

AROUND OUR TABLE

A Biannual Newsletter from Food Bank of West Central Texas



2023 SPRING NEWSLETTER

FBWCT.ORG

FEEDING VETERANS

Although a couple months away, May is Military Appreciation Month, a special month for both those in and out of the military. Food Bank of West Central Texas is beyond grateful for the sacrifices they make to serve our country.

Unfortunately, hunger impacts veterans and military families every day. No one who served this country should struggle to feed their family. But that's the reality. Some face hunger due to lower salaries at lower ranks, high unemployment rates for military spouses, and high cost of living near military bases.

The Food Bank works hard to ensure veterans and military families have access to food at partner food pantries and meal sites, Senior and Mobile Pantries, and Backpack Programs. With your support, we will continue to serve them in 2023!





OUR MISSION

Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope.

OUR VISION

Working together to eliminate hunger in West Central Texas.

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LET'S CELEBRATE!



Dear Food Bank Friends,

HAPPY NEW YEAR! As we begin 2023, I'm reminded of the lyrics from a song from 1980 that some of you may recall — "Celebration" by Kool & the Gang. Here's an excerpt from the lyrics:

*Celebrate good times, come on! (Let's celebrate)
There's a party goin' on right here
A celebration to last throughout the years
So bring your good times, and your laughter too
We gonna celebrate your party with you
Come on now
Celebration ... Let's all celebrate and have a good time
Celebration ... We gonna celebrate and have a good time*

Not only do we celebrate the New Year, but **this** one marks the celebration of the **40th year** Food Bank of West Central Texas has been leading the charge to fight hunger and feed hope in our Big Country community. Organizing in 1983 as the Food Bank of Abilene and later changing our name to reflect the footprint of our 13-county service area, we joined forces with our partner agencies and donor friends to make a difference in the lives of neighbors who live with hunger in our community.

Over the last 40 years, with the help of you — our friends — we have grown from a fledgling organization to one that distributes between four and five million pounds of food each year to our neighbors who need help putting it on their tables and in their bellies. With you standing beside us, we have weathered the storms of natural disasters, pandemic health crises, supply and demand issues, and cycles of economic uncertainty. It's not over, but we can certainly pause to celebrate where we've been, how far we've come, and where we are hoping to go!

Speaking of celebrating where we hope to go, the Food Bank's Board of Directors approved a capital campaign that will kick off this year to add to our facility and expand our community's access to resources to fight hunger. **See page 4** for more details, and stay tuned for more information.

So bring your good times and your laughter too, and come together with us and celebrate! I am convinced celebrating not only provides hope, but also helps us weather any future storms we may encounter. Thank you for being a Food Bank friend ... we are better together!

With gratitude,

Ronnie C. Kidd
President/CEO



P.S. In celebration of our 40th, please consider a donation in a \$40 increment. A \$40 gift can provide 200 meals; a \$200 gift can provide 1,000 meals. Thank you!

PARTNER AGENCY SPOTLIGHT: GUSTINE COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY AND THRIFT STORE

A Q&A with Pattielu Clark

Q Tell me how Gustine Food Pantry came to be.

A It is kind of an interesting story. God is in the middle of it. Back in March 2020, when COVID was roaring, a lady at Comanche County 4H contacted us saying they were having a Mobile Pantry and handing out food boxes provided by Food Bank of West Central Texas. The Comanche 4H thought the Gustine 4H might want to do something similar, but unfortunately, the Gustine 4H didn't have kids to help. So, they thought my church, Gustine United Methodist, and I could help. I had just retired from coaching volleyball and tennis and needed something to do. So, this got us involved with Food Bank of West Central Texas.



Q So, you started with a Mobile Pantry but now you have a fixed food pantry in Gustine?

A One day, I got a call from our friends at the Comanche Mobile Pantry, asking if we knew a man named Rufus Duncan of Higginbotham Brothers stores. They shared he had a storefront in Gustine that he wanted to donate. Previously a store, he changed this building into a little apartment he could stay in so he could visit the stores when he was in the area. He had portioned it off in sections that work great for keeping the food pantry and thrift store separate.

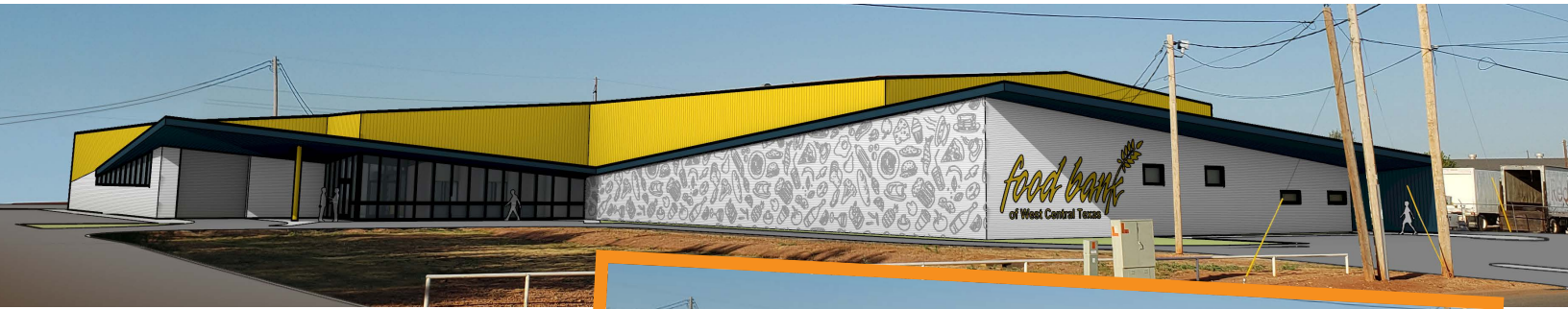
My church, from the get-go, wanted to get the entire community involved in the pantry so we asked that Duncan donate the building to the city. The deed is in the city's name, with an understanding it was to be a food pantry as long as necessary. This was July 20, 2022.

Q Wow, you've got a building! Now what?

A In late July 2022, we ordered food from the Food Bank for 40 households. When the Food Bank truck arrived with our delivery, all of our board members were there to unload the truck. To help with fundraising and the sense of community ownership of the pantry, I was sure to get other churches involved and added board members from their churches to our Pantry Board of Directors. The High School helps now, too.

Q Personally, why is this effort important to you?

A I'll never forget this young man, a junior in high school. He played basketball and after dunking, he broke his pelvic bone. The doctors determined the break was more so from malnutrition. Making sure people have food in the house was so important to me from then on!



WE'RE GROWING

The Food Bank of West Central Texas has a goal to distribute 5.2 million pounds of food — the equivalent of 4.3 Million Meals — by December 31, 2024. To achieve this, we must build our capacity to optimize the ability of the Food Bank, our partners, communities, and systems to positively impact West Central Texans facing hunger.

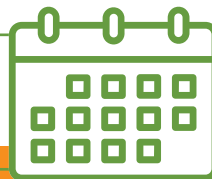
One way we'll do this is by creating a drive-through pantry at the Food Bank. We want to be more accessible



to the community, especially the working poor and seniors who may find it easier to visit a pantry after working hours, or for seniors who find it easier to remain in a car when receiving charitable food. Our goal is to have the drive-through pantry open two-three times per week.

We are fortunate to have public financial support from the Texas Department of Agriculture at \$1.4 million, totalling about a third of the funds needed. We'll be seeking additional private support for this effort. If you would like to get involved, please contact Ronnie Kidd, President & CEO, at ronniekidd@fbwct.org or 325-695-6311. **Together we will grow to Fight Hunger, Feed Hope.**

SAVE THE DATE: May 2, 2023



— ABILENE —
GIVES★

Join us May 2, 2023 for Abilene Gives, a day of online giving to raise money for nonprofits serving Abilene and the surrounding area, including your very own Food Bank of West Central Texas.

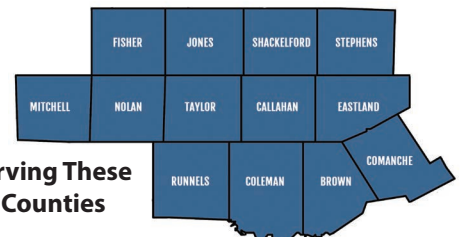
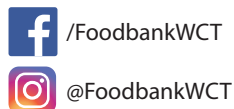
Giving happens at abilenegives.org. In 2023, our goal is to raise \$30,000. **Thank you for supporting your Food Bank!**



Food Bank of West Central Texas
5505 N. 1st St.
Abilene, TX 79603-6426
(325) 695-6311 • fbwct.org

Hours
Monday – Friday
8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Connect on Social Media



**Serving These
13 Counties**