

COMMUNITY DISH

SUMMER 2019



WEST TEXAS
CHILDREN HAVE
HEALTHY FOOD,
THANKS TO YOU!

DEAR FRIEND,

School is out for summer! The vacation from class is a welcome break for many students, but kids whose families face hunger are now at serious risk of missing meals.

Free and reduced-price school meal programs are absolutely vital for making sure children have enough to eat. But what happens when cafeteria doors close for summer?

Countless girls and boys would be hungry if it were not for your support.

Flip through our newly redesigned summer issue of Community Dish to meet just a handful of the kids — and families — who are giving thanks for you this summer. On the following page you will meet little Paloma, 5, on her first visit to a [West Texas Food Bank](#) Mobile Pantry with her mom and grandma. When you see her great big smile, I hope you will remember that you are the reason for her joy.

When you feed growing children, you give them the opportunity to thrive by helping reduce their risk of illness, developmental delays, behavior problems and more. Your generosity today will mean a brighter tomorrow for our entire community!

I could not be more grateful for generous folks like you. Without your partnership, our hunger-relief work would not be possible. Thank you for putting a stop to summer hunger here in West Texas!

Gratefully,



LIBBY CAMPBELL
Executive Director



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BECAUSE OF YOU, TANYA'S FAMILY IS THRIVING!

“It’s...wonderful. We’re very thankful.”

With the extreme rise in cost of living across our [West Texas](#) community, families like Tanya’s have been struggling to afford a trip to the grocery store on top of other bills.

Tanya is raising her 5-year-old daughter, Paloma, on her own in Odessa. She loves her little girl dearly and does all she can to provide the best life for her. Putting nutritious food on the table is especially important to her — Tanya knows Paloma needs balanced meals to reach her full potential.

But money is tight, and healthy food tends to be more expensive. Tanya works as a housekeeper, and her income cannot always stretch to afford the high-quality groceries — like fresh produce — that she knows her daughter needs. Her food bill will be even more of a concern when Paloma is home over the summer and without dependable school meals.

Tanya mentioned her financial dilemma to a co-worker, who told her about the West Texas Food Bank Mobile Pantry that stops by The Bridge Church each month. We met her, Paloma and Maria, Tanya’s mother, on their very first visit.

“It’s...wonderful,” Tanya says of the variety of food at the Mobile Pantry. “We’re very thankful.”

On behalf of the many families who can access healthy food because you choose to give, thank you for your generosity!

Tanya, Paloma and Maria are all smiles at the West Texas Food Bank Mobile Pantry in Odessa.



VOLUNTEER OF THE QUARTER: TIALA TAGALOA AND THE UTPB SOFTBALL TEAM

Tiala Tagaloa has been head softball coach for the University of Texas — Permian Basin’s softball team for nearly five years. As members of the community, she felt it was important for she and the team to give back.

Every few months, Tiala, her fellow staff and all 21 team members come to sort and package food for distribution to our network of partners. Tiala says many of the students she coaches did not understand the scope of hunger here in West Texas until they began volunteering.

“You never notice hunger in the Permian Basin until you are in front of it,” she says.

Tiala can speak from experience. Her

family struggled when one of her parents lost their job, and she says she did not realize how many other people needed help until she did.

The UTPB players hope to expand their volunteer work to include Food 2 Kids backpack sackings this fall when they will be better able to coordinate class schedules. They are committed to improving life for their West Texas neighbors.

“If you dedicate a little bit of time, it makes a stronger community,” Tiala says.

We have so much gratitude for our hometown softball team and their generosity in the fight against hunger. With their busy schedule of courses, games and other activities, they make fighting hunger a priority. Thank you!



THANK YOU FOR FILLING KIDS' PLATES THIS SUMMER

Having food on the table seems so simple, but good nutrition could not be more important

Your gifts are being used to stop summer hunger by stocking local food pantries, delivering groceries on our Mobile Pantry and serving balanced meals at feeding sites — like the one at Asbury United Methodist Church in Odessa.

The church's Vacation Bible School program runs every weekday morning during the summer with lunch served at noon. Kelly Dirden, WTFB Chief Program Officer, says they receive

prepared meals from the Food Bank's Odessa facility commercial kitchen and see about 120 4- to 12-year-olds and their siblings.

Sites like Asbury UMC help provide a needed food safety net for children who miss out on free and reduced-price school meals during June, July and August.

This summer, the Food Bank is partnering with 11 sites, like Boys & Girls Clubs and the Midland Downtown Library, to reach local children with balanced meals. These summer feeding programs are essential to ensuring kids have enough to eat until school resumes in the fall.

Having food on the table seems so simple, but good nutrition could not be more important — especially for growing children. You are feeding our community's future by filling kids' plates. Thank you for your compassion!

EMPTY BOWLS



One of our favorite annual events took place in January. This year we hosted the Empty Bowls event at our facility in Odessa.

The turn-out exceeded all expectations, and we raised \$22,000 to help continue the fight against hunger. The evening's festivities kicked off with the Mariachi Band from Odessa High School. Patrons enjoyed soup and desserts from Catfish & Company and Jason's Deli.

Each ceramic bowl is made in cooperation with Midland College, Odessa College and UTPB. Students from the Boys and Girls Clubs and the UTPB STEM Academy also helped with the glazing process.

In total around 900 bowls were made for the event, and we sold out! Bowls are already being thrown for the 20th anniversary celebration next year!

We want to extend our most heartfelt thanks to those who donated their time and talents to the event!

Jaxon sits down to a healthy snack at Asbury United Methodist Church in Odessa.



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