

# AROUND OUR TABLE

A Biannual Newsletter from Food Bank of West Central Texas



2024 FALL NEWSLETTER

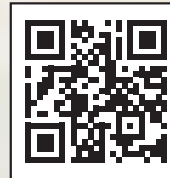
FBWCT.ORG




## TAKE ACTION FOR HUNGER



September is Hunger Action Month — a month where we stand together, with Feeding America and our nationwide network of member Food Banks, to fight hunger in our own communities; a month to spread the message about the issue of hunger, take action, and dedicate ourselves to providing nutritious food to individuals, families, seniors, and veterans struggling with hunger.



Join us by volunteering and taking selfies of your time at Food Bank of West Central Texas. Use the hashtag #HungerActionMonth on social media and donate on our website at [fbwct.org](http://fbwct.org).

**Hunger Action Month**® |  FEEDING AMERICA





## OUR MISSION

Fighting Hunger, Feeding Hope.

## OUR VISION

Working together to eliminate hunger in West Central Texas.

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# HARVEST TIME

Dear Food Bank Friends,

What an incredible time of year. For us, food is especially at the forefront. It's harvest season, kids are back in school participating in school meal programs and going home with our backpacks full of food, and September is Hunger Action Month.



I am reminded of a poem called 'Harvest Time Is Here Again' by Anita Killick, celebrating this special time of year.

*Harvest time is here again.  
Cut the corn and sift the grain.  
Pick the apples on the trees  
In the chilly autumn breeze.  
Dig the carrots, parsnips, too.  
Lots to eat for me and you.*



"Lots to eat for me and you," but unfortunately, not everyone can purchase or access the foods they need. According to Feeding America's latest Map the Meal Gap research, **1 in 6 people, or 52,660 individuals**, struggle with hunger in our 13-county service area. **This is up 20% over the previous year.** This number **includes 1 in 4 children, or a total of 16,390 children, up 29%.** With the high cost of groceries and living expenses, too many people in our community simply do not have enough money to cover the cost of their groceries.

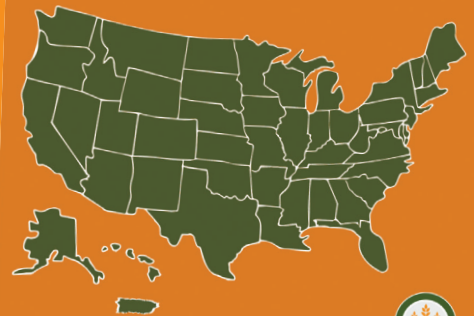
With harvest season upon us and Hunger Action Month taking place all September, let's remember our neighbors in need and share what we harvest. We can share our extra time, money, and food. On behalf of all those we serve, thank you for helping us take care of our neighbors in West Central Texas.

With gratitude,

Ronnie C. Kidd  
President/CEO

P.S. Can you share? A \$40 gift can provide 200 meals; a \$200 gift can provide 1000 meals. Thank you!

**Hunger exists in 100% of counties in the U.S.**



# COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: SWEETWATER HOUSE OF PEACE (SHOP), SWEETWATER, TX

A Q&A with Becky Acuna, Executive Director



**Q** Tell me about Sweetwater House of Peace.

**A** We are a Christian nonprofit. We primarily focus on feeding, clothes, and shelter. Years ago, a building was given to the church that I go to. So, we gathered and considered what we could do with it. We decided to “feed the kids.” Actually, that is what our summer programming was originally called ... ‘Feed the Kids.’ I was made Executive Director. Later, we changed the name to “Summer at the Shop.” It’s more dignified.

**Q** Tell me more about summer at the SHOP.



**A** In the summer, we do a free summer lunch program. It happens from Monday through Friday, from 11-1, for 9 weeks. All children, 18 and under, are welcome. We’ve set it up like a Vacation Bible School rotation. We eat, play, recreate, and do crafts. We serve anywhere between 90-120 kids a day at the beginning of summer when kids are still in summer school, but at the end of four weeks, we serve about 180 kids per day.

**Q** What else happens at SHOP to end hunger?

**A** We have a Backpack Program that is funded by Food Bank of West Central Texas. It was handed over to us about five years ago by a young lady who used to do it with her family. We serve 100-130 kids, which is a lot for our small town. All five schools in Sweetwater participate in the program. The kids are so excited when they get the backpacks. One family shared, “You have no idea how much these save our lives, how much it helps. We’re really grateful!”

We also have a food closet that is open once a week. We have a freezer, so we’re able to get meat, like ground beef. We like to keep our inventory consistent so people know what they are getting. People say, “I heard I can come here because you help people.” And even though the SHOP may not be able to supply their need, we find people who can.



**Q** Becky, why did you get involved in this work?

**A** I was a kid that benefited from summer programs in our town. We didn’t have a lot growing up. We were hungry. When I was an adult, I decided I didn’t want kids to be hungry. We have kids that have been in our program for nearly 10 years. And now they come and volunteer because they love what we do. The goal is for one of these young people who know this program to take over. One day, they will have the key, and they will be unlocking the door to serve.

**Q** Anything else for our readers to know?

**A** One of the best things we ever did was get involved with Food Bank of West Central Texas. One time, I walked into the Food Bank, and I told them I had a hard time keeping up. They asked how much food I needed and helped me on the spot. Everyone there is so nice. I just can’t even thank them enough.

# TAKE ACTION DURING HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Without the labor of love, time, and effort provided by our volunteers, Food Bank of West Central Texas could not accomplish its mission. Individual and group opportunities include:



## Warehouse Helpers

You can help us sort, organize, and repackage dry and canned goods for our Food Rescue Program, pack nutritional backpacks for our Backpack for Kids program, create senior boxes for our senior pantries, and help us with any warehouse food projects that arise. Volunteer shifts are Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

## Senior Pantry Volunteers

Volunteers are needed monthly for The Rose Park Senior Pantry. It is held every 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 2625 S. 7<sup>th</sup> St. from 9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m. Volunteers will help carry grocery items for our seniors and provide other valuable assistance.



## Specialized Skills

If you have special interests like photography, carpentry, artistry, computers, or other hard-to-find skills, let us know! We can always find a unique way for you to contribute to Food Bank of West Central Texas.

**Take action today.  
Call the Food Bank  
at (325) 695-6311.**

# ABILENE GAVE BIG!

What a difference a day makes! **Over \$2.5M** was raised on May 7, 2024, during Abilene Gives, a 12-hour 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. **We were so grateful to receive \$36,350 from 90 donors.** Thank you!



# DIRT AND CONCRETE AND PROGRESS, OH MY!

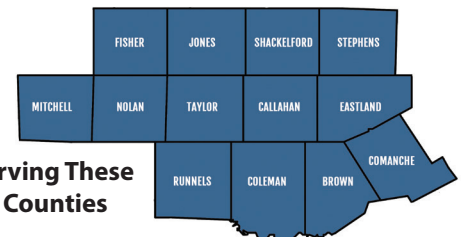
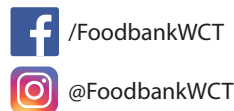
After a utility easement delay, our capital expansion is now rapidly progressing! Thank you to all who have supported it thus far. This 6000-square-foot addition will better serve our neighbors facing hunger with a Drive-Through Pantry. Our new Community Resource Center will support many areas of our work, including educating those facing hunger about additional resources and nutrition, as well as providing space to convene for our community partners and those we all serve. **This space is YOUR space should you need a place to gather.**



**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**