

MISSION

To alleviate hunger through the gathering and distribution of food while encouraging self-sufficiency, collaboration, advocacy, and education.

September 2020

Food and Friendship

Michael, a 64-year-old man, lost his job ...
and then lost his home.

When the pandemic hit, his son reached out and invited Michael to live with his family. Not wanting to be a burden, Michael insisted on providing his own food, so he visited St. Mary's Food Bank.

Shuffling along, eyes downcast, head hung, and somewhat ashamed of his situation, Michael stood in line to get food at our warehouse in Surprise. Little did he know, he was about to make a friend.

One of our stellar volunteers witnessed Michael's trepidation and sought him out to lift his spirits. The two men chatted and began joking around, making Michael more comfortable. The volunteer led the way to the parking lot with a grocery cart full of fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, milk, and pantry items, where a ride share vehicle was waiting.

The men smiled through their masks. Michael felt better, realizing he wasn't alone in his situation – and he hadn't been judged. There are many, many people in Arizona who need help and encouragement. Especially now.

St. Mary's Food Bank has been providing food, hope and encouragement to our struggling neighbors for 53 years. Your support allows us to continue this work.

It's been a challenging summer and we are all unsure about what the coming months will bring. Your continued friendship will help ensure that whatever comes, St. Mary's Food Bank will be open and here to help.



**Your continued
friendship will
help ensure that
whatever comes,
St. Mary's Food
Bank will be open
and here to help.**

End of School Year

2019-20

Impact of a Backpack

Chilchinbeto Community School on the Navajo Nation

“We’ve been driving the backpacks to the homes of the children during the pandemic. You go down these bumpy, dirt roads and come to homes that have no electricity, or no running water – or both. You know how much of a difference this food makes. Over half of our students are on the programs and the stories I have heard really touch you.”

First United Methodist Church in Winslow

“It’s amazing when we deliver the backpacks and the kids come up and give us big hugs and say, ‘thank you!’ for making sure they have food for the weekend. You would think we were giving them toys or bicycles.”

Since we started this program, the kids are performing better in school too. We have seen an upturn in the grades. Hungry kids can’t concentrate. Now they are learning! Families are getting backpacks and going to the mobile pantries and these families are destitute. It makes a huge difference.”

Grand Canyon Elementary

“We had one family that had both parents laid off from their jobs within a week. No idea when or if they will get their jobs back. Using the backpacks and other St. Mary’s programs like the mobile pantries and food boxes, they were able to feed their kids and themselves while home-schooling the kids and looking for work. Thank you to St. Mary’s for being there!”

Rogers Ranch School

“Families combine under one roof to save money and get by. We have one family that has 15 children living in the home. We send two backpacks each week and a lot of the food can be prepared easily by the older kids who help take care of the others. How would they make it without that food?”

**“To us this is a bag of food.
But this is so much more
to these families.”**





Bessie's Story: Stretching a Fixed Income

Bessie and her husband Alphesia are now approaching 80 years old, but they are still parents every day. In addition to being one of many elderly Arizonans on fixed incomes that don't cover their expenses, both of their adult sons are reliant on them for support. One is a diabetic who has suffered nine strokes, has been on dialysis for a year and has struggled with his eyesight.

Making things even harder on Bessie is that Alphesia is now suffering from dementia. After a career working in a hospital and caring for others, she is now the sole caregiver of three adult men during a global pandemic.

Money is tight. More than tight. But her trips to St. Mary's Food Bank are "an incredible help" and allows her to keep everyone fed. It also allows her to use what money they have to stay afloat. "We get the food we all need. Even the special food my son needs as a diabetic that can be so expensive," Bessie said.

Bessie misses being able to get dressed up and go to church each Sunday during the pandemic. But the blessings of food and hope from St. Mary's keeps her faith high.

"Thank you so much," Bessie said, punctuating each word to relay her gratitude. "We are so thankful to have this available to us."

"We get the food we all need. Even the special food my son needs as a diabetic that can be so expensive."

– Bessie

Monthly Giving Circle

A monthly recurring gift will help provide food to hungry children, families and seniors in Arizona, every month, all year long.

Make your charitable giving effortless. Sign up for St. Mary's Monthly Giving Circle and help bring hope to the lives of many of our struggling neighbors.

When you participate in the Monthly Giving Circle, you will receive limited mailings:

- Quarterly newsletters
- Special activity invitations
- An annual giving statement summarizing your donations



➔ **It is Easy to Enroll in the Monthly Giving Circle:**

Go online to www.firstfoodbank.org or call 602-242-3663 ask for Development department

Join us and make a long-lasting difference!



Help for an Artist on the Hopi Reservation

Jennifer lives on the Hopi Reservation and earns money as an artist. “Everything came to a halt with COVID-19,” Jennifer said. “There are no shows, no tourists, so nobody to buy my art.”

She cares for her 84-year-old mother who is in poor health and her husband, who recently had a kidney transplant. With their compromised immune systems, they must stay indoors to stay healthy and safe.

“I cannot thank the volunteers, donors and staff enough!”

“We appreciate St. Mary’s help right now,” said Jennifer. “There are not many stores on the reservation and basic items that a family needs are limited or just hard to find. St. Mary’s has been our savior.”

– Jennifer

While many of Jennifer’s neighbors don’t have electricity, she is fortunate enough to be able to refrigerate and store the perishable food like milk, meat, eggs and produce she received from St. Mary’s Food Bank.

Receiving fresh produce from St. Mary’s mobile distribution was more than just food, but a sign of hope. Items that she normally cannot afford like eggplant, strawberries, corn and heirloom tomatoes, Jennifer said nothing goes to waste. “The corn is very important to our people as it’s also a mother figure. It represents life,” she said.

With the help of St. Mary’s, thousands of people on the Hopi Reservation are able to get the food they need to see them through this difficult time.

“I cannot thank the volunteers, donors and staff enough! I will never meet you and you will never know how much this means to all of us. I hope to be able to pay it forward someday.”

Go behind the scenes

Visit our facility to learn how St. Mary’s Food Bank is able to distribute 250,000 lbs. of food every day to people in need.



This two-hour walking tour is suited for individuals and families, and is appropriate for adults and children ages 12 and older. Meet in the administration building’s lobby for the tour, followed by a question/answer session with staff and volunteers.

2831 N. 31st Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85009

Wednesday	October 7	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Monday	October 12	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Thursday	October 22	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Friday	October 30	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Wednesday	November 4	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Wednesday	November 11	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Thursday	November 19	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Wednesday	December 2	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.
Thursday	December 17	10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

➔ RESERVATIONS

- ✓ Email RSVP@firstfoodbank.org
- ✓ call 602-343-3177
- ✓ or sign up online: StMarysFoodBank.org/BehindTheScenesSignUp



Stay connected to the work you support, visit StMarysFoodBank.org



St. Mary’s
Food Bank®

St. Mary’s Food Bank
2831 N. 31st Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85009
602-242-FOOD (3663)



Donations to St. Mary’s Food Bank are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law and may qualify for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit. QCO code: 20208