

MISSION

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

September 2021

Dedicated Volunteers Make a Difference for Those in Need

"I've gotten a lot more than I've given."



George and Jayne have been financial donors to St. Mary's Food Bank for many years. They were impressed by how far St. Mary's stretched their donations to help as many people as possible.

When St. Mary's lost 80% of its volunteers in the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, the food bank put out a plea for volunteer help. Both recently retired, George and Jayne decided they could donate some time as well.

That was more than a year ago and they haven't stopped volunteering. The couple comes to the food bank three days a week and has fallen in love with St. Mary's mission and method of feeding Arizona's hungry. They fill grocery carts inside Knight Client Services Center as National Guard soldiers load those carts into the hundreds of cars that roll up each day.

Now volunteer veterans, they show the new helpers what to do as if they were on our staff – which they almost are!

"It's been an amazing experience," said Jayne, who worked as a nurse and loves the nutritious food St. Mary's offers each day. "The staff and other volunteers have become our friends. To have been able to help during this very difficult time for so many is so fulfilling. I felt like I've gotten a lot more than I've given at St. Mary's Food Bank."

You're Bringing Healthy Meals to Kids

A single mom of two young boys, Brianna had no choice when COVID-19 closed the schools and daycare centers. She had to quit her job because there was no work-from-home option. She didn't want the kids to fall behind in school and she needed help keeping them fed.

"You try to monitor portions, but two little boys are eating all the time," she said. "The money I had was going to other things."

Brianna said two visits a month to St. Mary's makes up what she couldn't afford to buy. The rest comes from clipping coupons and stretching what little money is left. "I try to take only what I need because I know others are in the same spot," she said. "The boys love when mom cooks for them."



“There isn't always enough money left for food.”

Because of You

Pockets of Poverty Reached Through Mobile Distribution

Thanks for Helping our Rural Neighbors Access Food

Anyone who has lived through an Arizona summer knows living in the desert can be a challenge.

But living in a “food desert” — areas where access to abundant and healthy food is severely limited — can be even tougher on hungry families.

That’s why St. Mary’s Food Bank goes on the road with its Mobile Distribution Program more than 60 times each month. The goal is to reach pockets of poverty around the Valley as well as the rural areas of northern Arizona where grocery stores aren’t just around the corner. The number of mobile pantries expanded during the COVID-19 pandemic and includes stops at senior centers, college campuses and now the Navajo and Hopi Tribal Lands.

For many families without access to transportation, purchasing food items from high-priced gas stations and convenience stores are the only option. That’s why this extra access to food makes all the difference.

“Rural Arizona has some of the worst areas of food insecurity in our state,” said St. Mary’s Mobile Distribution Manager, Lauren Tomlinson. “Our mobile



pantries are the best way to reach those people. The crowds we see at each distribution show the need is there. During the pandemic, lines of cars would stretch for miles. Now a year later, hundreds of families continue to show up for much-needed food.”

Tractor-trailer trucks packed with tens of thousands of pounds of non-perishable food, dairy products, fruits, and vegetables are set up for “instant distributions” in parking lots, alongside major roads, or anywhere the local community can gather and receive “meal makers” to take home. St. Mary’s brings all the needed supplies while volunteers from that area help distribute the food.

Distributions usually last 2-3 hours. An hour later, you can’t tell the mobile pantry was ever there, except for the bare cupboards that are now full.

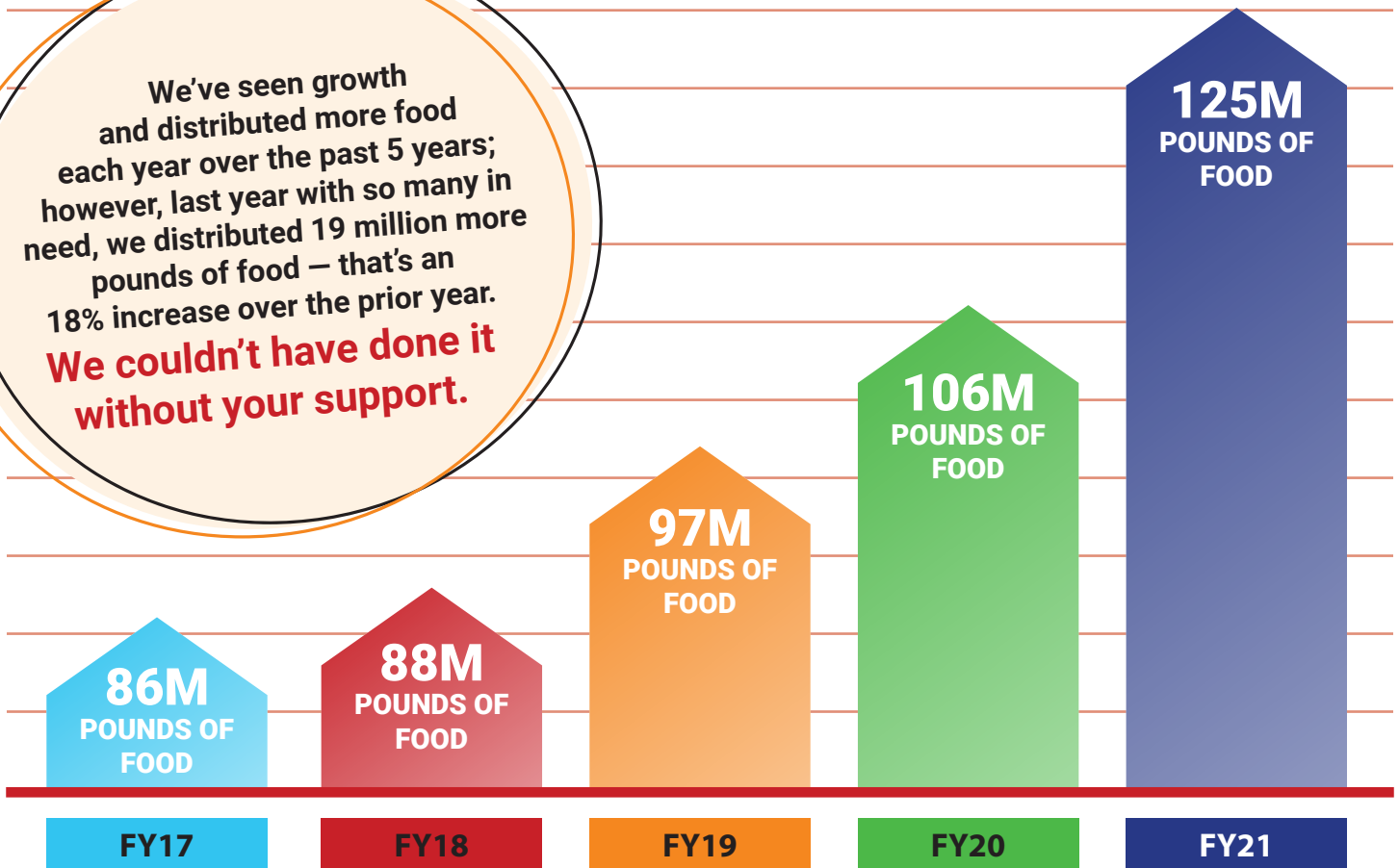
“It has made us a more flexible and responsive food bank, which is our goal,” Tomlinson said. “St. Mary’s has a huge service area. To reach everyone takes creativity.”

But it’s not just small towns and remote areas that need the help. Food deserts also exist in urban areas, where the closest full-service grocery stores are more than a few miles away. Seniors who no longer drive or families who use public transportation have a difficult time getting food home. That makes using the St. Mary’s mobile locations a welcome option.

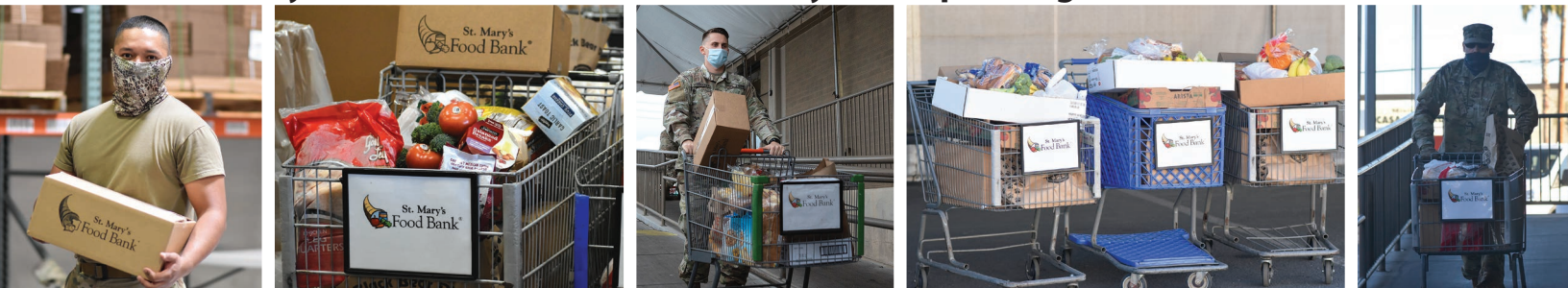
“Our mobile distribution makes a huge difference to struggling families,” said Mobile Distribution team member, Mollie McCurdy. “It gives people a place to go and receive food with dignity. You can tell how the word spreads in new areas. People come and see what is available and they tell other families who need help that St. Mary’s is here. We see and hear over and over how important it is to them.”



We've seen growth and distributed more food each year over the past 5 years; however, last year with so many in need, we distributed 19 million more pounds of food – that's an 18% increase over the prior year. **We couldn't have done it without your support.**



Thank you, National Guard soldiers, for your help during the last 18 months!



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.stmarysfoodbank.org or call 602-242-3663 and ask for the Development department

Join us and make a long-lasting difference!



Become a Junior Hunger Hero

Kids,

Raise money or food in a fun and creative way to help feed kids who are struggling with getting enough to eat. Visit our Jr. Hunger Heroes webpage for ways to join and other fun details – www.firstfoodbank.org/juniorhungerhero.

Tell us how you raised funds or food – birthday party, neighborhood fund drive, etc., when you send in your donation and you might be featured in our next Jr. Hunger Heroes newsletter.

For more info call LeAnne Hernandez at 602-343-2554 or email jrhungerhero@stmarysfoodbank.org.

Go Behind the Scenes

Find out how St. Mary's Food Bank is able to distribute 300,000 pounds of food every day to people in need. It's done with the help of volunteer hours, cash donations, and our network of food donors and food drives.



This is a two-hour walking tour suited for individuals and families. Meet in the administration building's lobby and then tour our three-building campus. Afterward, gather for a question/answer session with staff and volunteers of St. Mary's Food Bank.

Tour is appropriate for adults and children ages 12 and older. Please remember to wear closed-toe shoes and a shirt with sleeves.

All tours are from 10 a.m. – noon.

October 7	Thurs	October 22	Fri
October 11	Mon	October 27	Wed

Reserve your space today!

- Email: RSVP@stmarysfoodbank.org
- Call: 602-343-3177
- Website: StMarysFoodBank.org/BehindTheScenesTours



Take Advantage of the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit

As a resident of Arizona, you can receive a **dollar-for-dollar tax credit** for your donation to St. Mary's Food Bank – up to **\$400** individually or **\$800** if you file jointly. So, please give generously for the sake of our hungry neighbors.

Receive a **Dollar-for-Dollar Tax Credit** through your **ARIZONA TAX RETURN**

RECEIVE UP TO:

\$800
Couples
(filing jointly)

OR

\$400
Individuals

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



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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