



FOOD BANK OF  
NORTH ALABAMA

SUMMER 2025

# HARVEST NEWS



## AGENCY HIGHLIGHT: 12 BUSHELS A GROWING SEASONS

Matt Ward was looking for ways for 12 Bushels, a food pantry and thrift store in Scottsboro, to provide more for the families they serve. All he had to do was dig deep and the idea came to him: **a garden**.



Ward recognized the growing need in their community for food assistance, and decided to start growing fresh produce like corn, tomatoes, beans, bell peppers, squash and zucchini to supplement the food they source from the Food Bank of North Alabama.

***"We had a good first year of growing last year,"*** Ward said. ***"It was definitely a growing season for us no pun intended. We learned a lot through***

***it. We had some success, but learned a lot and we're gearing up for a good year in 2025. We are applying what we learned and expanding our facilities. We were able to feed people out of it, but this year we're looking to do that again at a more efficient scale."***

Located in Jackson County, 12 Bushels operates out of The Well Scottsboro and has been an invaluable partner of the Food Bank for nearly a decade. Between October 2024 and February 2025, 12 Bushels distributed over 123,000 pounds of food -- over 100,000 meals -- from

the Food Bank of North Alabama.



Every Thursday, they extend a helping hand to their neighbors by distributing essential food boxes. They also

operate a thrift store, which helps provide affordable clothing and household items to the neighbors they serve as well as to the broader community.

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## AGENCY HIGHLIGHT: 12 BUSHELS A GROWING SEASONS

*continued*

*"It's a tight economy, so for people here thrifting it's not just a trend on Instagram,"* he said. *"These are still good things."*

Ward said The Well isn't only planning to grow and provide fresh produce to their community, but also to educate and empower. Matt and his team are determined to elevate their community's standard of living through education and sustainable practices. Ward said they don't treat people like just a number. They call them guests, not customers or clients.



*"There's more to it than giving food away,"* he said. *"We've always wanted to protect the integrity and dignity of people, treating people like, well, people and creating more of a community atmosphere,"* he said. *"You know there's a reason they're hungry, and we can get to a deeper level by simply loving on people and meeting them where they are."*

The Well welcomes volunteers, donors and shoppers at their thrift store, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., Mon. through Sat. They also accept volunteers for their food distributions as well, on Thursdays at 5 p.m.



# PARTNER AGENCY COUNCIL



Pictured from left: Food Bank CEO Shirley Schofield, Renata Drake from Trinity SDA in Limestone County, FBNA Agency Relations Manager Amanda Carter, Jonathan Creekmore from The Link in Cullman County, Richard Robins from Arab Christian Center in Marshall County, FBNA Agency Relations Coordinator Kelly Nicholas, Betty Bellomy of Jacob's Well in Jackson County, Cassandra Boone of Madison County 310 Board from Madison County and FBNA COO Joshua Matthews. Not pictured is Kimberly Jackson of Crossroads Community Outreach from Lauderdale County.

The Food Bank of North Alabama is excited to announce their new Partner Advisory Council, which had their first meeting Feb 28, 2025. The council will feature representatives from Food Bank partners, and the first members of this new council are pulled from Food Bank agencies -- the food pantries, residential homes and other groups that source food from the Food Bank of North Alabama.

Currently there are agency partners from six counties represented on the council, but Amanda Carter, Agency Relations Manager at the Food Bank, said the goal is to have partners from all 11 of the Food Bank's counties represented. She added that the Food Bank eventually wants to expand the council to include a wider variety of FBNA partners, like store donation partners or healthcare partners.

***"We cover these 11 counties and while we like to think we know these counties well, no one***

***knows them better than the people that live, work and raise their families in those areas,"*** Carter said. ***"They know the need; they know the neighbors they serve on a personal level. If there's a disaster in their area, they will be our first go-to to evaluate the damage and how it impacted their community and what help they need."***

A wide range of groups are also already represented on the council, with large food pantries, small food pantries, residential programs, USDA-certified groups and both urban and rural partners. Some of the pantries also provide a broader range of services beyond just the food they source from FBNA.

The inaugural meeting went well, Carter said. And the council will continue to meet every other month to give feedback, discuss issues and help plan agency events.

***"They'll be our sounding board when we need to implement changes,"*** she said. ***"They'll be the voice that says what info they need or how they feel about a project and how it impacts what they do in their community."***

Carter added ***"I think that we have a really intelligent and empathetic group of people that we are now able to run ideas by and get honest feedback on our process to make us more efficient and better at what we do. It takes a huge team of people to feed 11 counties and now we have the ability to hear from people who are on the frontlines of those pantries. I think only positive things can come out of it. There's a lot of times when I want to implement something and hearing their take on it can change how we want to."***

## CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

If you or your organization are interested in volunteering with the Food Bank of North Alabama, please visit <https://www.foodbanknorthal.org/get-involved/volunteer/> or reach out to **Christi Garris, Food Bank Volunteer Coordinator** at [cgarris@fbofn.org](mailto:cgarris@fbofn.org).



# DONOR SPOTLIGHT: EMILY PROPST REINEY LEGACY SOCIETY

Love comes in many forms. Often for families, love is shown through cooking and eating together.

That was always the case for Emily Reiney and the Propst family when she was growing up. She remembers warm, hearty dishes and a sense of togetherness.



*whether you were family or not, by the end of the meal, you became family. These meals are less about the food itself and more about the experience of gathering together, sharing stories, and enjoying each other's company. It's these moments that remind me how powerful food can be in creating memories and strengthening bonds."*

Reiney, who directs her family's charitable giving through the Propst Foundation, naturally looks to food when she thinks about how to care for Huntsville and North Alabama.

The Propst Foundation proudly supports the Food Bank of North Alabama, Reiney said, because they believe that feeding people is one of the most fundamental ways to nurture and uplift our community in addition to honoring her late father.

*"Putting food on someone's table was more than just providing a meal – it was offering comfort, hope, and a sense of security. He saw hunger as something that no one should endure, especially in a community where people have the ability to help each other. For him, fighting food insecurity was about ensuring that everyone had the opportunity to live a dignified life, and he instilled that value in our family from an early age."*

*"Our father's vision was clear: Putting food on someone's table is a profound blessing,"* Reiney said. *"For us, mealtime represents more than just sustenance – it's a cherished opportunity for family connection and togetherness. We are committed to ensuring that no child has to face the hardship of an empty belly, as we know that nourishment is essential for learning, working, and thriving. Serving our community through this partnership is a privilege we hold dear, and we are honored to play a role in fostering a well-fed, connected, and resilient North Alabama."*



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Counties served: Colbert, Cullman, DeKalb, Franklin, Jackson, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Limestone, Madison, Marshall, Morgan. The Food Bank of North Alabama is an equal opportunity provider & employer.

Donate today and help us feed the hungry today and create solutions that will end hunger tomorrow! Give using the enclosed reply slip or by visiting [www.foodbanknorthal.org/give](http://www.foodbanknorthal.org/give).