



**EAST  
TEXAS  
FOOD  
BANK**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
FY2023**





**Volunteers and ETFB staff prepare produce bags at Tyler mobile pantry distribution.**



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# FROM THE CEO

*DEAR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS,*

The East Texas Food Bank (ETFB) continues to see more of our neighbors needing assistance with food. In fiscal year 2023, ETFB saw a 25 percent increase in the total number of East Texans we serve—for a total of 151,054 households. Historic inflation on everything from groceries to utilities is challenging our population and leaving many making tough choices.

Coupled with the economic crisis were several weather events that impacted huge sections of East Texas. This winter, prolonged cold and ice brought down power lines and kept many in the dark for days. This summer, a storm system caused over 250,000 households to lose electricity for over a week. Many, yet again had to throw away their groceries. I am proud ETFB and our team of volunteers and donors helped us to provide thousands of meals. We are so thankful to the many generous East Texans who help us fulfill our mission of fighting hunger and feeding hope.

According to new numbers from Feeding America's Map the Meal Gap, 1 in 7 East Texans are food insecure including 1 in 5 children. This means they lack access to consistent meals and nutritious food. When people are hungry, they

are depressed, sick, and lack energy to work or go to school. Our seniors and the disabled struggle the most, as many are on fixed-incomes.

This past year, ETFB served 27 million meals and provided 14 million pounds of produce to hungry East Texans. The Texas Legislature passed several important bills for hunger relief including an increase to the Surplus Agricultural Products Grant that helps food banks rescue surplus or unsellable produce from Texas farmers for distribution.

ETFB opened new mobile pantries in Frankston, Gladewater, Mineola, Daingerfield and Jacksonville. We have seen record crowds turning out for food at these distributions. We held our Agency Conference in Tyler for our 200 partners. Also worth noting, ETFB received the Better Business Bureau's Award of Excellence for Outstanding Non-Profit.

ETFB is committed to expanding our programs and services to meet the needs of our neighbors. The Deep East Texas Resource Center in Lufkin serves over 1.1 million meals each year. Our new Longview branch opened in October of 2023, Tyler's new resource center opened in December and Texarkana will open in the spring of 2024.

I am thrilled to be the new Chief Executive Officer for the East Texas Food Bank. I look forward to continuing to make sure everyone in East Texas is aware of the services we provide and receive the food they need to thrive.

*Sincerely,*

**DAVID  
EMERSON**

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



# WHO WE ARE

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## OUR MISSION

The East Texas Food Bank exists to fight hunger and feed hope in East Texas. According to Feeding America's recent Map the Meal Gap, 1 in 7 East Texans, including 1 in 5 children, are hungry.

## OUR VISION

The East Texas Food Bank's vision is a hunger-free East Texas.

## OUR STORY

Established in 1988 by a group of Tyler community leaders, the East Texas Food Bank covers 26 Northeast Texas counties. ETFB provides over 27 million meals each year to 200 partner agencies and feeding programs.

## HOW WE HELP

The East Texas Food Bank feeds our community, provides nutrition education and benefits assistance. According to Feeding America, 188,530 East Texans including 63,260 children face hunger.

By 2025, ETFB hopes to increase distribution to 32 million meals annually.



# SENIOR BOX PROGRAM



*Vivian of Texarkana says the senior box is very helpful to her father.*

Each month, low-income seniors receive a box of nutritious food with pantry staples such as beans, rice, fruit, canned meat, flour, cereal, juice and more. Many of the recipients are in isolated, rural communities and live on a fixed income. The box helps them supplement the limited amount of food they are able to purchase as they navigate other expenses such as utility bills, rent and medicine. On average, 4,555 seniors receive a box monthly at sites throughout our service area.

To qualify for the program, applicants must be 60 years of age or older, provide a declaration of residency and fall within the income guidelines.

## MEET LINDA

Linda can no longer work after injuring her back and shoulder. She is so grateful to receive the Senior Box each month at her apartment in Longview. **“It’s a Godsend to get this food each month. I love the spinach and canned meat and I am able to make all kinds of meals with the delicious items in the box.”**



## SENIOR BOX PROGRAM STATS

**54,660**  
boxes  
distributed

**1,599,660**  
meals were  
served

**7,594**  
households  
received a box

# MOBILE PANTRY

The Mobile Pantry Program targets communities with a high percentage of people who lack regular access to nutritious food. ETFB partners with organizations to find a distribution site. Volunteers from local businesses, churches and schools help give out the food.

The goal of the program is to offer fresh fruits and vegetables. In our last fiscal year, 14 million pounds of produce was given out. Mobile Pantry locations give out food once or twice a month, with no documentation or eligibility requirements to participate.

## MEET KRYSTIAN & JOHN

Krystian and John sat with Grace, 2, in the parking lot of the Family Circle of Care in Tyler for their first mobile distribution with ETFB. Grace had the sweetest hello for everyone around her despite the heat.

The young family lives in a one-bedroom apartment while awaiting the arrival of baby Daniel while John works as a house painter. With the high cost of living expenses, they were excited to receive produce and other items to help them with their groceries so they can feed their family. **“It makes a huge difference to us,”** said John.



## MEET VIRGINIA

Virginia was thrilled to find fresh fruit and vegetables at the mobile pantry near her home in Palestine. She had retired but really felt the squeeze of rising costs on her fixed income, so she took a part-time job as a bus monitor. “It’s just too much to handle for one person,” she says of the struggle to pay bills and afford food. “Please help us because we need help or otherwise we don’t eat.”



## MOBILE PANTRY PROGRAM STATS FY 2023

14 million	8,400	27
pounds of produce distributed	households	East Texas communities





## EMERGENCY DISTRIBUTIONS

Special food distributions helped neighbors impacted by winter storms and severe summer weather.

The East Texas Food Bank gave out thousands of emergency food boxes to Smith County residents impacted by winter power outages. Many East Texans had to throw away all of their refrigerated food after being without power for days. Smith County was declared a disaster by the state after frozen limbs fell on power lines keeping many people in the dark with no heat, power or food.

In June, a severe line of storms moved through multiple East Texas counties causing widespread power outages and damage. Some homes were without power for weeks. Emergency food box distributions were held in Gladewater, Quitman, Mt. Vernon, Avinger and Longview.





## CHILDRENS FEEDING PROGRAMS

The Backpack Program was designed to close the weekend hunger gap for children. Last year, ETFB served 9,932 children in school districts across East Texas. Bags filled with nutritious meals are discreetly placed in children’s backpacks at school so they have something to eat. ETFB partners with afterschool programs and the Kids Café to serve snacks when other resources are not available.

## SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM

Children receive free lunch and/or breakfast as part of the Summer Food Program. Nicolette brought her son Brayden to the Tyler location. She is thankful she has options to help feed her children. She says sometimes she doesn’t eat so they will have enough food. Nicolette works but doesn’t have enough money left at the end of each month to take care of her family and be able to feed her growing boys.

**“I really appreciate that the food is nutritious and the kids really like what they offer,”** said Nicolette. During the school year she relies on the free lunch program through the schools to supplement what she can offer at home. She also visits some of the ETFB partner agencies monthly to receive other food staples and has enjoyed receiving produce at the mobile pantry locations. **“Prices are so high in the grocery store so I am beyond grateful for this wonderful food from the East Texas Food Bank. Thank you to everyone who helps to make this happen.”**



## CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS FY 2023 STATS

**226,421**

backpacks distributed and  
9,932 children served

**61,473**

snacks served in Kids Cafe’ and  
Afterschool Snack Programs

**42,918**

meals served to 1,702  
children at 37 locations



# HELPING OUR NEIGHBORS

## BENEFITS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Benefits Assistance Program helps eligible East Texans apply for state social service benefits. Programs we offer include SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), Medicaid, TANF (Temporary Aid for Needy Families), CHIP (Children’s Health Insurance Program), Healthy Texas Women and Medicare Savings Program. Additionally, the Benefits Assistance Program provides referral services for other social service agencies, such as WIC (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) and housing, shelter and utility assistance programs.

## DIRECT EDUCATION

The Direct Education Program provides nutrition education through cooking classes. Topics include healthy eating on a budget, food safety, meal planning, cooking, physical activity and more.

## COOKING MATTERS

Cooking Matters for adults is a six-week course focused on preparing and shopping for healthy meals on a limited budget. Each class includes a nutrition lesson, cooking and food safety, and hands-on preparation of a meal.



## FY 2023 STATS

**1,763,336**

meals provided through  
SNAP application

**1,679**

individuals reached through  
Direct Education



# DEEP EAST TEXAS RESOURCE CENTER

The Deep East Texas Resource Center (DETRC) in Lufkin is a one-stop-shop of wraparound services including a food pantry, benefits assistance and other support services. The center has become a vital lifeline in the community and now serves as an example for three new resource centers for the ETFB that are located in Longview, Tyler and Texarkana. DETRC opened in May of 2021. The new branch in Longview opened in October of 2023, Tyler in December of 2023 and Texarkana will open in Spring of 2024.

The T.L.L. Temple Foundation provided funding for DETRC and the new resource center in Texarkana. The Foundation works alongside rural communities to build a thriving East Texas and to alleviate poverty, creating access and opportunity for all.

## MEET MIKE

“Mike started coming to the pantry shortly after we opened our doors. He would visit each week and only take a couple of items along with potatoes and carrots. After a few weeks, he asked if he could bring the grocery carts in. Then he began to help stock shelves and now feels comfortable assisting other neighbors as they get groceries from the pantry. Many of the people we help also want to volunteer and give back! For Mike, he was looking for a place to belong and make friends. We all love Mr. Mike.”

- Rachel Collins, DETRC Manager

## DETRC FY 2023 STATS

4,385	46	1,100,714
households served	different wraparound services were offered	meals





# MOUNT PLEASANT FAMILY GRATEFUL FOR ASSISTANCE FROM FOOD PROGRAMS

Randi and Bobby are the proud parents of two elementary school boys, in Mount Pleasant. Matthew and Jackson are on the free lunch program and also recipients of the East Texas Food Bank Backpack Program.

“My husband and I both started new jobs this past year and money has been tight,” said Randi. **“We are so appreciative of the extra programs that help us fill the gap to feed our children. The food is kid- friendly and is perfect for our growing boys.”**

Randi says the kids especially like the hand-written notes that are placed in their Backpack food from Mr. Robb. **“They love knowing that someone else cares for them.”**

As summer approaches, Randi is comforted knowing she can take her kids to the ETFB Summer Food Program in her community. **“Groceries are so expensive and having a place I can take my children to get a meal is wonderful. We don’t meal plan anymore, we only buy what is on sale. I cut back on meat and put less in my recipes. We are beyond thankful for the help from the East Texas Food Bank.”**

Randi says everyone who gives to help feed children is an angel.

“I don’t know if they realize how much it impacts people. When you give to these programs, it’s a ripple effect. If we have extra food we give to another neighbor and it makes them want to give. My children want to give back too. It’s an incredible feeling.”



# REMEMBERING EDGAR BURTON'S LEGACY

In the heart of East Texas, Edgar Burton's unwavering dedication as a former board member of the East Texas Food Bank (ETFB) shines as a true beacon of inspiration. His story is a testament to the power of dedication, hard work, and a passion for feeding his neighbors who faced hunger.

Edgar's journey began on a modest family owned chicken farm where he learned the value of hard work. The farm grew into a commercial egg operation housing up to a million laying hens.

Leaving the chicken business, Edgar embarked on a new chapter at Brookshire Brothers, Inc. to manage the distribution center and truck fleet. When he retired 25 years later, he was responsible for managing the company's assets, including maintenance, construction, environmental compliance, and real estate. Edgar often joked, "I don't sell ice cream. I just make sure it is frozen." It was during these years that Edgar's dedication to his community truly shone in many ways.

His commitment to fighting hunger extended beyond the grocery store. He was one of the founding board members of ETFB. For over three decades, Edgar made monthly trips from Lufkin to Tyler for board meetings, often traveling with his beloved wife, Joe Ann.

Edgar's passion for feeding his hungry neighbors transcended mere sustenance;





it aimed to restore hope and comfort. He tirelessly advocated for more resources, constantly seeking ways to improve lives in Deep East Texas.

His dedication was palpable, and his enthusiasm infectious. Edgar's belief in the food bank's mission inspired others to join the cause. He demonstrated that one person's unwavering determination could make a significant difference. His influence extended from coordinating food drives to reaching out to local businesses and foundations for support and sharing stories of those affected by hunger.

As years passed, Edgar's impact became increasingly evident. More families were fed, and the community grew stronger. His legacy wasn't just in pounds of food distributed or miles traveled to serve but in the hearts he touched and the unity he fostered in Deep East Texas.

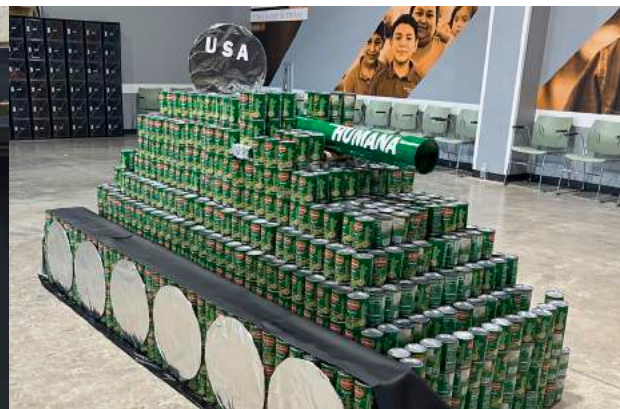
Today, we reflect on Edgar Burton's incredible journey with immense gratitude and appreciation. His story exemplifies the power of compassion, hard work, and dedication in the face of adversity. We honor Edgar for his enduring commitment and for being a beacon of hope in our community.

*Though Edgar is no longer with us, his presence and impact are still felt. ETFB wouldn't be where it is today without Edgar's hard work, pursuit of excellence, and love for people. Joe Ann continues Edgar's legacy as a partner of the ETFB.*



## CORPORATE PARTNERS

**“We greatly appreciate the relationships we have developed with our corporate partners,”** said Tim Butler, ETFB Chief Development Officer. **“Throughout the year, businesses give their time by volunteering with us, give corporate donations, hold special events or fundraisers that benefit the food bank and even hold canned food drives. We are so thankful for all of their support!”**





# SIGNATURE EVENTS



## WHATABURGER

Whataburger held their annual December fundraiser for ETFB selling ornaments and collecting food at multiple locations throughout East Texas and raised \$17,533.

## GOOD FOR COUNTRY

The fourth annual Good For Country concert, presented by UBank, featured 'American Idol' Season 10 Winner and country music star, Scotty McCreery. The concert was held in Lufkin and also featured Nashville country music singer, Travis Denning and Lufkin native, Jackson Pigg. The concert raised \$30,000 for ETFB.

## EAST TEXAS ADAM GOLF TOURNAMENT

East Texas Adam (Acquisition, Divestitures and Mergers) held a golf tournament at Willow Brook Country Club in the fall and presented \$16,500 to the ETFB.

## PANTRY RAID

Tyler High and Tyler Legacy came together for the 32nd annual Pantry Raid. The two schools collect food and funds to support the Tyler ISD Backpack Program. Students raised 151,000 meals and over \$30,000. Since the pantry raid began in 1991, students have raised more than 1.6 million meals.



# VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are essential to the East Texas Food Bank. They touch most items of food we serve. During the annual volunteer luncheon, two individuals were recognized for their dedication.

Debbie Finley received the 2023 Outstanding Volunteer Award. She had been a donor and after she retired came to see the operation in person. She was so impressed that she wanted to be a volunteer. **“I love making the Senior Boxes, knowing that we’re helping someone who might have to choose between medicine, heat, or food.”**

Debbie is also making the summer meal kits for children. ETFB typically prepares 50,000 meals for the three months of summer. **“I love your mission of making sure that no East Texan goes without food that they need.”**

Macey Bunger received our 2023 Outstanding Youth Volunteer. **“I wanted to volunteer to help feed seniors, families and kids in need. It is a great organization!”** said Macey. **“I love being the Lord’s hands and feet, and saving lives by keeping people from hunger, working with friends and meeting new people.”**



## VOLUNTEER FY 2023 STATS

**8,800**

volunteers  
helped ETFB

**32,000**

volunteer  
hours



# TEXAS LEGISLATURE BACKS MAJOR HUNGER-FIGHTING WINS

The Texas Legislature passed several new laws in the 2023 session that will prevent hunger for Texans experiencing food insecurity. The East Texas Food Bank took a team to Austin to visit with our local legislators about the bills. Three bills passed this legislative session along with increased funding for food distribution.

- 1** Update the SNAP Vehicle Asset Test (HB 1287): Texas uses a vehicle asset test to determine SNAP eligibility, placing limits on the value of the vehicles a household may own and still qualify for the program. HB 1287 makes an adjustment to better reflect today's car values.
- 2** Implementing pre-release SNAP registration (HB 1743): Early access to SNAP benefits ensures formerly incarcerated Texans have immediate resources for food so they can begin rebuilding their lives and reduce recidivism.
- 3** Increasing funds for produce rescue: The Surplus Agricultural Products Grant helps food banks rescue surplus or unsellable produce from Texas farmers for distribution to hungry Texans. The network achieved a \$10.2 million increase in funding, doubling funds to \$20.4 million.
- 4** Exempting state transportation-related taxes and fees for food banks (HB 3599): HB 3599 will give food banks an exemption from fuel taxes and registration for their fleets.

# BE THE CHANGE



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS | 2022-2023

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*Health Management Associates*

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*Gateway Ticketing Systems*

**Kenneth Cobb**

*amaGoh Smoothie*

**Gregg Davis**

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**Gina DeHoyos**

*Edward Jones*

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*Henry & Peters, PC*

**Verna Hall**

*Community Volunteer*

**Leslie Harrison**

*Attorney, Non-Practicing*

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**Dr. Valerie Smith**

*University of Texas at Tyler School of Medicine*

**Howard Tagg**

*Law Office of Howard Tagg*

**Dustin Wilkinson**

*Austin Bank*

**Lisa Williams**

*Black Nurses Rock*

**Ivette Zavarce**

*Encouragement Media Group*





# FUNDING SOURCES

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The East Texas Food Bank had \$52,354,392 in revenue and support, and operating expenses of \$62,824,582 in fiscal year July 2022 - June 2023. Over 95% of all support we receive goes directly to helping feed East Texans facing hunger.

**For the full financial report, visit [EastTexasFoodBank.org](https://EastTexasFoodBank.org)**



# YEAR IN REVIEW











MEMBER OF  
**FEEDING<sup>®</sup>**  
**AMERICA**

One of ETFB's largest mobile pantries takes place each month at the Gregg County Fairgrounds in Longview.