

FOOD FOR THOUGHT
is produced bi-annually by
the Food Bank of Delaware.

Winter 2015



Food for thought

Local veteran experiences homelessness and hunger

Donzella Johnson never imagined being homeless and hungry. She did everything “right.” Graduated high school, obtained a clerical certificate from DelTech, enrolled in the Delaware National Guard, got married and started a family.

After serving as an Active Guard and Reserve Soldier for the Delaware National Guard for 29-plus years, Donzella retired in 2009. Suffering a spinal cord injury in 2000, Donzella looked forward to finally having surgery during retirement; however, issues with her VA benefits left her in a financial bind. To help make extra money she worked the overnight shift at the Walmart SuperCenter in Middletown.

Six months after her retirement she became a homeless veteran. Donzella lost everything, including her comfortable four-bedroom home. She put what she could in storage, but after she couldn't pay for the storage unit, the owner sold the contents of the unit – including her medals and awards from her time of service – for \$975.00; the gentleman who bought it made close to \$45,000 after selling the individual items.

Donzella's story is not uncommon. In fact, according to the Hunger in America 2014 study, 30 percent of clients served by the Food Bank of Delaware's network of Hunger-Relief Program Partners have at least one household member who has either served or is serving in the military.

Like many veterans, Donzella had difficulties finding a spot in a local shelter because she was single. Thankfully, her mother lives locally. Donzella stayed with her mother, sister, niece and great niece for some time. The house was full; she found herself sleeping in a twin bed with two adult children, on the floor or a friend's couch.

Despite the living conditions, Donzella was determined to get back on her feet. She used her friend's computer to look for a job, walked to the local library to apply for jobs and rode the DART bus to job interviews.

Having difficulties finding a job, Donzella turned to the Delaware National Guard's employment services and Goodwill for help. A

volunteer from Bank of America assisted with sprucing up her resume. She got a call for an interview with the Emergency Medical Services and Office of Preparedness located at the Delaware Hospital for the Chronically Ill in Smyrna. She was hired and managed to walk to and from work every day, no matter what the weather, for almost a year before anyone knew that she did not have a car.

Donzella worked to regain her financial footing. A local landlord agreed to rent a townhouse to her. “He told me that he was renting based on my character, not my credit score.” Donzella was thankful. She recalled her first night in her new home, “I had no bed and slept on the floor, but it was the most peaceful rest.”

Asbury United Methodist Church and St. Polycarp Church in Smyrna helped Donzella get back on her feet. Ladies from the auxiliary brought towels, pots, pans and food. It wasn't until April 2011 that she could afford her very first piece of furniture.

Making a good salary now, Donzella is still behind. She now owns a car and was finally able to have surgery for the injury she suffered more than a decade ago. As she works to regain her financial footing with the help of a \$tand By Me financial coach, Donzella remains active as an advocate for veterans.

Donzella is the Membership chair, Ways and Means Co-Chair, State Conference Coordinator and Former Secretary for the Delaware National Guard Enlisted Association; the Secretary for the Delaware National Guard Retired Association and Service Provider Coordinator for the Veterans Homeless Stand Down event.

Life is finally looking up for Donzella, she is five credits away from obtaining her bachelor's degree and is determined to work on her master's degree next!





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A Note From the Board Chair and President & CEO

The cold winter months are here. For all of us it means high heating bills. Even as the price of oil has come down, for families already struggling to put meals on the table, it oftentimes means choosing between buying groceries and paying the utility bill.

According to the Hunger in America 2014 study, 71.3 percent of clients we serve are faced with choosing between buying food and paying for utilities.

No Delawarean should be faced with such difficult decisions. Thanks to your support, we are able to provide much-needed food for our neighbors struggling to make ends meet, especially children. With one in five Delaware children living in poverty, it is our priority to meet the nutritional needs of our children.

As winter turns to spring, we look forward to holding our third annual hunger conference. This year we are partnering with 11-year old Braeden Mannering, founder of Brae's Brown Bags, and the Food Research and Action Center. Our May 4 conference is entitled Coming Together: A Community Response to Hunger to reflect that it takes all of us – children, adults, nonprofits, government entities, businesses, faith-based organizations, educational institutions and others – working together to end hunger in our communities. More details can be found in the story below.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our vision of a community free of hunger!

Committed to ending hunger,

Theron J. Roe
Chairman of the Board

Patricia D. Beebe
President & CEO

Save the Date Coming Together conference - Monday, May 4, 2015

The Food Bank of Delaware, Brae's Brown Bags and the national Food Research and Action Center are proud to present Delaware's third annual hunger conference. **Brae's Brown Bags** was founded in 2013 by 11-year-old Braeden Mannering of Bear. To reflect the mantra that it takes all of us to end hunger, our spring conference will feature topics for both adults and children.

Our conference is scheduled for Monday, May 4, 2015 from 7:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the Chase Center on the Riverfront. The cost to attend the all-day conference is \$40 (\$50 after April 3). To learn more about the conference, please visit www.fbd.org/ComingTogether.



Increasing Access to Fresh Produce

The **Fresh Produce Access Program** is a newly-created initiative which seeks to increase access to locally-grown fruits and vegetables for underserved and vulnerable communities throughout the state. The new program will proactively seek out surplus agricultural production, maximize the amount of produce that is ultimately distributed to partners, and therefore foster greater connectivity between the agricultural community and the Food Bank's hunger-relief network. The Produce Access Coordinator will be charged with managing all aspects of the supply chain, from creating relationships and sourcing produce grown by the farmer to making sure that the produce is used to its maximum potential by the Food Bank's programs. The Food Bank is excited to continue developing strategies to grow the Fresh Produce Access Program, such as improving the product flow, operational processes, and improving agency capacity in order to safely and efficiently distribute more fresh fruits and vegetables throughout Delaware.





www.fbd.org

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OUR VISION:

The Food Bank of Delaware is a statewide nonprofit agency whose vision is a community free of hunger. We distribute food to the hungry people in our community through a network of 550 hunger relief program partners.



Food Bank of Delaware marks significant donations from Walmart and the Walmart Foundation

The Food Bank of Delaware marked significant donations from Walmart and the Walmart Foundation at an event on November 6 outside the Milford Walmart. Over the past two years, the Food Bank of Delaware has received two refrigerated trucks and more than \$330,000 from the Walmart Foundation, and close to one million pounds of food from Walmart.

The Food Bank of Delaware received its first truck from the Walmart Foundation in 2012. Earlier this fall, the Food Bank received its second truck valued at \$117,000. The two 26-foot trucks enable the hunger-relief organization to travel up and down the state picking up perishable food donations, including fruits, vegetables and meats, from local retailers – including Walmart.

“If it wasn’t for our customers, this wouldn’t be possible,” said Milford Walmart Store Manager Stephanie Edwards. “In 1962, Walmart was founded on the principle of providing people in a small community with access to healthy food at prices they can afford.”

According to Feeding America’s Map the Meal Gap study, 119,500 Delawareans live in food insecure households. Last year Delawareans visited the Food Bank of Delaware network of hunger-relief program partners more than 900,000 times.

Milford Mayor Bryan Shupe was on hand for the occasion. “The Food Bank of Delaware serves the most vulnerable in our community. I am pleased that the city can be a part of this.”

“We could not possibly serve as many Delawareans as we do if it was not for the support of community partners like Walmart,”

said Food Bank of

Delaware Programs Director Charlotte McGarry. “We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of Walmart over the past two years. To receive two trucks within two years is really special and is much needed in our state.”

Through their long standing commitment to fighting hunger, Walmart and the Walmart Foundation provide donations of both food and funds to Feeding America and its nationwide network of food banks. The Food Bank of Delaware is one of nearly 200 Feeding America members that currently receive product donations from local Walmart stores and Sam’s Clubs.

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation recently met and exceeded a \$2 billion goal to fight U.S. hunger one year ahead of schedule and have donated more than 1.5 billion pounds of food to those in need across the country. Additionally, Walmart recently announced further food goals in the areas of affordability, accessibility, healthier eating and safety and transparency, which included providing four billion meals to those in need in the United States over the next five years. To learn more about Walmart’s work to fight hunger, visit foundation.walmart.com.

“ We could not possibly serve as many Delawareans as we do if it was not for the support of community partners like Walmart. ”



Thanksgiving for All

Thanks to the support of the local community, 4,000 Delaware families received everything needed to prepare a hot Thanksgiving meal this year through the Thanksgiving for All program. Meal boxes filled with all of the trimmings, turkeys and roasting pans were distributed to the community through Food Bank of Delaware mobile pantries and local organizations. This year's distribution was more than doubled compared to the 2013 Thanksgiving for All Program.

More than 215,000 pounds of food were collected and \$65,000 raised. Thanks to these generous financial partners: Chesapeake Utilities, Trinity Logistics, Perdue Chicken, Palmer Home Foundation, Harris Teeter, Barclaycard, Delmarva Power, Capital One, Navient Foundation and AARP Delaware.

One recipient who wished to remain anonymous said, "This is such a blessing. Your staff, volunteers and donors have given us this wonderful box of food. It was cold and windy, but everyone pushed on. From my family and myself, thank you and have a blessed Thanksgiving."

TD Charitable Foundation donates \$145,000



The TD Charitable Foundation, the charitable giving arm of TD Bank, America's Most Convenient Bank®, announced a \$145,000 donation to the Food Bank of Delaware in November.

\$50,000 will be used to help fund the Mobile Pantry program; \$25,000 towards the Backpack Program for at-risk children and \$70,000 for general operations in Kent and Sussex Counties.

The donation comes at a critical time as funding for the children's Backpack Program is down, while demand is up. The program provides food to children in need for weekends and holidays when school is not in session and federal school meal programs are not available. Backpacks are stocked with kid-friendly, nutritious foods including shelf-stable milk and juice, meals such as macaroni and cheese and beef stew and more.

"We can't do what we do without community partners like the TD Charitable Foundation," said Food Bank of Delaware President and CEO Patricia Beebe. "When we put in our request for funding, we originally requested \$75,000; you can imagine our surprise when the foundation came back with a check for \$145,000. It truly was a holiday surprise. Thanks to the TD Charitable Foundation, we will be able to provide more meals to children and adults throughout the state."



In the Community:



More than 250 individuals attended the second annual Harry K Foundation Christmas Ball. Proceeds from the event will help fight childhood hunger in Southern Delaware.



Keynote speaker Chef Hari Cameron of a(MUSE.) in Rehoboth Beach provided keynote remarks for the fourth graduating class of The Culinary School at the Milford Branch.



The Food Bank of Delaware marked a brand-new truck donation from Bank of America with a mobile pantry and cooking demonstration on January 27 in downtown Wilmington.



Keller Williams Realty realtor Michael Haritos presented a check for \$6,000 to the Food Bank of Delaware in December. The monetary donation represented his commission from the sale of a home that the Food Bank inherited in early 2014.



The Food Bank of Delaware is now offering ServSafe® classes to the general public. The one-day class is offered in Spanish or English and at both Food Bank facilities. The cost to attend the class is \$150; cost to take just the exam is \$75. To learn more, visit <http://www.fbd.org/servsafe/>.