



# Food4Thought

People Helping People's Newsletter

February 2024

## A BLESSING FOR HUNGRY CHILDREN

*"They are the beat of my heart and the pulse in my veins and the energy of my soul. They are my kids."*

Most parents feel this way about their children. So, imagine if you will, that circumstances are preventing you from being able to provide your child with a very basic necessity - food.

Families can face many adversities - physical and mental illness, substance use and addiction, domestic violence and unemployment. These situations can begin to accumulate and lead a family to the point where the children may not be receiving an adequate amount of nutritional food.

It's well acknowledged that hunger can impact a child's ability to learn leading to developmental impairments.

On its website, Feeding America tells us "children need nutrients so they can grow, develop and focus on learning instead of thinking about the food they need. Ultimately, they need to be able to concentrate in the classroom so they can succeed in school and be prepared to enter the workforce as adults."

This is where the idea of a It Takes A Village comes into play. In fact, looking out for children not having enough food at home began with PHP back in 2010 through a relationship among Joann Boggus, a board member from PHP's beginning, Maureen Follansbee, a board

member for several years, and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church. And thus, Weekend Blessings began.

Board meeting minutes from 2010 indicated the Blessings in a Backpack, as it was first called, was starting up as a feeding program with PHP and \$4000 in the budget. Spring Hill Elementary was eager and willing to be the first school served. Since then, Weekend Blessings has grown and is now providing 455 students each week with four meals for the weekend. Brick and mortar recipients include students at many of the elementary schools, middle schools, a couple of high schools and children at agencies like Head Start, Children's Advocacy Center, and New Beginnings Youth Shelter. During the summer months, People Helping People partnered with the City of Brooksville's Parks and Rec Department to bring bags to the Jerome Brown Center and for qualifying kids attending YMCA's Summer Camp. During shorter breaks away from school, PHP sends letters home to families encouraging them to stop by our HELP Center to pick up bags. In short, we don't want kids to go hungry.

Of course, to ensure that they don't, we count on the generosity of the community.

PHP is the recipient of generous grants from Hernando County United Way and Suncoast Credit Union (thank you both!!) The Mary and Bob Sierra Family Foundation recently reached out to PHP with a very kind donation (thank you!) These monies go a long way toward the thousands we spend each month to purchase nutritional, kid-friendly food. If you would like to ensure your monies go directly and only to Weekend Blessings you may designate them as so.

Donations can be mailed to PHP, PO Box 6182, Spring Hill, FL 34611.



*Weekend Blessings is supported by grants following:*



**PEOPLE  
HELPING  
PEOPLE**  
in Hernando County

[www.phphernando.org](http://www.phphernando.org)  
352-686-4466

**Saturday, April 20**

**11 AM– 3 PM**



**PHP Help Center**

**1396 Kass Circle, Spring Hill, FL 34606**

*For the benefit of ...*

People Helping People in Hernando Co. (PHP)

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SMILING HAPPY PEOPLE (HELPING PEOPLE)

*May all beings be happy.*



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352-686-4466

*Good food*  
brings people together and  
*nourishes the soul*

**Sunday Blessings  
Meal Sponsors -  
February  
THANK YOU!!!!**

*Please show your appreciation by supporting these  
fine establishments and organizations.*



**KNIGHTS  
OF COLUMBUS**  
IN SERVICE TO ONE. IN SERVICE TO ALL.

Are you a restaurant owner/manager, a  
homeowner's association, a religious  
institution, or a group of friends who  
would like to donate a meal for our  
Sunday Blessings program?  
Please call 352-686-4466.



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*"May all my thoughts words, and actions contribute in some way to the happiness of all beings."*

**Thank you to those who contributed monetarily in January!**

**Anonymous (we know who you are!)**

**Anthony & April Artemisio**

**Shawn Berg**

**Kelly Brown**

**Catherine Buonemani**

**Murilene Cronk**

**John & Melissa Darling**

**Dennis Dwyer**

**Donation Jar HELP Center**

**Dr. Syed Waqar Hasan**

**Alison Kalvelage**

**Joan Kenyon**

**Michael & Ruth Kosteva**

**Michael & Marion Lamberti**

**Paula Margulis**

**PayPal Fund**

**David & Angela Porterfield**

**Richard Sweade**

*There is no right or wrong way to be kind.*

Some people volunteer and donate their time and talent. Some people donate actual goods or material items.

Some donate with "treasure" or money.

Why donate monetarily?

If you have some wiggle room in your budget, deciding how to spend that extra money may fuel your daydreams. How would your hard-earned money be best spent? How can it improve your life?

One answer: donate it to a worthy cause. Research shows that donating money makes people happier than spending it on themselves.

- ◆ By donating, you can improve your mental wellness while supporting the well-being of others.
- ◆ It reminds you of all that you have and gives the opportunity to give back.
- ◆ Donating money to a charity comes with a tax benefit.
- ◆ You don't need \$10,000 to make a difference in someone's life.
- ◆ When children see their parents donating money, they're more likely to adopt a giving mindset as they grow up.

With even a small donation, each of us has the power to contribute to change for the better. This fact should be a beacon of hope for all. You can make a difference, and you can start at any time.

Monetary donations may be mailed to:

People Helping People

PO Box 6182,

Spring Hill FL 34611

or made online at [www.phphernando.org](http://www.phphernando.org)

**THANK YOU**



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*"May all my thoughts words, and actions contribute in some way to the happiness of all beings."*

*Thank you to those who contributed in-kind donations in February*

Anonymous (we know who you are!)	Ogretta Miller
A.A.	Robert
Amy Lord	Robert Medina
Andrea Obonnin	Publix
Cheryl Lawsom	Maddie Lyons
Christine Adkins	Melanie Shore
Dennis Dwyer	Nate Johnson
Dollar General	Suzanne
Edith Kroeger	Theresa Soto
Florida Department of Health	Tina Boyt
Fran	Tom
Glen Lakes Bible Club	Tonya Kazar
High Point Community	Veronica Stringer
Irwin Rappon	Woodwards
James Walsh	Zachary Butler
Jan Ball	
Jennifer Bruce	
Jose Rivera	
Joseph Degado	
Karen & Leo	
Karen Blystone	
Karen Dumice	
Lisa	
Lisa Florita	
Lyeia Campagno	
Mary Ellen	
Melanie Coley	
Merry Oakes	
Nate Johnson	

*What is an In-Kind donation?*

The term in-kind generally refers to goods, services, and transactions not involving money. When we acknowledge the generosity of those who have contributed "in-kind" we are talking about food and non-food items (toiletries, healthcare, beauty items) the community donates to keep our shelves stocked for us to share with those in need.

Because of your donations we can provide emergency-assistance food to those in critical need, supplement the meals we serve here, share select items with individuals and families, and create "take-with" bags for the homeless.





## MARK IS MAKING A MARK

What a great fit Mark is for the director of our Weekend Blessings program! Let's begin with his passion for the goal that no child should go hungry. As a kid growing up in the 60's, Mark knew what it was like to go hungry on the weekends. His family experienced food insecurity for a number of years.

"Back then programs like Weekend Blessings were not available so we had to rely on friends and family when we could. Unfortunately that help wasn't always available," Mark remembers.

Mark was born and raised in Connecticut and moved to Seattle in the mid 80's to finish school. He worked in hospital finance in Seattle for a couple of years and decided it was boring and unchallenging so he took a job as a Clinic Manager in a Primary Care Clinic in 1990. In 1995, the clinic started working in Clinical trials and he took on the role of Clinical Research Coordinator in addition to the Clinic Manager Position. Fast forward 30 years to 2020 and Mark decided it was time to retire. He found the move to Florida an easy choice having visited close friends a couple of times a year for about 15 years. Tired of the rain in Seattle, Mark was ready for sun and warmer weather.

After the move and completing a major remodel on his home, Mark was needing something to keep himself busy, active, and social and began looking for volunteer opportunities online and came across PHP. "PHP's mission was just the type of thing I was looking for so I decided to call and see if it was a good fit. It was and I've never looked back."

It was only Mark's second day of volunteering, when PHP's Executive Director knowing an enthusiastic volunteer when she sees one and feeling it would be mutually beneficial for both Mark and PHP, approached him about the Weekend Blessings Program. Mark sums it up, "I said I would give it a try and here I am 6 months later."

Mark recognizes the criticality of making food available for kids over the weekend, "This program is a lifeline to so many families in Hernando County. In today's world the cost of housing, gas, utilities and insurance, continues to increase. Families are forced to make a choice - keep a roof over their heads or buy groceries. For those families, Weekend Blessings provides some breathing room and guaranteed food supplies every week.

At the beginning of the 2023/2024 school year we were providing 289 bags of food to 11 schools. Today we are providing 455 bags to 13 schools and organizations throughout Hernando County."

He also recognizes the importance of community support as being essential to the success of programs like Weekend Blessings. "Food insecurity will continue to increase but when communities support programs like this, everyone benefits."

How does Mark have fun beside when he's volunteering at PHP?

"In my free time I love to cook and try new recipes. I also like working in my yard and playing with my fur baby Cadet."

PHP is so glad Mark made that long move from Seattle to Florida!



**APRIL 20. Rather attend than compete?**  
**\$5 entry to taste some of the best chili**  
**in Hernando County!!!**

**11 AM- 3 PM**



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## **HELP Center Calendar**

### **Nature Coast Art League**

Mondays, 9am

### **AA meetings**

Mondays 8 pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 7pm

Fridays 7pm

### **Free Health Clinic**

Tuesdays, 10 am - 1 pm Kass Circle

1:30pm - 3:00pm Brooksville \*NEW

### **GED classes**

Mondays, Wednesdays 1:30 - 4:30 pm

### **Meals for those in need**

Sunday 3:30 pm

Tuesdays & Fridays 11:30 am

### **Showers available**

Tuesdays & Fridays 10 am - 1 pm

Our Calendar is online - view it here:

<https://phphernando.org/calendar>

\*call 352-686-4466  
for more information



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