

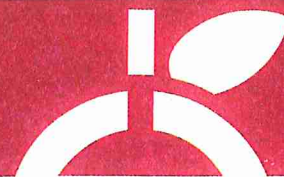
nourish

MONTGOMERY COUNTY FOOD BANK

| FALL 2021



Dear Friend,



I want to sincerely thank you for your dedication to helping our neighbors most affected by hunger — especially after this past year of hardship.

Healing from the long-lasting effects of the pandemic will take years, but your outstanding support is helping our community recover. One step at a time.

Your incredible partnership makes fresh and nutritious food available to Montgomery County neighbors who would otherwise go hungry. Last year, we were able to provide over 11 million meals through our vast network of more than 70 partner agencies. We are able to provide an incredible five meals for every dollar donated.

There's still an increased need for healthy food across Montgomery County — it's the support from donors like you who make meeting that need possible.

In this issue of *Nourish*, you can catch up with Montgomery County Food Bank and read stories from Sara and Kimberly, two neighbors who are so grateful for your gifts. You can also read a bit about Peter Jensen, a longtime volunteer in our Produce Rescue Center.

This back-to-school season, families are still facing financial hardship as a result of the pandemic. Countless parents and their children will be thankful for your support as kids head back to school this fall.

Your generosity is vital to healing our community from within. So many neighbors are significantly worse off than they were before COVID-19, but your kindness is helping them get back on their feet. Thank you so much for your commitment to growing a stronger Montgomery County.

Gratefully,

Kristine Marlow
President & CEO



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Sara's Family Finally Catches a Break

Sara and Larry have two children, Ryder, 10, and Hazel, 3. The family began truly struggling to make ends meet in the winter of 2019 when Larry was laid off right before the holidays.

Just three months later in March of 2020, the pandemic struck.

As soon as the virus became widespread, the daycare Sara worked at shut down. She also began homeschooling her son, which meant he no longer had access to reduced-price meals the school provided.

After several weeks, Sara and Larry had used most of their savings to feed their children. They needed help.

Sara found an article in the local paper on Nourishment for the Needy, a Montgomery County Food Bank partner agency, and that day everything changed.



Sara smiling outside Nourishment for the Needy, a Montgomery County Food Bank partner agency.

At Nourishment for the Needy, Sara was immediately welcomed with open arms and cried when she received her first bag of fresh food. Now, she comes back at least every two weeks to receive much needed assistance. She's truly grateful for this help. This amazing assistance is made possible by your commitment and donations to Montgomery County Food Bank.

"Thank you for having open arms and a kind heart," Sara says. "The work being done truly makes a big difference."

Moved to Tears When Volunteering

Peter Jensen volunteers for Montgomery County Food Bank's Produce Rescue Center (PRC), which diverts truckloads of produce that were on their way to the local landfill to the food bank instead. The produce is then sorted by volunteers like Peter and packaged for distribution to families in need.

Following his retirement from Exxon Mobil, Peter worked closely with MCFB staff and long-tenured volunteers to establish the PRC in 2017.



"We've had thousands of volunteers come through the PRC, many of whom Peter has worked with personally during his more than 2,000 hours of service," said Andrea Richardson, MCFB's Volunteer Services Manager. "This is an incredible ongoing project, because not only does it help reduce

food waste, but it also may be the one and only opportunity for some of our food insecure neighbors to have fresh, nutritious produce."

Despite his many hours of service and helping the PRC rescue over 16 million pounds of produce from the landfill to date, Peter still remembers the first time he volunteered at one of the food bank's mobile distributions. He says, **"Attending my first mobile market on March 4, 2017, I was emotionally overwhelmed by the number of people in our community who needed food and showed up before 5 a.m. for a 10 a.m. food distribution."**

"To anyone thinking about volunteering in the PRC," Peter says, "you will not be disappointed. And you may leave with a warm feeling and a new family. I arrived hoping to solve world hunger, but learned to do it one person at a time."

We're so thankful to our volunteers helping get fresh, nutritious food to individuals and families who need it most. To everyone who serves with us, thank you for everything you do.

Kimberly's Big, Happy Family

Kimberly's family has had a tough few years. From her mom's recent stroke to being evicted from their home and living in hotel rooms, Kimberly and her children weren't able to catch their breath.

They were very grateful to qualify for housing assistance, but as they were moving out of the hotel room to a newly constructed home, the family still had the burden of moving expenses. Kimberly needed help to stock her new pantry and was thankful to discover Wildwood United Methodist Church, a partner agency of Montgomery County Food Bank.

The pantry supplied her and her family with the healthy food they needed as they got their fresh start.

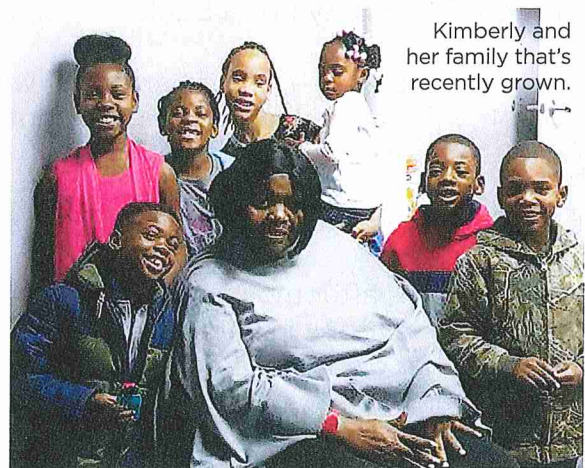
"It [was] a tremendous help," Kimberly says.

Several months after moving into their new house, Kimberly took in her sister's three children as her own. There were almost twice as many kids to provide for. Kimberly's oldest, Valencia, 13, says, "We went from a family of four to a family of seven children."

Around this same time, Wildwood's pantry got back in touch with the family and assured Kimberly she could call and ask for help with anything they needed — from food to laundry, to toys to prayer.

"Anything we need," Kimberly says. "We have a great support system. I appreciate the time and effort to reach out to people... that are needing help."

Because of you, families like Kimberly's receive the care they need in times of crisis, and her children will be heading back to school better equipped to learn and thrive. Your pledge to fight hunger for families who are struggling to make ends meet is sincerely inspiring. Thank you!



Kimberly and her family that's recently grown.



Backpack Buddies Program

- One in four children are food insecure in Montgomery County.
- We work with our community school districts to provide nutritious, kid-friendly food for children who are at risk of hunger via school pantries and our Backpack Buddy program.
- Many families rely on school meals to provide breakfast and lunch for their children. During breaks, such as weekends and holidays, these meals can be difficult to come by, but our Backpack Buddy program works to fill that gap by providing healthy meals for school children to take home.