



# FOOD FOR THE MIND

Quarterly Newsletter of The South Texas Food Bank  
Winter 2022

**MESSAGE FROM  
THE DIRECTOR - 3**

**HUNGER-RELIEF  
RAFFLE WINNERS- 4**

**VOLUNTEERS  
HEED THE CALL- 5**

**FALL HEALTH  
FAIR - 6**

**MOVING FORWARD  
TOGETHER**







# LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

We've come a long way. The last two years have showed us that we can tackle just about anything that comes our way - as long as it's together.

Community continues to be the force that moves us forward through the likes of pandemics, winter freezes, water boils and more.

And we still have a long way to go, but the South Texas Food Bank knows for certain there's no feat we can't overcome when we work **together**.

## ON THE COVER

The first volunteers of 2022 were AHEC students.

Despite the challenges presented by the current health crisis, The South Texas Food Bank and its mission continues to receive volunteer support from our local community.



## THE SOUTH FOOD BANK

Main Office:  
2121 Jefferson St.  
Laredo, Texas 78040  
Tel: 956.726.3120

Mailing Address:  
P.O. BOX 2007  
Laredo, TX 78044

Website:  
[southtexasfoodbank.org](http://southtexasfoodbank.org)

## FOLLOW US



## South Texas Food Bank's Mission Statement

To alleviate hunger in South Texas by collecting and distributing food through partner agencies and programs while creating awareness and educating the community on the realities of hunger.



# Message from the Director



**Alma Boubel**  
Executive Director

## DEAR FRIENDS,

First of all happy New Year to you and your loved ones!

At the South Texas Food Bank, we are starting the year filled with much hope for a better year for all and with the drive to feed our over 44,000 clients that we serve on a monthly basis throughout our eight-county service area.

The continued pandemic, high fuel prices, and disruptions to the food supply chain pose a serious challenge to our mission. However, with the support of generous foundations, businesses, and contributors like you, as well as our partner agencies, we will continue to work hard to expand our services in order to serve even more food-insecure individuals. We also hope to be able to once again host in-person community events as the current health situation allows.

Together we continue to move forward, providing the much-needed hunger-relief that our clients need with the hope that one day no one will have to go to bed hungry in our South Texas communities.

Sincerely,

*Alma Boubel*  
Executive Director

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

#### Executive Council

Hugo Flores, President  
John Solis, President Elect  
Roberto Diaz, Treasurer  
Kevin Romo, Secretary  
Laura Narvaez, Historian  
Doug Howland, Past- President

#### Members

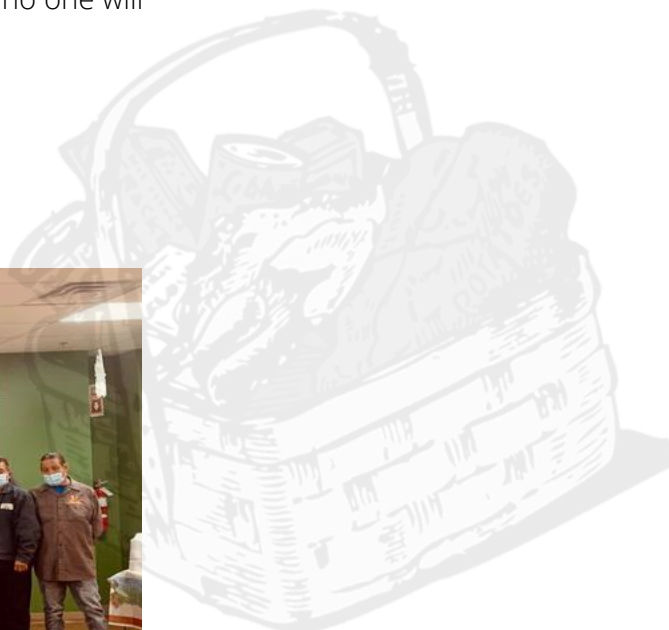
Leslie G. Benavides  
Aide Brooks  
Roberto Cuellar  
Gabriela De Leon  
Anna Benavides-Galo  
Romeo Salinas  
Ed Sherwood  
Christina Garcia  
Gerardo Salinas  
Juan Carlos Vazquez  
Steven Edward Cruz  
Fernando Ortega  
Erasmus Villarreal

#### Advisory Board

Romelia Cardona  
Galo Garcia  
Valeria Rubalcaba  
Annie Dodier



Holiday Fun: The South Texas Food Bank staff took a pause from their daily hunger-relief efforts to have a holiday fellowship.





# And the Winners Are: 2021 Hunger Relief Raffle



Robert Cantu (center) received the keys to a brand new 2021 Mercedes-Benz car from Alma Boubel, STFB executive director and the STFB Board.

The South Texas Food Bank held their Hunger Relief Raffle December 15 at the food bank's parking lot, where a shiny white Mercedes-Benz stood waiting for the name of its owner.

At noon sharp, the food bank started their livestream event on Facebook. Guest M.C. and ticket picker, A.B. Barrera, welcomed viewers; introduced the food bank members who were present at the event; reminded the audience about the eleven prizes that were about to be given away; and kick-started the raffle by picking out the name of the lucky winner of the grand prize – the 2021 Mercedes-Benz GLE 350.

All proceeds of this event are in benefit of food insecure families, children and elderly in the South Texas area.

"The food bank has not been unable to host any of its traditional fundraising events due to the

health crisis. Unfortunately, the pandemic along with the tough economic times that we are currently facing have caused the demand for food assistance to increase. In addition, severe weather conditions, rising gas prices and food shortages this year have posed unprecedented funding challenges to our organization, so we needed to find a safe way to fundraise so we could continue with our mission," STFB Executive Director Alma Boubel said.

She hopes that the food bank will be able to resume its regular events in 2022.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this fundraiser a success. ●

## Thank You



GUNTOLOGY



## 2021 Holiday Raffle Winners

1st Prize: Robert Cantu  
2nd Prize: Patricia Bocanegra  
3rd Prize: Richard Barrera  
4th Prize: Ernest Chamberlain

5th Prize: Andrew Howland  
6th Prize: Leti G. Martinez  
7th Prize: Pedro Ramos  
8th Prize: Anna Galo

9th Prize: Zapata National Bank  
10th Prize: Victoria Tamez  
11th Prize: Frances Salinas

# Volunteers Make the Food Bank World Go Round

Following a long hiatus due to COVID-19, the South Texas Food Bank hosted a community volunteer event on Saturday, November 6th.

Dozens of volunteers made their way to the food bank's volunteer center to help Set the Table – a volunteer opportunity that was open to the entire community. Those interested were encouraged to sign-up online. The food bank was overwhelmed by the response, receiving a significant number of applications the first day the event was posted and promoted on social media.

Volunteers helped assemble Feast of Sharing boxes, packing them with cans of green beans, corn, cranberries, apple pie filling, pie crust, maple brown sugar oatmeal, brown gravy, and sweet and salty snack bars.

These boxes were distributed at this year's H.E.B. Feast of Sharing held as a drive-thru at the Sames Auto Arena.

Executive Director, Alma Boubel, expressed enthusiasm, saying, "We are happy to re-open our Volunteer Center for volunteer events, and what better way to do so than hosting an event in support of our longtime partner and friend, H.E.B., and its Feast of Sharing."

Anyone interested in volunteering at the South Texas Food Bank is encouraged to check the food bank's website and social media for volunteer updates and opportunities. ●





# Fall in Love with Health Community Fair



*Left Pic:* Families lined up to pick the produce of their choice. *Right Pic:* Over dozen of door prizes were give away to attendees.  
*Pic Below:* The City of Laredo Health Department provided free immunizations.

The South Texas Food Bank's community health fair returned Saturday, Nov. 6 with the goal of raising awareness about the health risks associated with food insecurity.

Aptly named *Fall in Love with Health*, this free event featured several health-related agencies and organizations that provided information and free services to attendees.

Participating agencies and organizations included Border Region Behavioral Health Center, City of Laredo Health Department, Driscoll Health Plan, Enroll 4 Health, Gateway Community Health Center, Imagine Dental, New Life Home Health, Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program, South Texas Dev. Council Area Agency on Aging, South Texas Food Bank, Texas A&M University Colonias Programs, Texans Recovering Together and Webb County Community Action Agency.



Flu and COVID-10 vaccines were also offered by the City of Laredo Health Department.

Participants also had an opportunity to win door prizes that included frozen turkeys and H.E.B. gift cards.

"We are very excited to be bringing this family event back after a long recess due to the COVID-19 pandemic," said Alma Boubel, South Texas Food Bank Executive Director. The last time that the food bank hosted a health fair was back in September 2019.

Besides the health providers, this year's fair featured a farmers market, sponsored by H.E.B. Stores.

"Attendees were able to take home different vegetables and fruits, as well as try fun and simple recipes that can be made with these produce," Boubel mentioned. ●

# SNAPS for SNAP

Aracely Rodriguez, a mother of two, has been on and off SNAP benefits throughout the years. Like many working mothers, Rodriguez has always been resourceful and looked for ways to supplement her family's food needs through programs like SNAP.

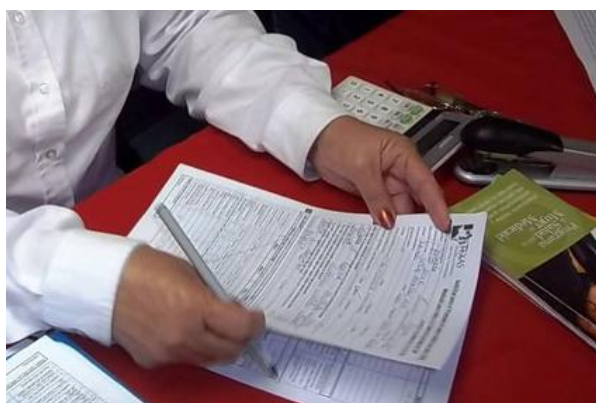
"I have been on the SNAP Program only when I need it the most," she humbly points out, as she explains that she strongly believes this program is vital in providing hunger relief to people suffering from financial, health and other unpredictable hardships in their lives.

"This program has been a blessing to me and my family, especially when things got rough. You know, things that one can't control," she said.

And while there have been many circumstances that she has not been able to foresee or control, there remains one thing for certain – where she gets SNAP assistance.

"Every time I need help with the food stamp program, I come to the South Texas Food Bank. I prefer it," she noted.

The food bank provides direct support with the application process, answers questions and can even help determine potential eligibility for SNAP benefits. Eligible participants can also apply for Medicaid, TANF, CHIP, and other women's programs.



The South Texas Food Bank has been providing SNAP application assistance for close to 14 years now.

"It's our mission to alleviate hunger," STFB Executive Director Alma Boubel said, "and SNAP is one of many programs we can facilitate support for our clients."

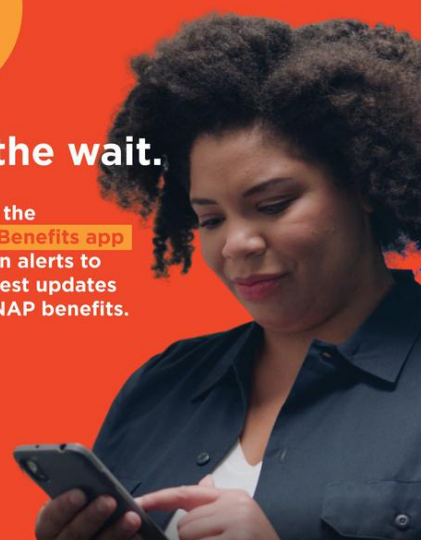
Currently, the South Texas Food Bank offers SNAP assistance in three communities: Laredo, Del Rio and Rio Grande City.

"The SNAP Coordinator at the South Texas Food Bank is always in a good mood and you can tell that she really wants to help you," Rodriguez said. "They not only help you with the applications and sorting through all the paperwork, but they also inform you about the latest program changes or updates – important things that otherwise I wouldn't know."

Asked how likely she would be to recommend the SNAP Outreach provided at South Texas Food Bank, Rodriguez enthusiastically replied, "Oh, I send people to the food bank for SNAP help. I tell them that that is where they need to go. They will be well taken care of." ●

**Skip the wait.**

Download the  
**YourTexasBenefits app**  
and turn on alerts to  
get the latest updates  
on your SNAP benefits.





# Giving Back

The South Texas Food Bank relies on the generosity of the community to continue its mission of feeding the hungry. Our community was filled with the spirit of giving this past holiday season.

Thank you to the businesses and organizations that volunteered, collected food, and donated in benefit of the food bank.



## SUPPORT THE CAUSE: CAUSE MARKETING OPPORTUNITIES

There are many great ways to support our mission of feeding the hungry thanks to the many community and business partnerships the food bank enjoys.

You can help us out by participating in one of these great current campaigns benefiting your South Texas Food Bank:



Coming April 2022

## Planting Awareness

Spring is coming and we are getting ready to kickstart our community garden once again. We will be looking for volunteers in the month of March to help us with flower bed repair and maintenance, soil preparation, and plant herbs and vegetables. The goal of our garden is to promote gardening as a healthy and sustainable eating option.

If you would like to sign-up to volunteer or make an in-kind donation for the garden, please contact the Marketing Department at [marketing@southtexasfoodbank.org](mailto:marketing@southtexasfoodbank.org); or, visit our website for more information.

## Our Funding

The South Texas Food Bank is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization headquartered in Laredo, Webb County, Texas, and serves eight counties in South Texas: Val Verde, Kinney, Maverick, Dimmit, Webb, Zapata, Jim Hogg, and Starr. The food bank's produce donations, resources, income and revenue sources come through diverse partnerships and collaborations. We also apply for and receive foundation grants and pursue diverse community fundraising opportunities.

For more information on how you can join the fight against hunger, contact STFB Executive Director Alma Boubel at (956) 726-3120 or at: [aboubel@southtexasfoodbank.org](mailto:aboubel@southtexasfoodbank.org)