

NO KID HUNGRY'S IMPACT IN 2021

One Hungry Kid is Too Many



VOICES FROM THE PANDEMIC

Kids have endured unprecedented challenges throughout this pandemic. But countless heroes across the country stood up to feed them at great risk to themselves and their families. These are school food service staff, bus drivers, community leaders, parents and caregivers and so many more.

As 2021 comes to a close, join us in hearing from the individuals putting kids first during and

beyond this pandemic. Your gifts have helped us partner with and support extraordinary leaders across the country through grants that buy critical equipment, guidance that launches meal programs, advocacy that cuts through red tape, and so much more to feed hungry kids.

This crisis is far from over, and it's going to take all of us to ensure that each and every child gets the food they need to thrive.

The Stories Have Kept Me Going

BETH BREWSTER

Supervisor of Food Services, Caroline County Public Schools, Maryland

At first, my cafeteria staff and I were thinking, “We can do anything for two weeks.” But then two weeks turned into months and then even more. We were first responders, really. We were just running on adrenaline.

We’re on Maryland’s Eastern Shore. It’s beautiful and very rural. But nearly half of the people here live below the poverty line. We have only a few grocery stores, making it hard for folks to get fresh food. So many kids rely on school, on us, for healthy meals.

You can imagine our concern when the pandemic hit. Schools closed, and a lot of our kids were suddenly home alone because their parents were working. And if they weren’t working, parents just didn’t have transportation to get out and find meals for them. Our kids and families were already living on the edge; now they were in serious trouble. We had to step up.

We found out on a Thursday that school was closing, and we were fully operational by Monday. We purchased four refrigerated trucks to store



and bring meals directly to the kids. We never, never stopped getting meals out. It's been exhausting, but the stories have kept me going.

A woman called one day. She had six kids, was a single mom and had lost her job. She said that if we weren't bringing her food, she didn't know how her children would eat. A boy from another family was taking the food and hiding it under his bed, because there just wasn't enough food in the house. He wanted to have it close.

It's heart wrenching, but this is why we do what we do. Our kids would have gone to bed hungry otherwise.

NO KID HUNGRY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A GREAT PARTNER, AND THEY STEPPED UP TO THE PLATE TOO. Instead of telling us what we needed to do, they listened to us and heard what we needed. They sent us a grant to cover thousands upon thousands of meal trays to get the food out through the depth of the crisis. With those trays, we were knocking on 2,000 doors three days a week, giving out 6,000 meals a day.

It's been a tough almost two years. And it's not over. We're in a recovery stage now, and our kids are still in a difficult spot. So much is unknown. I'm very proud of my lunch ladies, my team. Despite all the struggle, the crisis helped make us better. We have to continue to be resilient.



**NO KID HUNGRY HAS
SENT \$100 MILLION
IN GRANTS TO
SUPPORT LOCAL
COMMUNITIES SINCE
MARCH 2020.**



WE HELPED INCREASE
AVERAGE SNAP
BENEFITS FOR
FAMILIES BY MORE
THAN **21%** OVER PRE-
PANDEMIC LEVELS.

It's Been a Difficult, Traumatic Time

JOSÉ

Father, West Palm Beach, Florida

Our daughter Sophia is six years old. She's super outgoing, whip smart and just a happy kid. Of course, she can be picky when it comes to food. She loves the usual stuff like pizza and hamburgers, but she's getting better with what we cook at home.

My wife Liliana and I never had to worry about putting food on the table. Never needed or accepted help from anyone. We're living in paradise in sunny South Florida, you know? That all changed when the pandemic hit and we didn't know how we'd feed Sophia.

My wife lost her job as a substitute teacher. I work at a local school, helping new students and

families get settled. It doesn't pay much, but I love it. Thankfully, I was able to keep my job.

But suddenly, we had only enough money to cover the most basic expenses and just the minimum food we'd need to survive, all while Sophia and her appetite were home with us every day of the week. What's more, Liliana was pregnant. I had to find a second, part-time job at an auto parts store to make ends meet. We were really worried.

THEN, OUR SCHOOL STARTED OFFERING FREE, HEALTHY MEALS TO KIDS, AND THE GRANT FROM NO KID HUNGRY WAS A BIG HELP. Being able to pick up a daily breakfast and lunch for Sophia was



a huge relief, especially during the summer, when the school was on vacation and I had only my part-time job to rely on. I'm not sure what we would have done without those meals.

It's been a difficult, traumatic time for so many families, and ours is no exception. I'm working seven days a week between two jobs. Getting home to spend time with Sophia is difficult, but

I make the most of every minute with her. Her optimism is infectious. And Liliana gave birth to Sophia's beautiful baby brother, David!

We have so many blessings, and still, the future is unclear. We just have to keep trying and have faith in the kindness of others. We'll get through this together.



How Were We Going to Feed Them?

FAUSAT RAHMAN-DAVIES

Child Nutrition Lead
Rialto Unified School District, California

In Africa, where I come from, there's a saying: "Umbutu," which means, "I am because of we." I don't do anything on my own, and neither do you. Everything takes a village. Feeding kids is that way.

I moved to Rialto from Nigeria more than 30 years ago. I love it. There's a real community here of hardworking people supporting each other. Rialto is my village. And we have our challenges.

Our school district is made up of 29 schools serving 25,000 students. When I first started, I was shocked that many of my kids were living with hunger. I thought, "I can't actually believe this is happening in America. It can't be real."

I know what hunger feels like, and I couldn't let my students experience it. I partnered with No Kid Hungry to serve breakfast after the bell during the school year and also feed children over the summer, when they might go hungry.

Then the pandemic hit. Our schools closed. I knew many of our kids relied on the meals we served them. They might not eat without them. I was panicking inside. How were we going to feed them? I had to find a solution and reassure everyone that everything was okay, we got this.

My team, I call them the A-Team, set up grab-n-go meals sites where parents could drive up and get meals for any kids under 18. We started opening our kitchens at 3:45 am to cook everything from scratch and pack the meals individually, sometimes until 9 at night and over the weekends.

We didn't have a machine to wrap all the meals to keep the food safe. **NO KID HUNGRY GAVE US THE FUNDS TO GET THAT MACHINE, HELPING US DISTRIBUTE MORE THAN 14.3 MILLION MEALS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR.**

That first day of our grab-n-go sites, lines and lines of cars showed up from all directions. People were parking and walking from almost three miles away to get to us. One mother did that, her two-year-old in a stroller, seven-year-old son walking next to her, and bag in hand to carry the meals. She told me, "I need this food. My kids haven't eaten breakfast."

My team has done their best. Many have gotten sick, had to quarantine, lost loved ones. I've cried with them, and for myself because of the emotional toll. Our work since the pandemic hit has not been easy. Still, we have to do it.

Things have gotten better, but our community is in need and the future is gloomy. Ensuring no child goes hungry is going to take all of us. We have to take care of our village.

**OUR FREE MEALS
FINDER MAP AND
TEXTING LINE HAS
HELPED 445,000
FAMILIES FIND THEIR
KIDS FOOD SINCE THE
PANDEMIC HIT.**





Looking Ahead

No one could have imagined the impact that this crisis would have on our nation's families and children, but it exposed just how many Americans are one paycheck away from a financial breaking point. Stories like these have shined a light on hunger in America throughout the pandemic.

These are trying times, and it will take all of us to emerge from this difficult moment. There will be no one-size-fits-all solution to ending childhood hunger, but voices like those you've heard here will guide our work toward a day when not one child in our country goes hungry.

- We're working with hospitals and medical providers to pilot programs where pediatric patients can have healthy food prescribed and provided to them.
- We're expanding our focus to reach our youngest children—from babies to kindergarteners—with three meals a day.

- We're exploring how policies like the Child Tax Credit can couple with food strategies to relieve child hunger.
- And we're doing all of this with an emphasis on helping tackle the systemic racism that is a root cause of hunger for so many.

There will be no getting back to normal and there shouldn't be. But it's going to take all of us to build a better future for our kids.

One hungry child in our country is too many, and we're at an inflection point where the hunger crisis may deepen again without decisive action. We have to put our collective strength behind prioritizing our most vulnerable children.

These children, and the community heroes feeding them, urgently need our support. Every meal, every donation, every supporter counts. Thank you for your continued partnership in this work together.

1030 15TH STREET NW, SUITE 1100W
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

800-969-4767

NOKIDHUNGRY.ORG

