We had an abundance of accomplishments to celebrate at God’s Pantry Food Bank during 2015 and selecting only 10 was difficult. Thank you for helping us achieve the following:

1. Celebrated 60th Anniversary of feeding families in Central Kentucky and beyond – we started as a small pantry serving Fayette County and have grown to become the largest food bank in the state, serving 50 counties of Central and Eastern Kentucky.

2. Opened Morehead Regional Distribution Center

3. Celebrated a successful close to the Come to the Table campaign and our expansion initiatives – the five-year campaign allowed us to increase refrigeration more than 5-fold, add new regional distribution centers in London and Morehead, open a second warehouse in Winchester, create dedicated volunteer and community space in our Lexington facility, and put our first tractor-trailer on the road (now we have two).

4. Prestigious AIB food safety certification achieved in all 5 warehouses

5. Distributed a record 23 million meals – Those meals do more than just fill tummies – they provide hope, lessen worry, and illustrate humanity.

6. Launched first school pantries at Bryan Station High School and Leestown Middle School in Lexington – It is unfortunate how many children in our state suffer from food insecurity, but being able to provide food as close as their own school is a wonderful way to feed entire families.

7. Record store donation pounds received: nearly 6 million pounds from Walmart, Kroger, and other retail food outlets

8. In 73 days, provided more than 23,000 meals and snacks for kids in summer feeding programs in 10 counties – You’ve heard it before – when school is out kids who rely on free and reduced school meals often have to go without. We’re trying to change that statistic by partnering with the Kentucky Department of Education to offer meals and snacks at neighborhood sites throughout the entire summer, ensuring that kids don’t go hungry during the summer break.

9. Served 9,600 seniors through CSFP program – this USDA program provides supplemental food to enrolled seniors each month.

10. Fayette County public and private school students provide 64,000 pounds of food. It was another successful year for the Kids Can Hunger Food Drive providing food for the Lexington pantries.

Take the Pledge!

Join people all over the country and volunteer! It doesn’t take a big commitment to make a big impact. Together, with millions of other volunteers, your time adds up and helps God’s Pantry Food Bank serve more than 200,000 fellow Kentuckians. Take the pledge online today, then pick a local volunteer opportunity below.

Ways to Volunteer:

Lexington Warehouse: Join us for one or multiple warehouse shifts at our Lexington Warehouse. We have sessions available on Thursdays from 5-9pm and Saturdays from 9am-12pm and 1-4pm. Click here to check availability and sign up or call Lara Wheeler at (859) 288-5323.

Central Intake: Volunteers are needed on our Central Intake phone lines to take referrals from organizations or clients for our Fayette County Pantries. You can choose one shift or multiple shifts Monday-Friday 9-12pm and 1-3pm. Please e-mail Mary Alice Daniels if you are interested at mary@godspantry.org or call at (859) 288-5319.

Fayette County Food Pantries: Our Food Bank operates four pantries in Fayette County. We are in need of volunteers to staff each location daily. Please e-mail Mary Alice Daniels if you are interested at mary@godspantry.org or call at (859) 288-5319.
Pantry Goes to School

Last semester, GPFB teamed up with UK Dietetics and Nutrition students to lead a series of cooking classes at Bryan Station High School, bringing a set of simple and healthful recipes to students and families accessing the school’s Defenders’ Pantry. These classes will continue in 2016 at BSHS, and will soon commence at Leestown Middle School, the site of the Food Bank’s second school pantry.

The classes often attract siblings and even parents, making cooking dinner after school a family affair, and recipes use ingredients commonly available in the school pantry so that students can easily replicate the dishes at home. Students in need at these two Fayette County schools are able to visit the pantry monthly.

Unlike the Backpack Program, which provides shelf stable, easy to prepare meals and snacks for younger children to take home for the weekend, the pantry provides groceries intended to last about a week. This is done with the understanding that many teenagers are beginning to cook for themselves and their families and that their nutritional needs differ from those of elementary school children. The total number of children in the household is considered when determining the amount of food a student will receive.

The pantries at BSHS and LMS are student choice, meaning that the students have a significant amount of say in the food they select to bring home for themselves and their families. Shopping cards indicate the number of items to select from each food group, and the pantries are stocked with a variety of options designed to encourage students to make healthy choices. Grains, canned fruits and vegetables, eggs, milk, bread, fresh produce, and frozen meats are continuously stocked in the school pantries, along with other items as they’re available.

Becoming a Hero for the Hungry is easy!
Join the monthly giving program and be a Hero for the Hungry!

Hunger doesn’t happen seasonally or discriminate. By joining our monthly donor program you will be providing ongoing support for Kentucky families in need! During 2015 the monthly donor program provided more than 900,000 meals to hungry neighbors in our communities. A commitment of just $25/month means you could provide more than 2,400 meals in one year. It’s easy to sign up as a monthly donor; visit give.godspantry.org/monthly.hero or contact Amanda Black at 859-288-5335.

A Legal Affair

Each Fall, as we start talking about our Sharing Thanksgiving program, the Young Lawyers Division of the Fayette County Bar Association starts talking about how many families they want to sponsor. They then issue a challenge to all their colleagues in the area to raise funds from their respective firms and legal entities. Because of the dedication of this group, more than $140,000 has been given in the past 10 years through this drive; that’s more than 3,500 Thanksgiving meals they have provided for Fayette County families. Thank you to everyone in the Fayette County legal community, especially the members of the Young Lawyers Division for faithfully heading up this drive each year!
2016 Events: Mark Your Calendar

Taste of the Bluegrass presented by Columbia Gas of Kentucky & Quantrell Auto Group: May 20, 2016, 7:00 pm-11:00pm - Early Bird Tickets on Sale Now!
Golf Fore the Hungry Dinner: August 21, 2016, 6pm - 9pm
Golf Fore the Hungry Scramble: August 22, 2016 1pm-6pm
Taste of Southeast KY: October 2016, 6pm - 9pm; London Community Center
Chili Wars: November 2016, 5pm-7:30pm; Morehead Conference Center
Basket Brigade: November 12, 2016, 8am - 4:30pm

Want to become a sponsor? Call Susie Basham for more information 859-288-5332.

Tasting Care of ALL Our Neighbors

There is a group of families in Lexington who have set an incredible example for showing how to take care of our neighbors. Several families from the Firebrook Neighborhood issued The Firebrook Challenge during the most recent GoodGiving Guide Challenge. This challenge matched the first $15,000 given dollar for dollar. By pooling their gifts to create this challenge they doubled their impact, and ultimately helped to provide 240,000 meals for struggling Kentuckians! Thank you friends in the Firebrook Neighborhood and thank you to those who accepted their challenge!

See Your Food Bank in Action

In one hour, see how God’s Pantry Food Bank turns every $10 given into 80 meals.

Join us for “Food for Thought” lunch, talk and tour from Noon to 1pm: February 11 or March 10 (Monthly, on second Thursdays).

You and your guests are welcome! Call or email at least two days in advance for your reservation. 859.288.5322 or alice@godspantry.org.

Great Gifts

Many of our critical programs rely on gifts to operate. The following organizations donated $5,000 or more to God’s Pantry Food Bank between July 1 and December 31, 2015. If you know someone affiliated with these groups, please thank them for supporting the Food Bank, and if you are involved personally, our thanks to you!

Amazon.com
BMS Matching Gift Program
Copia Foundation, Inc.
Dr. Scholl Foundation
Emergency Food and Shelter Program
Glenn Auto Mall
Grainger Foundation
Hoskins Family Foundation
Kellogg Company
Kroger Corporation
LFUCG
Mitchell Family Foundation
Norfolk Southern Foundation
Quantrell Auto Group, Inc.
Red Nose Day Fund
Rent-A-Center
Spray Foundation
The King’s Daughters & Sons Foundation of KY, Inc.
The Orphan Society of Lexington
The TJX Foundation
Walmart
William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust

Pantries Get IT Upgrade

The Fayette County Pantry Program has been assisting residents in need of emergency food since 1955. Starting January 1, 2016, we updated the referral system we have been using for 20-plus-years, which allows us to collect more accurate data. The more we know about who we are serving, the better we are able to serve. A regular volunteer who worked in the old system mobilized a group of donors to fund the new referral system.
Thank God You’re Here

He was 10, and had come from soccer practice to the Food Bank’s pantry at St. Luke United Methodist Church. The social worker with him handed the registration volunteer a copy of two ID’s. “His parents aren’t able to make it tonight,” she explained. “I’m going to help him ‘shop.’” I was volunteering to guide clients through the pantry, set up like a small grocery, pointing out items for his family of five other members.

Soon his cart was brimming full with vegetables, cereal, fruit, bread and other family favorites. At the freezers, we pulled out a large tray of chicken breasts and a pork roast, and the social worker turned away from the scene. As the items were loaded in the boy’s cart, she faced me. I saw tears in her eyes that she didn’t want the boy to see. Finally she whispered to me, “Thank God you’re here. You don’t know what this means to this family.” She regained her composure and loaded her young friend’s groceries in her car.

That social worker wasn’t just thankful for me. Hundreds of volunteers serve in our four Lexington pantries every week. Others take daily referrals for families at the Food Bank’s headquarters. Thousands of others sort donated food in the warehouse. Then there are the grocery stores, companies, and individual donors who provide funds and food to fill clients’ shopping carts, as well as churches and community centers that provide the space. At the Food Bank, office workers, warehouse workers and truck drivers are on the job continuously making more food available. Thousands of kind acts make it possible for this boy’s family and 2,000 more Lexington families just like his to put food on the table each month. On behalf of this one boy, I pass along the social worker’s words...Thank God you’re here.... Together we can solve hunger.

To read more stories from families we serve, follow our Food Bank on Facebook, Twitter, You Tube and Instagram @GPFoodBank.