



# THE BIG SCOOP

## Newsletter

Winter 2023

Together we earned Gold!



Leah's Pantry  
Nutritional Pantry Program



Anne Costa, Honor Health Desert Mission Community Resource Manager; Robin Kilbane, Foothills Food Bank Client and Resource Manager; Brooke Summers, Honor Health Nutrition Outreach Coordinator; Michelle Reyes, Foothills Food Bank Operations and Donor Relations Manager; and Lauren Cobb, Foothills Food Bank Community Engagement Manager celebrated the gold certification.

## Food Bank Recognized for Excellence

Balloons and streamers filled the air as volunteers, staff and special guests of the Foothills Food Bank celebrated becoming Arizona's first food bank to earn gold certification from Leah's Pantry.

"Gold certification means we have met the highest standard for support, systems, and environmental changes at our pantries," said Lauren Cobb, Community Engagement Manager. "We have morphed into a much more client-centered, healthy-focused food bank for our neighbors." Changes will help deliver dignity-based, trauma-informed, and client-centered food assistance services.

"Our goal through this process was to boost nutritional offerings while also building a program that is less transactional and more client-centric," Cobb explained. Local support on earning gold status came from partners at Honor Health Desert Mission Food Bank.

According to Executive Director Leigh Zydonik, "we have always believed that access to nutritious food is foundational to health and wellness, both mentally

and physically. We care for the whole person and want everyone to feel welcomed and respected while we support their journey to independence.

"Our goal is to nourish our community and we have demonstrated our commitment by taking extra steps to become a healthy and equitable food distribution organization," Leigh concluded.

**To learn more about Leah's Pantry, find them at [leahspantry.org](http://leahspantry.org).**



Volunteers Abe and Linda McCabe enjoy the gold celebration.



## A Note from Leigh

I stopped by a local cafe recently and noticed a poster that read “even in the chaos of everyday life, moments of gratitude remind us to hold on to the good things.” As we kick off 2023, I want to share my gratitude and the good things we hold on to here at the food bank and beyond.

I am grateful for the volunteers who give of their time and ask for nothing in return. Without the kindness and commitment of these wonderful people, we could not do what we do.

I am grateful for a community that never lets us down, and showers us with their generosity. Day in and day out, you step up and donate your time, goods and funds to help our neighbors.

I am grateful for our supporters and donors who keep the lights on and our trucks on the road. They also helped fill a lot of Christmas stockings last month!

I am grateful for our staff whose tireless efforts, compassion and empathy are demonstrated every day.

And for our families who hold us up and watch our backs, I am grateful.

Thank you all for your part in helping Foothills Food Bank serve thousands of men, women, and children in 2022. Every day, you make our mission to provide food, services, and programs for families possible.

Wishing you less chaos and much gratitude in the new year.

*Leigh Zydonik*

Executive Director

P.S. Arizona Charitable Tax credits up to \$800 are still available for 2022. Please keep us in mind. Our AZ qualifying tax credit number: 20514



## Small but Powerful Team

### Volunteer Spotlight

Here at the food bank, we are very grateful for our volunteers and the work they do. One group that is sometimes overlooked is our Black Canyon City team who keep the pantry running like a well-oiled machine.

“Our neighbors in Black Canyon City are blessed to have a small but powerful team who make the pantry a welcoming place to visit,” Leigh Zydonik, executive director, said. “George, Karen, Del and Jaqie are the lifeblood of our operation at the pantry and I’m so happy to have them in our volunteer family.”

George and Karen have been volunteering at the food bank for five years, sharing their grocery and merchandising skills from their professional careers. George works in the warehouse stocking shelves and packing while Karen helps keep the clothing closet and pop-up library organized.

“We are happy to be a part of a hardworking, caring team who enjoy giving back,” George said. “We love to volunteer and we feel comfortable volunteering so close to home and not having to commute.”

Joining George and Karen every week are Del and Jaqie who have been volunteering for at least four years. “We saw the need when working with the Salvation Army and love working with a caring, thoughtful team who are willing to help others and are always smiling!

Del and Jaqie enjoy spending time with family traveling, playing pickleball and other activities while George and Karen enjoy time in their garden, watching nature, sports and travel.

*Photo: Representing Black Canyon City are (left to right) George, Karen, Jaqie and Del.*

## GuideStar Recognizes Food Bank with Gold

Our organization has earned a 2023 Gold Seal of Transparency with GuideStar! GuideStar lists, and ranks, information on every nonprofit registered with the IRS as tax exempt. Now, you can support our work with trust and confidence by viewing our nonprofit profile at [Guidestar.org](https://www.guidestar.org).





# Foothills Food Bank & Friends Spread Holiday Cheer

A village of volunteers and generous donors helped brighten the holidays for children, families, and seniors at the Foothills Food Bank & Resource Center's twentieth annual holiday gift program. More than 1,140 neighbors received new toys, blankets, books, special snack bags and other special gifts.

The food bank hosted holiday carnivals in Black Canyon City and north Scottsdale for all invited families where they distributed gifts donated by community members. Children and adults enjoyed live music, games, balloon magic and a barbecue lunch. The celebration was topped off with a visit from Santa.

"I think the clients loved the walk-through party, adding a more personal touch. The gifts were amazing and both venues had a magical holiday spirit," said Leigh Zydonik, Foothills Food Bank executive director.

Books were donated by Kids Need to Read; first aid kits were donated by Me4kidsz; and Daisy Mountain Fire

Department donated an incredible number of toys collected at their toy drives.

A special thanks to Santa, AKA board member Joe McCabe, a host of local businesses, churches and organizations who supported the program as well as venue partners Holland Community Center and Canon Elementary School. Also pitching in were Harold's Corral; Anthem Community Council; Anthem Giving Circle; North Scottsdale Rotary Club, Anthem Rotary Club; Desert Hills Presbyterian Church; The Boulders Resort and Spa; the Young Marines; San Carlos Apache mission and several anonymous donors.

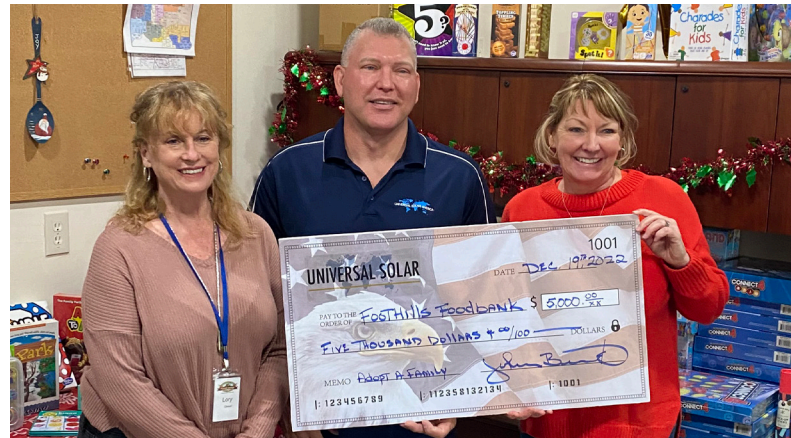
"We couldn't have done any of this without our amazing volunteer Adopt-a-Family organizers, Amy LeClair and Kim Sky and their team of elves, and our event sponsors Universal Solar, United Healthcare and LINQ," concluded Foothills Food Bank Community Outreach Manager, Lauren Cobb.

## Adopt-A-Family Donors Rocked 2022



### Desert Hills Presbyterian Church

Donated 600 holiday snack bags to the food bank for Adopt-a-Family. The gift bags were assembled by more than 35 members of the congregation, friends from the Navajo community of Leupp Presbyterian and local Cave Creek-based scouts and their families. We greatly appreciate their continued support in helping to spread joy this holiday season.



### The Importance of Helping Others

Universal Solar CEO and founder, John Bereckis Donated \$5,000 to sponsor the Adopt-a-Family program for a second year. He knows firsthand the importance of helping others and the impact that community agencies have on children and families. "It is only through giving that we can truly see the impact of change and the outcome of that help," John said. Thanks, John.

Accepting the donation from John are (left) Lory Olsson, board president and Leigh Zydonik, executive director.





## Firefighters to the Rescue

Members of the Daisy Mountain Fire Department collected thousands of new toys and financial donations for this year's Adopt-a-Family program. This was our first year as a beneficiary of their toy drive; however, the Firefighters Charities have been supporting local hospitals and community partners for more than 14 years.

Daisy Mountain Firefighters also attended the Adopt-A-Family holiday distribution parties to help children select toys. Money donated to the firefighter fill-the-boot will be used to fund Food Bank school lunch and snack pack programs. Toys were also shared with our partners Phoenix Impact Center, My Christian Fellowship, Canon School, San Carlos Apache Mission, and Ryan House.



## Carefree Kiwanis Club Foundation

Made a very generous donation again this year that helped provide holiday meals for neighbors during Thanksgiving and Christmas.

These generous community partners model the importance and impact of neighbors helping neighbors. Together we are fighting hunger, giving hope, and spreading holiday cheer.

## The Boulders – Rock Solid Support

For more than ten years, the Women's golf club at The Boulders has supported the Adopt-a-Family program, this year donating nearly \$19,000. The Boulders' Mulligans group has been a sponsor since the early 1990's and together, they donated \$46,000 this year.



## Volunteers, Donors Make Holiday Meal Program a Success

More than 1,100 holiday turkeys, hams and all the traditional side dish ingredients were packed by volunteers and donors at the Foothills Food Bank for neighbors who might not have otherwise enjoyed a holiday meal with family. Thanks to our donors and enthusiastic volunteers who packed and sorted the items into perfect holiday presentations.

Volunteers who packed meals included members of Anthem Giving Circle; Vibrant Vinnies from Our Lady of Joy Church; Affinity Sales Group and our very own, dedicated volunteer team.

Major donors who made the dinners possible included Kiwanis Club of Carefree; Andrew and Gail Cannella; Cross of Christ Lutheran Church (Anthem); Russ Lyons; Hercules Industries; Lori Laswick American Family Insurance; Kiewit Fan; and DW Plumbing and Heating.

*Photo: Holiday fixin' bags (donated by Lori Laswick American Family Insurance) were stuffed by the Annunciation Catholic School Vibrant Vinnies and Anthem Giving Circle volunteers. Together, they filled more than 600 bags. The Vinnies represent St. Gabriel Catholic Parish.*





## All Dressed Up

Tom Boharsik, owner of AZ Baby Boutique, recently retired and donated the inventory of his children's clothing store to the food bank. Two vans full of clothing which were shared with our neighbors; children at Desert Hills Lutheran Church; Hope Chest; Ryan House; Phoenix Children's Hospital; Cordes Lakes Community Association and San Carlos Indian Mission.

## A huge thank you to all of our holiday food drives!



## Empty Bowls Brings Awareness to World Hunger Day

The Foothills Food Bank and Resource Center, in conjunction with the Sonoran Arts League, celebrated the twenty-third annual Empty Bowls Big Hearts art auction and bowl sale held in the fall. Harold's Corral, our amazing community partner, once again hosted the event.

Funds raised will help support the mission of the Foothills Food Bank which is to provide food, referral information and financial assistance to individuals and families in need within our service area.

This year's event once again included handcrafted wooden bowls made by Arizona Woodturners Association as well as many local artisans.

Thanks to the community for their support, to those who purchased art and to our volunteers and community partners without whom the event would not be possible. Those partners include Harold's Corral; Tech 4 Life Computers & Websites; and Arizona Woodturners Association.

## WELCOME SHARON BYKERK

We are excited to welcome Sharon Bykerk, site coordinator, to the Foothills Food Bank and Resource Center team. Sharon is the new pantry coordinator, supporting the volunteers and staff at both our New River pantry and Black Canyon City pantry.

"I love working with the volunteers and providing much needed services to our community," Sharon said. "I have volunteered at other food banks, and organized one at our church, so this was a natural move for me. And I love it!"

Sharon is a native of Chicago but she and her husband, Ron, call Arizona home along with their six children and eight grandchildren.

Sharon shared that the favorite part of her day is the hug that follows a kind word or deed.





6038 E. Hidden Valley Drive  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331

ECRWSS  
Postal Customer



## HOURS & INFORMATION

### Cave Creek

6038 E. Hidden Valley Drive  
Cave Creek, AZ 85331  
(480) 488-1145

### Senior Market Day

Monday: 9am - Noon

### Food Sharing

Tuesday - Friday: 9:00am - Noon

Thursday: 5:30pm - 7:00pm

### Donation drop off hours

Monday - Friday: 8am - 2pm

### Black Canyon City

34550 S. Black Canyon Hwy  
Black Canyon City, AZ 85324  
(623) 374-9441

### Food Sharing & Social Cafe

Tues., Wed., Thurs: 9:00am - Noon

### New River Community Pantry

42425 N. New River Rd  
Phoenix, AZ 85086  
(623) 465-9461

### Food Sharing

Friday: 11:30am - 1:30pm

### Email:

Info@foothillsfoodbank.com

foothillsfoodbank.com

f /foothillsfoodbank

ig /foothillsfoodbank

### Leadership Team:

Julie Writz, Scheduler

Lauren Cobb, Comm. Engagement Mgr.

Leigh Zydonik, Executive Director

Lou Argyros, Fleet & Facilities Manager

Lynn Ballou, Data Analyst

Michelle Reyes, Operations Manager/  
Donor Relations

Mike Howington, Facilities Assoc.

Robin Kilbane, Client & Resource Mgr.

Tom Kilwein, Driver Scheduler

### Black Canyon City

Nancy Wiederhold, Warehouse Associate

### New River

Sharon Bykerk, Site Coordinator



Pictured are left to right, Michelle Reyes, Terry Dowd, Jacqueline Destramps, Libby Murphy and Janice Shimokubo.

## Giving Circle Donation Supports Seniors

100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun recently delivered a donation of more than \$18,000 to the Foothills Food Bank and Resource Center.

100 Women Who Care is a giving circle that brings a group of people with shared values together to collectively discuss and decide where to make a pooled gift.

"The Foothills Food Bank is truly grateful for the generous donations and support received from 100+ Woman Who Care," shared Leigh Zydonik.

## 2023 Charitable Donation Form

Your gift makes a huge difference in the lives of children, families, single people, veterans, and seniors experiencing food insecurity and financial difficulties. Your donation stays in our community and provides support to our neighbors.

**Foothills Food Bank is a 501(c)3 non-profit. Your donation is 100% tax deductible and may qualify for the Arizona Charitable Tax Credit. Our Charitable Tax Credit ID is 20514. You may also donate online at [foothillsfoodbank.com/donate](https://foothillsfoodbank.com/donate)**

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Donated \_\_\_\_\_ Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

(Please make check payable to **Foothills Food Bank.**)

**Or**

Please charge my VISA \_\_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_\_ Discover \_\_\_\_\_ American Express \_\_\_\_\_

Card number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiration Date \_\_\_\_\_ Security Code (3 digits on back of card) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please mail this form to: Foothills Food Bank, 6038 E. Hidden Valley E. Hidden Valley Drive, Cave Creek, AZ 85331**

## OUR MISSION

**The Foothills Food Bank and Resource Center provides food, referral information and financial assistance to individuals and families in need within our service area.**