

MISSION

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

April 2021

A single mom begins again ... with your help

Regina was finally safe ... but didn't know how she'd provide for her two kids.



When Regina got a protective order from her abusive husband, it resolved one horrible part of her life. But suddenly becoming a single mom with two kids put her in another tough situation: providing for her family without help.

Even after finding a full-time job, there wasn't enough money for bills and food. It wasn't an easy decision, but Regina turned to St. Mary's Food Bank for help.

Your support has made it possible for this single Mom to provide for her kids ... while starting over.

"I come from a proud family where we were taught not to ask for help. It's OK to starve. But I didn't want my children to go hungry," Regina said. "I know there are other kids at our school who don't eat because their parents won't accept help. It's just how we were raised."

Regina uses a St. Mary's pantry located at her children's school to get milk, cereal and other food staples. **Your generosity has made all the difference, allowing her to stretch her budget to cover other expenses.** She was quick to point out, "I am careful not to take more than we can eat. I know a lot of people come and I want there to be enough for everyone."

"I never thought I would need help. But you must take care of your kids. That is first. As a parent, you do what you have to do for them."

Regina had never been to a food bank in her life and said she will only use it while it is necessary.

“ It's a very peaceful feeling knowing my kids aren't going to bed hungry. ”

"If I can find a way to make more money, I will stop and leave the food for others," she said. "But I am very grateful this is available. I try my best to encourage other parents to come because we all need the help."

Regina and her kids have one less thing to worry about in this new phase of their lives ... thanks to you. Now, for the first time in months, Regina can rest a little easier.

"It's a very peaceful feeling knowing my kids aren't going to bed hungry."

* Photo changed to protect privacy.

From a table ... to a closet ... to a classroom of food

Your support makes it possible to grow a school food program – and feed more neighbors in need

Tiffany is a social worker in Central Phoenix at an elementary school. When the school closed last spring, teachers regularly called the students to check in and make certain they had everything necessary for the most successful remote learning experience.

The kids had books, pencils and internet connections. But what they were missing was food.

“Sometimes we would hear about an iPad not working,” she said. “But 99 percent of the time it was, ‘My mom lost her job. We have no food. Can you help?’”

Without hesitation, Tiffany and the other teachers started delivering groceries and toiletries to students, leaving items on their porches as a safety precaution. The demand kept growing. Once a week, the teachers set up a table outside the school for students to receive the items they so desperately needed. But the food never lasted very long, especially when people living across the street started asking for help.

“We would help 20 families and have to turn away so many more,” Tiffany said. “It just wasn’t enough. I felt so bad. It was definitely hard turning away the seniors because I know they needed food too.”

Tiffany reached out to St. Mary’s Food Bank for help to keep their food distribution going for the students and the neighborhood. **And thanks to your caring support of St. Mary’s, we were able to immediately send enough emergency food boxes to fill one of the school’s storage closets.** Once again, the supply did not outlast the increasing need.

St. Mary’s met with the school authorities and soon realized the need for food was great – and the school’s storage facilities were lacking. Your support helped make it possible for us to quickly set up shelving and install refrigeration units to accommodate the truckloads of nutritious and fresh food that are now arriving weekly. The students are provided healthy food to keep their minds on their studies – and not their growling stomachs.

St. Mary’s also worked with the school to help inform their senior citizen neighbors that food is available just for the asking at the Food Bank. Home delivery of healthy, fresh food is available to those who qualify.

No one – student or senior citizen – should struggle with hunger. And thanks to you, these neighbors are getting the food they need.

What began as a table-top pantry has grown to a full-size classroom where parents can “shop” for most-needed items to feed their children and families.

This success story is spreading as is the food! Some of the other 19 schools in this district are impressed with what Tiffany and St. Mary’s started – what you’ve helped make possible – and are now working on adopting the “Classroom of Food” program.

“Everyone has pulled together for the kids and the families of this community. Everything we do is all for them,” Tiffany said.



“ We would help 20 families and have to turn away so many more. It just wasn’t enough. ”



Because of You

You helped him help himself

And now ... he's paying it forward



Donavan was a victim of childhood hunger and food insecurity. There was never enough food at home and what food was there was not nutritious. Not knowing if or when he was going to be able to eat, Donavan relied on his school for meals. Hunger overshadowed his ability to learn, sleep, and grow. He experienced homelessness, drug addiction and even incarceration at an early age.

“ I never thought I would get up out of the dirt. ”

Instead of continuing down a dark path, Donavan conquered his drug habit and enrolled in St. Mary's Food Bank's Community Kitchen program. He graduated from the program and is now a chef instructor — helping others to start a new life.



Donavan is a wonderful example of what someone can accomplish when shown empathy and taught life skills in a structured environment.

Your dedicated support of St. Mary's — and our highly regarded Community Kitchen program — has produced a long list of graduates' success stories: Those who have gone from struggling through life to becoming self-sufficient and gainfully employed within a few months.

Shy and seldom trusting, Donavan is now brimming with self-confidence. “This has definitely helped me come out of my shell,” he said. “I am shocked at my accomplishments. I never thought I would get up out of the dirt.”

Donavan especially loves the child meal preparation component of the Community Kitchen program. Helping provide nutritious meals to children through after-school programs gives Donavan a warm feeling.

“No child should suffer,” he said. “I know we are helping those children and it gives me a greater purpose.”

Donavan wants to thank St. Mary's donors — friends like you — who have made it possible for the Food Bank's unique second-chance program to flourish.

“It means so much to me and to the students I work with,” he said. **“People now have a future because of you — and this amazing program.”**

Go behind the scenes

Visit our facility to learn how your support helps St. Mary's Food Bank help those in need.

This two-hour walking tour is suited for individuals and families, and is appropriate for adults and children ages 12 and older. Meet in the administration building's lobby for the tour, followed by a question/answer session with staff and volunteers.

Wednesday	April 7	10 a.m. - noon
Tuesday	April 13	10 a.m. - noon
Thursday	April 22	10 a.m. - noon
Friday	April 30	10 a.m. - noon

Reserve your space today!

- ✓ Email: RSVP@firstfoodbank.org
- ✓ Call: 602-343-3177
- ✓ Website: StMarysFoodBank.org/BehindTheScenesSignUp

Introducing Family-friendly warehouse tours

Bring the whole family on one of our new interactive, kid-friendly, socially distanced warehouse tours and discover how you make it possible for St. Mary's Food Bank to distribute 250,000 pounds of food every day!

Saturday	April 10	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday	May 8	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday	June 5	9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

- ✓ RSVP at StMarysFoodBank.org/FamilyFriendlyTours

Space is limited. Kids should be 3 years or older with one adult per child. Contact Arayah at alarson@firstfoodbank.org or 602-343-3150 with questions.



Donor-advantaged funds

Don't forget your donor-advantaged fund can help St. Mary's provide food for our struggling neighbors.

We are able to accept donations from your fund any time.

CONTACT US!

To learn more and how to generate a gift to St. Mary's from your Fund.

- ✓ Call: 602-343-3111
- ✓ Website: StMarysFoodBank.org/give/donor-advantaged-funds

DID YOU KNOW?

There are \$37.27 billion dollars resting in donor-advantaged funds in the U.S.?

Let us put that money to work!

Help pack much-needed food boxes

Join us on one of the following dates:

Thursday	April 22	9 - 11 a.m.
Saturday	April 24	8 - 10 a.m.

Space is limited.

CONTACT US!

- ✓ Email: RSVP@firstfoodbank.org
- ✓ Call: 602-242-3663
- ✓ Website: StMarysFoodBank.org/BoxPackingSignUp



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



St. Mary's
Food Bank®

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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