true blessing,” shared Karen, a *Senior Mobile Produce Pantry* recipient. “Social Security just doesn’t go far enough when it comes to trying to pay for insurance and medical, and this has definitely helped us fill in the spot where we would have gone without food.”

Your support ensures seniors like Karen get the nutrition they need to maintain a thriving, independent life after their years of hard work. Thank you for your compassion for seniors facing hunger in the Ozarks.



Your support helps provide nutritious food so seniors can thrive.

THE EFFECTS OF WINTER FOR OUR NEIGHBORS FACING HUNGER

We were humbled by the community’s support for our neighbors in need during the holiday season. In November and December, thousands of families put a holiday meal on the table thanks to the generosity of donors, partners and volunteers like you. But hunger doesn’t end after the holidays.

Winter can be the most difficult season for our neighbors facing hunger. As temperatures drop and heating bills rise, many families have to choose between groceries and keeping their homes warm. In fact, roughly 2 out of 5 households served by our network report having to make the choice between groceries and utilities.

For families with children, winter break and inclement weather cancellations place added strain on already stretched budgets. Guardians must provide extra food for children when school meals aren’t available, and working parents have to choose between taking the day off to care for their kids or paying for childcare.

Many people with seasonal jobs in our area – such as agriculture and tourism industries – see their incomes drop in the winter. Illnesses take their toll as well for working individuals, seniors and neighbors with underlying health conditions. One unexpected illness could mean extra doctor visits, prescriptions and unpaid days off work.

In all of these situations, our neighbors facing hunger need somewhere to turn to help fill the gap. That’s where Ozarks Food Harvest’s network of faith-based and community charities comes in.

Donations to Ozarks Food Harvest tend to slow down after November and December, but our mission doesn’t stop with the holidays. Our partner charities often see a rise in the demand for food assistance this time of year. Your contributions ensure Ozarks Food Harvest can continue to provide food and support so our neighbors don’t have to stress over winter’s challenges.

Charlie's CORNER



Charlie O'Reilly



Year-round giving is critical to The Food Bank.

GIVE HOPE ALL YEAR LONG

As we transition from the holiday season into 2024, Ozarks Food Harvest is still serving more than 70,000 individuals each month—nearly 20,000 more than during the height of the COVID-19 crisis. People are experiencing the daunting challenges of winter, including higher utility bills, childcare, housing and food costs. Although thousands of donors and volunteers helped us during the holiday season to ensure families could put a meal on the table, there’s still work to be done.

That’s why year-round giving is critical to The Food Bank. One in 7 children and adults face hunger in the Ozarks, which means these folks don’t know when they will get their next meal. The dramatic increase in demand in 2023 consumed a large portion of Ozarks Food Harvest’s resources, and they’ve only been able to keep up because of generous donations from individuals, businesses and foundations.

Monetary donations help The Food Bank ensure their network of 270 charities are consistently supplied with food and their programs continue to serve people who may fall through the cracks with regular distributions. Your gift will help ensure a child has enough food to eat over the weekend through the *Weekend Backpack Program* or help a grandmother continue to receive a box of nutritious food every month through the *Senior Food Program*.

The best part about making a gift to Ozarks Food Harvest is you can rest assured that it’s being spent wisely. Last fall, Ozarks Food Harvest

earned a 100 percent rating from Charity Navigator, America’s largest and most-utilized independent charity evaluator, based on their performance across multiple metrics, such as finance, impact and results. Not only that, they received their 12th consecutive Four-Star Rating, indicating The Food Bank outperforms most other charities in America.

I encourage you to read Bart’s article this month for more information about Ozarks Food Harvest’s quality standards because high performance and ratings like this don’t happen by accident. They’re the direct result of The Food Bank being good stewards of every dollar you donate throughout the year.

Please consider becoming a regular monthly donor with Ozarks Food Harvest by joining their Harvest Circle community. When you sign up, you save time and postage by setting up automatic payments every month. One-time donations go a long way, but monthly commitments give The Food Bank the flexibility to budget for an increased demand for food and unexpected expenses. And if you’re already a monthly donor, please consider increasing the amount you give. Your generous gift can help provide millions of meals to families facing hunger and bring hope in the new year.

Thank you in advance for your help in 2024. If you’d like more information about how your gift is being used to give hope to the community, please give Bart a call.

UPCOMING EVENTS

LENT FISH DRIVE

February 14 – March 28

Participate in this year’s Lent Fish Drive and Fundraiser! Collect nutritious and low-calorie fish in cans or pouches and drop them off at the Food Bank during Lent. Fish is a high-protein food item our pantries love to have donated. Find out to how to help at bit.ly/lentfishdrive_2024.

CASEY’S HERE FOR GOOD CAMPAIGN

February 28 – April 2

Round up at the register with your local Casey’s General Store through April 2 to benefit Ozarks Food Harvest! Every dollar donated helps provide three meals to people facing hunger in the Ozarks.

SCOUTING FOR FOOD

March 1 – March 31

Join Scouts BSA across the Ozarks collecting food for neighbors facing hunger this March. Place your nonperishable food items donation in the grocery sacks distributed by local scouts in neighborhoods throughout March or drop them off at participating grocery stores by the end of March. To find more information, join the fundraising teams, or donate online, visit bit.ly/scoutingforfood_2024.

FOOD FIGHT

March 18 – March 29

Springfield Public Schools will compete for the title of Food Fight champion while raising meals for our neighbors facing hunger. Your business or organization can help by hosting a fundraiser or food drive on behalf of a partner school. Visit bit.ly/foodfight_2024 to register or contact Sarah Green at 417-865-3411 to learn more.

OZARKS FOOD HARVEST RECEIVES SUPERIOR FOOD SAFETY RATING FROM AIB INTERNATIONAL

I'm so proud to share with you that Ozarks Food Harvest received a superior food safety score of 955 out of 1,000 from AIB International this fiscal year! We also earned a perfect score for our cleanliness and sanitation practices in our warehouse.

Our AIB score and audit are important because food safety is a top priority at The Food Bank. To ensure it remains a priority, The Food Bank voluntarily undergoes a thorough inspection from the food safety professionals at AIB International every two years. AIB International is one of the world's top training and auditing organizations on food safety, inspecting many of our major food donors like Associated Wholesale Grocers, Kraft and SGC Foodservice.

The inspection process involves an in-depth examination of Ozarks Food Harvest's sanitation practices, documentation processes, pest control and standard operating procedures to guarantee the entire facility meets food safety standards. The inspection not only allows us to certify that we handle food with the utmost care, but also provides an opportunity to double-check our work.

In 2012, Ozarks Food Harvest was the sixth

Feeding America food bank of 200 in the country to undergo an AIB audit and certification. For more than a decade, we've received superior AIB ratings that serve as a testament to our commitment to food safety. We continue to do this voluntary inspection because we believe that everyone in our community deserves safe, healthy food.

We receive superior ratings for food safety because we've built it into our culture. The processes and procedures that go under review with AIB aren't just thrown together when we know the inspector is due—they're meticulously maintained every single day of the year. From briefing volunteers on food safety procedures to rigorous temperature checks, all of our procedures are checked and monitored by Ozarks Food Harvest staff. When our AIB auditors come for inspection, it's just another day at the warehouse.

Maintaining impeccable conditions in our warehouse goes beyond meeting standards; it also builds trust with our retail donors and our network of 270 charities. Last fiscal year, we received, processed and distributed more than 20 million meals. Distributing that many



BART'S Hope Note

meals with our cleanliness standards builds trust because people see that we are doing everything we can to ensure meals are distributed safely so families have good, nutritious food to put on the table.

If you have any questions about AIB or food safety, feel free to give me a call. I would love to walk you through the process on a deeper level and show you how dedicated we are to serving safe, healthy food to families facing hunger in the Ozarks.

CREATE A LEGACY OF HOPE WITH PLANNED GIVING

If you, or someone you love, are looking for ways to make a difference for future generations, Ozarks Food Harvest offers planned giving opportunities. A planned gift is a powerful way to extend your charitable giving beyond your lifetime and leave a legacy of hope for our neighbors facing hunger.

Planned gifts are typically bequests, but donors can contribute in a variety of ways. If you choose to make a bequest, remembering Ozarks Food Harvest in your will or trust is one of the easiest – and most meaningful – ways to make a difference.

You may also consider designating Ozarks Food Harvest as a beneficiary of your retirement assets or life insurance policy. Up to 70 percent of your retirement assets may be subject to estate and deferred income tax at your death. As a charity, Ozarks Food Harvest can become a tax-free beneficiary of those assets.

A financial adviser can help you design a plan that works best for you and figure out what tax benefits might be available. No matter how you choose to extend your giving, please know we will be honored by your long-term support of our mission. Your support will strengthen our community and help put meals on the table for children, families and seniors facing hunger in southwest Missouri.

For more information, visit ozarksfoodharvest.org/planned-giving or call Cassie Hanson, director of development, at 417-865-3411. Thank you for considering a legacy gift to Ozarks Food Harvest that will ensure our mission to *Transform Hunger into Hope* is secure for years to come.



Leave a legacy of hope with planned giving.

SPECIAL THANKS

O'REILLY AUTO PARTS CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC BENEFITS THE WEEKEND BACKPACK PROGRAM

This year's tournament raised \$20,000 to provide weekend meals to students facing hunger in southwest Missouri. Each year, O'Reilly Auto Parts hosts the Charity Golf Classic to raise money for organizations that help individuals and families overcome barriers including hunger, homelessness, health, poverty, domestic violence and literacy. Since 2017, this event has provided \$130,000 for children facing hunger in the Ozarks.



Thank you to everyone involved in the Charity Golf Classic.

WALMART'S FIGHT HUNGER. SPARK CHANGE. CAMPAIGN RAISES NEARLY \$144,000 FOR THE FOOD BANK

Last year's Sam's Club and Walmart's annual Fight Hunger. Spark Change. campaign raised nearly \$144,000 for Ozarks Food Harvest. Walmart and Sam's Club customers got involved by purchasing participating products, donating at check-out, rounding up their purchase and donating at Feeding America's campaign site. This campaign supports Feeding America food banks across the nation. The Fight Hunger. Spark Change. campaign has helped provide more than 5 million meals for our neighbors facing hunger in the Ozarks since 2010!

CVS'S REGISTER ROUND-UP CAMPAIGN PROVIDES AN ADDITIONAL 17,500 MEALS

CVS Round-Up for Food Banks campaign encourages shoppers to round up their purchase at the register to help fight hunger. This year's donation of \$5,855 will provide more than 17,500 meals to children, families and seniors facing hunger. Since 2020, CVS has donated more than \$17,000 to Ozarks Food Harvest. Look for CVS's Round-Up opportunities when you shop in stores.

THE TJX FOUNDATION DONATES \$5,000 TO SUPPORT OUR NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Ozarks Food Harvest was honored to receive a \$5,000 gift from the TJX Foundation on behalf of their Corporate Associated Grants Program. The TJX Foundation strategically invests in nonprofit organizations that address their mission of helping families most in need build a valuable future. We are grateful to the TJX associates who nominated Ozarks Food Harvest as the organization they trust to support local families with this generous grant.

SMART CHICKEN DONATES 6,300 POUNDS OF CHICKEN TO FIGHT HUNGER

Ozarks Food Harvest received 6,300 pounds of chicken thanks to Smart Chicken's 21st annual Smart Giving Holiday Challenge. This donation allows The Food Bank's network to provide protein-rich chicken for families facing hunger across southwest Missouri. Smart Chicken's campaign donates 10% of poultry purchased in November at local grocers including Apple Mart, Country Mart, Food 4 Less, G&W Foods, Harter House, Price Cutter, Town and Country and Woods Supermarket.



The Food Bank received 6,300 pounds of chicken from Smart Chicken.

TURKEY TROT PROVIDES OVER 5,500 MEALS

This year, we were once again reminded of the generosity of our community during the 29th annual Turkey Trot 5K Run/Walk. The event's food and fund drive raised 5,630 pounds of food and \$220, which will provide more than 5,500 meals for our neighbors facing hunger. Since 2001, the widely-attended Thanksgiving Day race has collected nearly 160,000 meals for Ozarks Food Harvest. Special thanks to the Developmental Center of the Ozarks and the Springfield-Greene County Park Board for their annual partnership!

OZARKS FOOD HARVEST BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Kenny Ross, President—Ross Construction Group
- Dr. Meera Scarrow, President Elect—Mercy Hospital-Springfield
- Tommy Wohlgemuth, Treasurer—SGC™ Foodservice
- Ashley Kimberling-Casad, Secretary—CoxHealth
- Jim Admire—Kraft-Heinz
- Dana Ausburn—Community Volunteer
- Clayton Brown—Prime Inc.
- Genevieve Carvel—Positronic Industries, Inc.
- Tamara Conn—O'Reilly Auto Parts
- Jason England—Arvest Bank
- Holly Gray—Heim, Young & Associates
- Charlie Lynn—Associated Wholesale Grocers
- Shelley Marshall—Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc.
- Mike Pinkston—Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith, Inc.

OZARKS FOOD HARVEST STAFF

Bart Brown, President/CEO

ADMINISTRATION

- Cindy Snow, Director of Administration
- Terry Keller, Human Resource & Administrative Services Manager
- Matt Koenig, IT Manager
- Cindy Boggs, Inventory Office Manager
- Alyssa Tapio, Administrative Services Coordinator
- Zetta Graves, Receptionist

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

- Cassie Hanson, Director of Development
- Sarah Green, Marketing & Events Manager
- Kylee Compton, Graphic Designer
- Rhoben Renae, Development Assistant
- Holly Fox, Development & Grants Coordinator
- Ali Pool, Special Events Coordinator
- Allie Smith, Corporate Development Coordinator
- Triston Trybus, Development Assistant

- Jordan Browning, Director of Communications
- Sarah Byrd, Volunteer Program Manager
- Heather Haloupek, Communications Coordinator

MEMBER SERVICES

- Mary Zumwalt, Director of Programs & Member Services
- Terra Baum, Agency Capacity & Compliance Manager
- Jalen Doss, Mobile Food Pantry Coordinator
- Kristin Graves, SNAP Outreach Coordinator
- Deidra McBride, CSFP/Senior Box Coordinator
- Brent Nichols, Agency Outreach Coordinator
- Jane Terry, Creative Information Specialist
- Melanie Toler, Agency Resource & Training Coordinator
- Shada Travis, Agency Support Specialist/Weekend Backpack Coordinator
- Jessica Wallace, Agency Outreach Coordinator
- Sarah Waterman, Child Nutrition Programs Coordinator
- Julie Woodiel, Food Sourcing Coordinator

OPERATIONS ADMINISTRATION

- Scott Boggs, Vice President of Operations
- Steve Roberts, Director of Operations
- Trisha Heflin, Distribution Center Manager
- Mike Hesebeck, Transportation Manager
- Eddie Hicks, Building Maintenance & Compliance Specialist

- Marcus Seal, Senior Operations Manager
- Lydia DeWeese, Volunteer Center Supervisor
- Andrew Magnus, Volunteer Systems Specialist
- Kevin Richardson, Instructional Materials Designer
- Dillon Smith, Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator

- Alexa Poindexter, Director of Full Circle Gardens
- Cady Wolf, Field Operations Manager
- Jessica Allen, Full Circle Gardens Outreach Coordinator
- Rachel Breckling, Full Circle Gardens Coordinator

To view a full staff listing please visit ozarksfoodharvest.org.

HUNGER HERO NEWS

FEEDING FAMILIES ACROSS THE OZARKS

“You never know who hunger is affecting. It could be your neighbor or classmate or someone at work. Ozarks Food Harvest has a lot of working parts, and that’s why volunteers are so essential...so that they can go out and feed people.”

— Lauren Pyle, Ozarks Food Harvest volunteer



Lauren Pyle has been Transforming Hunger into Hope for more than two years.

LAUREN PYLE: SERVING WITH A SMILE

If you meet Lauren Pyle, you might remember her smile. That’s because Lauren likes to have a smile on her face wherever she goes in the hopes she might put one on someone else’s face, too. Lauren has had a compassionate heart for a long time, and for nearly two years, she’s brought hope to our neighbors facing hunger by volunteering at Ozarks Food Harvest.

Lauren is no stranger to volunteering and serving her community. When she was younger, she and her parents served meals to people experiencing homelessness through a church program. Her experiences there sparked a passion for helping people from a young age that’s made her appreciate her time at Ozarks Food Harvest even more.

“It’s so hard to see people that are hungry,” Lauren shared. “And thinking about kids that the only time they get food is through school – it’s just heartbreaking. Food is something that’s a basic human need and everyone deserves to have.”

One of Lauren’s favorite things about Ozarks Food Harvest is how many people she can reach in just a three-hour volunteer session. In a typical session, one volunteer will help provide more than 300 meals, and multiple volunteers working together can provide hundreds more. From the *Weekend Backpack Program* for kids to the *Senior Food* program, Lauren appreciates that The Food Bank’s efforts reach a wide variety of people.

She explained, “I think it’s important to know you never know who hunger is affecting. It could be your neighbor or classmate or someone at work. Ozarks Food Harvest has a lot of working parts, and that’s why volunteers are so essential to make sure all those steps get done in a timely manner so that they can go out and feed people.”

We’re grateful to have compassionate volunteers like Lauren, who extends her kindness to the neighbors we serve. Thank you, Lauren, for putting smiles on the faces of thousands of our neighbors in need.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Thank you to our community partners who helped provide more than 500 meals from November 2, 2023 – January 10, 2024.

7 Eleven, thanks to Feeding America – 68,367
Town & Country Super Market, Inc. – 14,787
Turners Rock – 14,460
Ozark Lakes Region Porsche Club of America – 12,939
Zimmer Communications – 9,879
Great Southern Bank – 9,000
Associated Electric Cooperative, Inc. – 8,058
Springfield-Greene Co. Park Board – 5,232
Keurig Dr. Pepper, thanks to Feeding America – 5,153
Georgia Mac’s – 4,500
Hot Topic/BoxLunch, thanks to Feeding America – 3,750
Affinity Wealth Partners – 3,432
Meta Games Unlimited, Inc. – 3,169

Monster Energy Company, thanks to Feeding America – 3,014
Kickapoo High School – 2,745
KIND LLC, thanks to Feeding America – 2,508
Community Blood Center of the Ozarks – 1,950
The Summit Preparatory School – 1,650
Nestle Purina Pet Care, thanks to Feeding America – 1,646
MSU, Lambda Chi Alpha – 1,500
Rapid Robert’s – 1,500
Springfield Public Schools - AgAcademy – 1,200
Frito-Lay Inc., thanks to Feeding America – 1,166
Grant Avenue Free Will Baptist Church – 1,065
Southern Glazer’s Wine & Spirits – 1,058
Disney Elementary School – 986

The Sandwich Scene – 900
Flora Farms DBA BD Health Retail 1LLC – 867
Drury University - Lambda Chi Alpha – 852
Amazon Delivery Station WMO2 – 848
Springfield Conservation Nature Center – 780
OTC Bookstore – 735
Grant Avenue Free Will Baptist Church – 705
Kendra Scott Springfield – 661
Cherokee Middle School – 639
Mercy Retail Pharmacy - Central Region – 582
Teamster No. 245 Retirees – 540
TLC Properties – 511
Missouri Employers Mutual - Columbia – 503



Baker Creek donation will promote gardening in the Ozarks.

GARDEN-TO-GO KITS AND MORE THANKS TO BAKER CREEK HEIRLOOM SEED COMPANY

Our generous partner Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company is once again helping grow the impact of The Food Bank’s *Full Circle Gardens* program with their recent donations of \$1.3 million worth of seed packets, over 3,300 pounds of garlic, and additional flower bulbs.

Many seed packets will be used in Ozarks Food Harvest’s Garden-to-Go kits and distributed to our network of 270 faith-based and community charities as well as other Feeding America food banks in Missouri and Arkansas. Each kit contains seeds for flowers, herbs and vegetables, along with a planting calendar, links to gardening instructions and budget-friendly cookbooks.

Garden kits have been popular amongst our partner charities. Cassville Pantry shared, “Our agency is primarily serving a rural community

and our clients are extremely grateful for the seeds. Thank you so much for helping make this very valuable provision available.”

Ozarks Food Harvest will also share seeds with organizations such as schools, seed libraries, community gardens and more to promote gardening in the community. Donated garlic was distributed to our hunger-relief network as food, and some was reserved for school gardens and The Food Bank’s home garden.

Ozarks Food Harvest is so excited to share garden resources with neighbors facing hunger in southwest Missouri and beyond. Thank you to Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company for helping spread produce and beauty to Ozarks communities.

CENTRAL BANK OF THE OZARKS REACHES 1,000-HOUR MILESTONE AT THE FOOD BANK

At a well-deserved celebration of their achievement in December, Ozarks Food Harvest staff presented Central Bank of the Ozarks with their own engraved apple plaque to be displayed on The Food Bank’s Gift of Time Tree – an honor reserved for volunteers and groups who dedicate 1,000 hours of their time at The Food Bank.

Central Bank has been sending employees to Ozarks Food Harvest to volunteer one Tuesday each month, as well as helping with emergency volunteer sessions and special events, for more than seven years. Their passion for service is clear as Ashley Reicke, commercial lender trainee at Central Bank, shared that several employees

began asking if they could volunteer for an extra session to help reach the 1,000-hour mark.

Ashley shared, “Knowing we’re helping is why we keep coming back. Hearing how many pounds of food we sorted or boxes we packed at the end of each session, that puts what you’re doing in perspective. All you have to do is share a few hours to help feed hundreds of people. And now, we finally get that apple on the tree!”

Volunteers from Central Bank have helped provide more than 280,000 meals since 2016. Ozarks Food Harvest is incredibly grateful for our partnership with Central Bank and the compassionate employees who donate their time to help fight hunger in the Ozarks.



Ozarks Food Harvest was excited to celebrate 1,000 hours with Central Bank in December.

VOLUNTEERS

Below is a list of individuals and groups who have donated 15+ hours of time from November 1 – December 31, 2023.

INDIVIDUALS

Timothy Adams	George Lawrence
Michelangelo Alfano	Shaun Lencki
Stephanie August	JaMya Love
Korey Besch	Konnar Lundquist
Leslie Blanco	Mary Magnus
Jim Brymer	Cindy McDonough
Alan Butler	Lauren Medrano
Tom Carson	Spencer Mende
Gale Clithero	Janeane Myhre
Dewayne Cossey	Alyssa Nanneman
Gary DeHaven	Heather Nanneman
Kris Dreesen	Ryan Owrey
Betsy Esquivel	Derek Peacock
Mario Esquivel	Tucker Pedigo
Myra Evans	Connor Penrod
Ed Ferris	Craig Peterson
Gerald Green	Debbie Peterson
Janice Grimes	Daniel Regier
Wil Hardiman	Terry Reichert
Matthew Harmer	Emerald Sell
Mark Hartman	Margene Terrill
Marcia Hesler	Tyler Thompson
Ben Johnson	Amy Viets-Cooper
Susan Johnson	Kathy Vinson
Aaron King	Lona Wait
Julian Koenig	Julia White
Don Landon	Jack Williams
Dave Lappin	Kitty Williams

GROUPS

Ameriprise Achieve	Mercy Technology Services
Private Wealth	Mercy Orthopedics
Ameriprise Financial Services	Mercy Rheumatology/
Ameriprise Penney,	Dermatology
Murray & Associates	Missouri State University
Antioch United Methodist	Mountain Grove HS Math
Church	and Science
Armstrong World Industries	MSU Campus Recreation Staff
Blue Eye HS FFA & FCCLA	MSU Delta Sigma Pi
Central Bank of the Ozarks	MSU Delta Zeta
CoxHealth Network	NorthBridge Church
Cronkrite Homes	Ozark Ambush Premier
CU Emerging Professionals	Scott Rice Springfield
Datema House	SGC Foodservice
Emmaus Church	Springfield Catholic HOSA
Forsyth High School FCCLA	SPS Community Liaisons
Georgia Macs	St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
Graddy Real Estate	Sysco Foods
Home Builders Association	Tralliner
of Greater Springfield	Wesley UMC
Masonite Architectural	Willard High School FCCLA
Mercy Finance	

VOLUNTEER WITH US

We need Hunger Heroes like you to help us feed the Ozarks. Sign up for a volunteer session now by scanning the QR code or visiting ozarksfoodharvest.org/volunteer





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ozarksfoodharvest.org

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