



Volunteer Vibes

NEWSLETTER OF THE HARRY CHAPIN FOOD BANK



"To know is to care, to care is to act, to act is to make a difference."

Harry Chapin

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Well, here it is! The first issue of our own volunteer newsletter, the **Volunteer Vibes**! And it's brought to you by: you guessed it, Volunteers of the Southwest Florida Harry Chapin Food Bank! In this publication we'll share what's going on, upcoming events, and fun facts about each other. I'm so excited to be a part of this organization and newsletter!



Hi! My name is Suellen Selby, and I'm a volunteer just like you. You might say I'm a permanent snowbird because I don't like being cold, and I've always wanted to live in Florida. Last year in November the timing was right, so I moved here with my husband and our cat. Being new to the area, I didn't know anyone or my way around. Volunteering and giving back to my new community would be a good way to help others, learn my way around, and meet people. After seeing a Harry Chapin Food Bank truck, I knew exactly where I wanted to volunteer. I love Harry Chapin's music and I believe in what he stood for, so volunteering at the Harry Chapin Food Bank is a perfect fit for me. Since joining, I've helped in the warehouse by sorting and packing food, stocking the food bank shelves, packing produce (peppers, tomatoes, squash, & 2000 lbs of potatoes!), sorting frozen meat, and packing bread. I also got to help at a food drive, a golf outing, the hunger summit, and at a post office for the postal food drive. I'm a member of the Harry Chapin Food Bank Volunteer Action Committee. (Stay tuned, we'll tell you about that in the next newsletter). Since volunteering my time, not only am I meeting a lot of great people, but I get a great feeling knowing that we're helping a lot of people.

Maps of Member Agencies Aid in Informing the Public

The recent addition of six large maps of the Harry Chapin Food Bank service region has provided a valuable resource for workers and visitors alike. Now hanging in two conference rooms, the main foyer area, and three staff workers' offices are large 36" x 40" maps of the five counties served by our food bank. Each map has color-coded pins showing all locations of the 175 member agencies that receive food from the Harry Chapin Food Bank. The different colors are used to represent food pantries, soup kitchens, residential facilities, youth facilities, and group homes.

Several people helped make these maps a reality. First, volunteer Janet Marderness stopped by **Creative Photos** on College Parkway and spoke with the owner, **David Witt**, who was more than willing to help with the project. Using Photoshop software and a regular map of Florida, he created large images of the five-county area. His time and materials, along with his talent, created just what we needed. Thank you David!

The work of placing all of the 175 pins in their proper locations was a major undertaking. Friend of the food bank, **Melissa Beck**, used her GPS software to assist in locating the pins on the first map. Thank you Melissa! The other maps required volunteers Suellen Selby and Nancy Armocida to assist Janet Marderness in replicating the locations from the first map. It was tedious and time consuming, but well worth the effort.

Today, visitors taking a tour of the food bank have a visualization of the extensive contribution made by the food bank as well as a realization of just how many hungry people are in need of food bank services.

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Food Drives

Cape Coral Farmers Market Food Drive

On April 9th, Linda Weiner, Nancy Armocida, & Suellen Selby set up a food drive table at the **Cape Coral Farmers Market**. There we greeted the shoppers with a smile and provided information about the Harry Chapin Food Bank.



We were well-received by the crowd and collected 47 pounds of food along with \$128 in cash. And since every dollar received supplies \$6 worth of food, that equates to \$768. It was a good day for Harry Chapin Food Bank and we would like to thank **Claudia St Onge** and the Cape Coral Farmers Market for allowing us to solicit donations at the event. Thank you to all who donated or stopped by our table to learn more about this awesome organization!



Naples Snowbird Food Drive

In April, Marykate O’Connell, Marketing Manager for **Two Men and a Truck®**, coordinated a food drive to benefit the Harry Chapin Food Bank. The Fort Myers/Naples Two Men and a Truck partnered with the **North Naples Fire District** for the first annual “Snowbird Food Drive”. The timing was perfect for collecting non-perishable items from “snowbirds” preparing to head back north, so collection boxes were placed at the seven North Naples fire stations as well as at **The Quarry** and **Lely Resort**. Two Men and a Truck used their trucks and manpower to pick up the collection boxes and deliver the food items to Harry



Chapin Food Bank in Fort Myers. A big thank you goes out to Two Men and a Truck, **Chief Orly Stolts** and the North Naples Fire District, **Melissa Speach** and **Kim Davis** from Lely Resort, and **Andrew Dailidonis** and **Patrick Shean** at The Quarry for donating their time and resources. And thank you to all who donated food. Over 1000 pounds of food items were collected from your generous donations!

Here’s what they said.....

It was a typical morning at the Harry Chapin Food Bank warehouse. On Thursday, July 14th a group of volunteers gathered in the break room a little before 9:00 a.m. waiting for Jen Pelletier, Volunteer Supervisor, to provide work assignments and training. It was meat day. Jen lead us to the room where 2 large bins of frozen meat and meat products waited to be prepared for distribution to our member agencies who receive food from Harry Chapin. The frozen meat and meat products were sorted, packed in boxes, weighed, then taken back to the freezer. After about an hour and a half of sorting, packing, and weighing, we went back to the break room for a short break. That’s when we started talking about why we do this, and here’s what was said:

Break time is over and it’s back to the meat! We finished the day at 4:00 pm after sorting and packing 14 bins which totaled 8,225 lbs of frozen meat.



“I’m here for school, but I enjoy it!”

“It helps the communities here, especially in this economy.”

“It needs to be done and it keeps costs down.”

“I do this once a week, why not?”

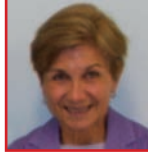
“It makes me feel good that I’m helping others.”

“I’m with Charter School and we have to volunteer 20 hours for community service per year. It’s fun!”

VOLUNTEER VIEWPOINT

Interviewee:

Janet Marderness, South Fort Myers



Q: When did you start to volunteer with Harry Chapin?

A: In 2002, shortly after I retired from teaching at Fort Myers High School.

Q: Why did you choose the food bank for your volunteering?

A: I have always been a fan of Harry Chapin's music, but I admired him even more for his stand against world hunger. He always donated a large percentage of his concert and album revenues to hunger relief. It is such a basic human right, freedom from hunger, that I consider working at the food bank as one of the most important contributions that can be made to our fellow human beings.

Q: Have you had positive experiences as a volunteer here at Harry Chapin food bank?

A: Absolutely! People are friendly and we seem to have a spirit of camaraderie, since we are all working toward a common goal: helping to get food to those in need. I always feel good when leaving the food bank, knowing that the cause of hunger relief is so important, especially in today's economy when so many people are facing hard times.

Q: Have you seen many changes over the years you have volunteered at Harry Chapin food bank?

A: When I first volunteered, the food bank was located on Alicia Street, near the corner of Fowler Street and Martin Luther King Blvd. The building was small and old, and in desperate need of repairs. Sorting in that environment was a real challenge! The current building is so much bigger and nicer. It is great to see how the operation has grown and changed. And the community and business support is outstanding. The amount of contributions in all areas: food, volunteers, and financial donations have increased dramatically over the years as a response to the increasing need in our community.

Q: What do you see for your future involvement with the food bank?

A: As long as I am physically able, I want to be involved in some way. Right now I help with office work when needed, and I am a member of the newly formed Volunteer Action Committee (VAC), chaired by Bedzaida Bryen. The main goal of VAC is to expand the roles of Harry Chapin Volunteers. That will include expanding existing volunteer programs and creating new ones. It is an exciting adventure to be a part of this process!

(Each issue of this newsletter will feature an interview with one of the many volunteers at the Harry Chapin food bank. If you would like to be interviewed or submit an article for our next issue, please contact Suellen Selby or Marykate O'Connell at HCFB.volunteer@gmail.com)

Landscaping/Beautification



Thank You to **The Home Depot** and **Amy Kolb**, from their plant department, for their generous donations of flowers, plants, and mulch. The front of the Harry Chapin Food Bank located at 3760 Fowler Street in Fort Myers now has a brighter look.



In March, Bedzaida Bryen, Carol Bass, and Suellen Selby planted Vinca flowers, golden dew drop bushes, and Coco Plums. Then mulch was added around the plants for a finishing touch.



Also, a big thank you goes to all the students from **New Hope Presbyterian Church** who volunteered their time to help. They raked, swept, and bagged the leaves and trash from the area beside the parking lot. That was an enormous task and they did a fantastic job!



Grandezza Country Club Golf Classic

On May 18th, the Harry Chapin Food Bank hosted its inaugural golf classic at the Grandezza Country Club in Estero. There's a lot involved in a golf outing like this!



Not only was a round of golf played by more than 100 golfers, but there was a silent and live auction at the event.

These activities created a lot of jobs that were filled by 10 volunteers.

Our volunteers set up and worked 3 registration tables where they greeted and checked-in golfers, handed out goodie bags, and sold mulligans. There were volunteers that set up and worked 3 beverage/snack stations along the course. Volunteers also set up the silent auction tables, monitored the bid sheets, monitored the bidders at the live auction, and closed the silent auction. At the end of the day, they took down all set ups and loaded the van. It was a lot of work on a hot day, but what a great way to help out! Thank you to **Grandezza Country Club**, the corporate and private sponsors, and the golfers for making our first golf classic a huge success.

2011 Hunger Summit

The 4th annual Hunger Summit and Agency Conference was held April 29th at **Hodges University**. This conference, hosted by the Harry Chapin Food Bank, was attended by representatives of our partner agencies, but 10 volunteers played a big part in keeping the day going. Volunteers greeted and registered participants, provided name tags and handouts, and directed them to the various presentations and workshops. They set up breakfast and lunch tables and cleaned up after each meal. Volunteers also assisted the workshop presenters with sign-up sheets, handouts, and timekeeping. At the end of the day they helped hand out prizes and cleaned up the meeting rooms.

Other Volunteer Activities

There are a lot of opportunities to help out at the Harry Chapin Food Bank in addition to assisting in the Warehouse. These are just a few examples where volunteers provided the help needed to make the events happen. If you want to do more, please let Bedzaida Bryen know.

Volunteer Appreciation Week



On behalf of all the volunteers who participated in the Volunteer Appreciation Week celebration, we thank the Board of Directors and staff of the Harry Chapin Food Bank. On March 28th through March 31st we were treated to delicious lunches consisting of sandwiches from deli meats and cheeses, fresh vegetable and fruit trays, chips, cookies, and soft drinks.

After lunch we enjoyed a presentation by Executive Director **Al Brislain** and Treasurer **Sandy Robinson** and an informative food bank video produced by **VISTA**



Volunteer, Ben Walther. Then we were entertained with a movie filmed on location at the food bank. This movie, also produced by Ben, was a food bank news program with our very own news anchor, Bedzaida Bryen and reporters



Jen Pelletier and Marta Hodson, interviewing employees of the food bank. Ben and all of the Harry Chapin Food Bank actors did an awesome job. Before the day was over, there was a drawing for prizes and everyone got a T-shirt and water bottle. What a great week! This was a wonderful way to let the volunteers know they are truly appreciated for all the time and help they provide to the Food Bank.

Upcoming Events!

Mobile Pantry – We are always looking for volunteers! Aug. 18, 30, Sept. 1, 8, 15, 21, 22, 28 & 29th. Please contact us for times and places.

Fill our Fleets Feed our Hungry - September 18. We need volunteers help us to unload the food and load it into bins.

Walk for the WAY - September 24. Join us in walking in support of the United Way!