Reaching Out When Disaster Hits Home

In late June, devastating floods hit parts of Virginia’s Alleghany Highlands and over the border in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia. Possessions, homes and lives were lost to the raging waters. As the water receded, it became clear that residents of those areas were going to need help -- lots of it.

FASWVA was on the ground immediately after the disaster to provide food and supplies in the Covington area and to support the Mountaineer Food Bank in West Virginia, which was overwhelmed by an influx of needy families.

In the weeks following the floods, FASWVA conducted two disaster relief food drives with the assistance of local Kroger stores and partnered with the Communication Workers of America Local 2201 in Salem to collect cleaning supplies. Between those drives and contributions from the FASWVA warehouse, close to 33,000 lbs. of food, paper goods and cleaning products were sent to flood victims.

As Mountaineer Food Bank stabilized response efforts in its service area, FASWVA moved back across the border to continue helping our partner programs in the Covington area support an estimated 180 families who will need long-term assistance rebuilding their lives and homes after devastating losses.

FASWVA’s connection with partner programs COPE and South Covington Care Pantry has been extremely important during these challenging times. Both pantries have taken on the responsibilities of distributing additional food and supplies to families affected by the floods in addition to conducting their regular distributions to those facing hunger in their areas.

“These programs already make a difference in the lives of the Covington community, and they’ve jumped right in to help even more,” says Amy Morgan, FASWVA vice president of programs. “They’re a cornerstone of our ongoing support efforts for flood victims -- we couldn’t do it without them.”

Rebuilding after a disaster can be a long, complicated process. But with the passion and commitment of our Covington partners, Feeding America Southwest Virginia continues to support affected families on their journey to recovery.
A MESSAGE
from the President & CEO

“When natural disasters capture headlines and national attention short-term, the work of recovery and rebuilding is long-term.”
— Sylvia Mathews Burwell, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services

As a lifelong resident of Clifton Forge, July’s flood was disaster knocking at my own door, with my own neighbors who were suffering. Some people lost loved ones in unspeakable tragedies. Many others lost their homes and belongings, and were left without the resources to rebuild.

When a community endures such hardship, it takes a community to help them overcome. I am so thankful for our partners who made the food and supply donation drives possible, for the innumerable community members who donated goods to make these drives successful, and for our partner feeding programs who were willing to step up to the challenge and increase their outreach. It’s because of this amazing response that Feeding America Southwest Virginia was able to act quickly in the face of this great need.

However, if 35 years in hunger relief has taught me anything, it’s that the work is far from over. As Burwell states, true recovery and rebuilding is a long-term process. True recovery and rebuilding isn’t flashy, isn’t marketable and can’t be done with a series of quick fixes. True recovery and rebuilding require hard work, dedication and commitment on a day-to-day basis.

The fight against hunger in Southwest Virginia is a process that we’ve been working on tirelessly for 35 years now. Like our emergency response, this work would not be possible without the continued support of a compassionate community. As you’ll see inside this newsletter, we’re blessed with corporate partners who go the extra mile, community organizations who come together to succeed and individuals who want nothing more than to help their fellow man.

With your support, Feeding America Southwest Virginia is prepared for both emergency crises and the long-term endeavor. As Hunger Action Month approaches, there’s no better time to join us in the fight!
Celebrating a Great Corporate Partner
Salem Walmart brings $8,000 grant to FASWVA

Recently, Walmart in Salem (store #1309) presented a check for $8,000 to Feeding America Southwest Virginia during an event held at the store. The check was a bonus grant earned by the store as a result of the national “Fight Hunger. Spark Change.” campaign with Feeding America and Walmart stores.

“Fight Hunger. Spark Change.” concluded in April and the Salem Walmart had a stellar showing, placing 1st in the region for the sale of participating products and 3rd in the region for monetary donations. Those placements earned the $8,000 bonus grant for Feeding America Southwest Virginia, in addition to funds raised via the campaign itself.

Feeding America Southwest Virginia representatives, including President and CEO Pamela Irvine, joined the Salem Walmart Store Manager Lisa Ratcliffe, Market Manager George Joyner and store associates to accept the grant.

As a special thank you to the Salem community, Feeding America Southwest Virginia also conducted a “grocery give-away,” presenting a $100 Walmart gift card to the First Baptist Church of Salem’s Soup Kitchen. Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Wade accepted the gift card on the church’s behalf.

Thank you
Salem Walmart!

Stamp Out Hunger: 24th Annual National Association of Letter Carriers’ Food Drive

Another year, another fantastic Stamp Out Hunger food drive!

With the help of our local letter carriers and tremendous volunteers from throughout the area, we collected 278,168 pounds of food during this year’s drive -- that’s enough for nearly 232,000 meals!

Kicking off that total was a fantastic 13,000 pound food donation from Stamp Out Hunger sponsor Food Lion.

Thank you for helping FASWVA
Stamp Out Hunger!
Feeding the Hungry Then and Now: FASWVA Celebrates 35 Years

Today, Feeding America Southwest Virginia distributes more than 20 million pounds of food to partner programs per year, is supported by more than 9,000 volunteers and continues to engage our region in the fight to end hunger.

Thirty-five years have brought many challenges to FASWVA, but through them all the food bank has persisted and remained focused on its core mission -- fighting hunger in Southwest Virginia.

Pamela Irvine, FASWVA’s President and CEO, has been with the food bank since its inception. Her steady hand has been guiding the food bank since it began as a part of Total Action Against Poverty (TAP) in 1981. That longevity gives her the unique ability to reflect on just how much the food bank, and the people it serves, have changed throughout the organization’s life.

“I’ve seen the structure, technology, programs and services of the food bank change immeasurably in more than three decades,” Irvine says. “But one thing has not changed -- people in Southwest Virginia still face hunger. That means we must continue to innovate and challenge ourselves every day to find new ways to help.”

The past 35 years have set a solid foundation for FASWVA, allowing the food bank to play a strong supportive role with partner agencies and feeding initiatives. In recent years, the food bank has made great strides in taking a more active, client-engaged role through the development of new programs such as the Harvest Home Community Kitchen, Mobile Food Pantry and Mobile Produce Program.

The Harvest Home Community Kitchen began in the year 2000 at FASWVA’s Abingdon branch with Freda Blevins, then an Americorps VISTA (today, the branch’s Office Coordinator), tracking down donations of everything from the wood and nails to build the kitchen, to the food to serve the first meals. Today, volunteers serve an average of 600 meals per week.

The United Company Foundation helped FASWVA launch the Mobile Food Pantry in 2012 to reach the most rural parts of the food bank’s service region where a lack of brick-and-mortar partner agencies left a gap in services. The MFP now serves about 4,000 clients per month.

With the generous support of Linda Smith, the Mobile Produce Program made its debut in 2014. Smith donated the funds to purchase the “The Veggie Mobile,” a refrigerated van and trailer. Last year, fresh produce made its way to more than 19,000 people!

Going forward, FASWVA’s strategic initiatives focus on finding new ways to deliver fresher, healthier food as well as working with healthcare partners to promote the overall health and wellness of food bank clients. In doing so, FASWVA also continues to strengthen our partner programs and expand and steward the utilization of our resources to make every effort and every dollar do the most it can in the fight against hunger in Southwest Virginia.
Double the Gifts, Double the Impact: FASWVA’s May Matching Gift Challenge

Hunger has met its match!

Raising a total of almost $53,500, contributions from donors like you helped us exceed our ambitious May Matching Gift Challenge goal. Our sincerest thanks to everyone who gave.

We owe special thanks to generous board members Chris Thompson, Jim Pearman, Mike Wise and Sharon Sever for making the May Matching Challenge possible. We know that our supporters appreciate turning $1 into seven meals and further doubling their impact through a Matching Gift Challenge is especially meaningful.

Feeding America Southwest Virginia will work to offer similar matching gift opportunities in the future. Make sure to subscribe for email announcements to stay informed: www.faswva.org/email-list

Giving Back in Retirement: IRA Charitable Rollover

Most of us in Southwest Virginia are fortunate enough not to worry about where or how we’ll receive our next meal. However, for 1 in 8 individuals in our community, it’s not always known whether there will be any or enough food to eat. Your support can make a difference!

If you’ve reach the age of 70 ½, and are considering ways to reduce your federal income tax on unneeded, but required distributions from your traditional IRA – a charitable gift made via IRA rollover may be an option for you.

How does it work? Once you’ve reached the required age, you can make gifts of up to $100,000 per year to a qualified charitable organization such as Feeding America Southwest Virginia – directly from your IRA. These gifts count toward your Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), and are not included in your adjusted gross income.

A charitable contribution directly from your IRA is a great way to make a gift during your lifetime and can benefit so many. If you’re planning your year-end giving for 2016, contact us to learn more about this opportunity. And, as always – be sure to contact your plan administrator to discuss how you can use this gifting method in your tax and financial planning.

For more information about giving to Feeding America Southwest Virginia, contact Jenny Doud, Vice President of External Affairs, jdoud@faswva.org or 540.342.3011 ext. 7034.
It’s a God Thing for Kimberly Hurd
A FASWVA Client Profile

Damascus, Va., is a small community that’s home to a lot of big hearts. Take Kimberly Hurd, who’s made it her life mission to help others in need by volunteering with One Way Ministries’ food pantry, It’s a God Thing.

Every month, It’s a God Thing distributes more than 300 boxes of food to those in need. Many are elderly shut-ins living far out in the country, so Kimberly and others make special deliveries. Many more are simply families struggling to get by in these hard times.

“Families that don’t get food stamps,” Kimberly says, “that don’t get any extra help, and live on a low income—It’s a God Thing helps them in between.”

The need hits close to home for Kimberly. Not only do she and her husband, both on disability, receive food assistance, but her children and several extended family members have been helped in these difficult “betweens.”

For instance, Kimberly’s oldest daughter found herself in the midst of a divorce from an addict husband with five kids to feed. She turned to It’s a God Thing for food and was able to overcome that trying time. Now, Kimberly’s daughter has a stable life, works as a phlebotomist, and no longer needs food assistance.

It’s a God Thing also helped Kimberly’s youngest daughter after her husband had been laid off. Before he’d take any food, he insisted on helping to sort and hand out food for others. Now that he’s working again, they don’t receive any assistance. They know there are others who need it more.

According to Kimberly, lots of families see this type of turnaround. “We help them,” she says, “and then they help themselves. That’s what we want. We help whatever the situation is—no matter who you are, where you come from, or what you do—if you need it, it’s there.”

Helping feed the hungry is not easy work, though. Many times It’s a God Thing has had to stretch their food supplies to make sure everybody got something. “Our food pantry is not big,” Kimberly says, “but we are proud of what we have and very proud that God has given us the opportunity to make somebody’s life a little easier. It’s a blessing. It’s a God thing. It always is.”

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Short Takes
Recent Events at FASWVA

Smithfield, Food City & Richard Petty Motorsports Team up for Meat Donation

Meat donations are like gold at food banks. So, FASWVA was especially excited to receive a donation of meat made possible by Smithfield, Food City and Richard Petty Motorsports, in celebration of the “Battle of Bristol” race weekend. A protein-packed 15,000 pounds of meat products *(enough for over 12,000 meals!)* were given to both FASWVA and the Second Harvest Food of Northeast Tennessee. FASWVA President and CEO Pamela Irvine attended “Food City Race Night” on August 18 to accept the donation. Thank you Smithfield, Food City and Richard Petty!

Let’s Do Lunch: FASWVA Lends a Hand

Once again this year FASWVA provided a refrigerated truck and driver to support the Local Office on Aging’s “Let’s Do Lunch” fundraiser for the Meals-on-Wheels program. The fundraiser was a great success, bringing in over $71,000 for Meals-on-Wheels. The LOA sent thanks and high praise for FASWVA warehouse associate and driver Jon Smith, who helped deliver 1,638 lunches during the effort.

100% Juice Drive and “Pack the Tundra”

This year, the month-long 100% juice drive brought in a total of **89,169 servings** *(29,723 lbs.)* of juice. That juice is helping children through a variety of FASWVA partner programs, including Backpack programs, which provide food for children to take home during breaks from school.

During the “Pack the Tundra,” event, five local cheer teams stationed outside five local Korgers brought in 21,065 pounds of juice! That blows 2015’s 12,514 pound total out of the water. This awesome response can be credited to the generosity of the community, the support of the sponsors and the food bank staff, and the participation of the cheer teams. Here are the “Pack the Tundra” results for each team:

- **Hidden Valley HS**—Cave Spring Corners Kroger: 5,326 lbs.
- **Staunton River HS**—Vinton Kroger: 5,128 lbs.
- **William Byrd HS**—Bonsack Kroger: 3,876 lbs.
- **Cave Spring HS**—Brambleton Ave. Kroger: 3,688 lbs.
- **Salem HS**—Spartan Square Kroger: 3,047 lbs.

That makes Hidden Valley High School’s cheer team the “Pack the Tundra” champ for the third year in a row!

Upcoming Events

*(August 27) – Deschutes Street Pub*

FASWVA will be a primary partner for Deschutes Brewery’s August 27 “Street Pub” event at Elmwood Park in Roanoke from 2 to 10 p.m.

Deschutes will be bringing a 402-foot custom bar with 50+ tap handles and they’ll be serving beer along with a culinary demo area serving “pub foods.”

This event is FREE to attend and 100% of beer proceeds from each of Street Pub stops go to local nonprofits, including FASWVA.

*(September 10 and 11) – “Strike Out Hunger” Girls Fast Pitch Softball Tournament and Food Drive*

FASWVA will hold a food drive in conjunction with Got Game Fastpitch’s “Strike Out Hunger” girls fast pitch softball tournament Saturday and Sunday, September 10 and 11.

The tournament will be held at Northside High School in Roanoke and the Moyer Sports Complex in Salem.

Got Game has challenged all the teams playing to donate at least 100 canned food items. Spectators are also encouraged to bring canned goods to the tournament sites to donate to FASWVA. The food bank will have donation bins on site.
September is Hunger Action Month!

Hunger Action Month is when Feeding America asks everyone in the nation to take action to fight hunger in their communities, all month long. HAM is your opportunity to join a movement that has a real and lasting impact on efforts to feed more Americans than ever before -- including more than 154,000 people facing hunger right here in Southwest Virginia.

Whether it’s by advocating and raising awareness, making donations, or volunteering, you can find the way that’s right for you to make a difference during Hunger Action Month.

These are just a few HAM highlights. You can find even more events and information by visiting our website www.faswva.org and by following us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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<td>FASWVA Elected Officials Day</td>
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- **Get more details on Hunger Action Month events at www.faswva.org!**

4. Mellow Mushroom FASWVA Benefit Day (Bristol, Va.)
5. Turn your Facebook profile pic orange for hunger awareness
6. Tour FASWVA! Call us to schedule a tour.
8. Hunger Action Day!™
9. Donate kid-friendly foods to support BackPack programs
10. Allstate Helping Hands Volunteer Day

11. Strike Out Hunger Softball Tournament
12. Organize a “Tuna Tuesday” food drive
13. Tweet to raise awareness using #HungerActionMonth
14. View poverty statistics for your county at Map the Meal Gap FeedingAmerica.org/MaptheGap
15. Make coffee at home and donate what you would have spent to the food bank
16. Friends of the Food Bank “Lend a Hand” Day
17. Donate a grocery store gift card to the food bank

18. Donate your status for hunger
19. Invite your local representative to visit our food bank
20. Food Lion Feeds Great Pantry Makeover at Ecumenical Faith in Action
21. Write a letter to a newspaper editor about hunger
22. Volunteer at the food bank
23. Write a hunger message on a plate to send to our local elected officials
24. Like FASWVA on Facebook

25. Follow the food bank on Twitter @FASWVA
26. FASWVA/AARP Food Drive Event at Roanoke Pinball Museum
27. Request the food bank e-newsletter at FASWVA.org/ email-list
28. Organize a brownbag lunch with co-workers and donate your lunch money to the food bank
29. Follow FASWVA on Instagram
30. Share a hunger fact with friends