



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Volunteers provide infrastructure for Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

National Volunteer Recognition Week

April 27 to May 3

RALEIGH - Volunteers are the heart and soul of the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina's mission – to harness and supply food resources so that no one goes hungry in central and eastern North Carolina. That means the never-ending job of “gathering and distributing” more than 32 million pounds of food each year is impossible without the assistance of dedicated volunteers. During fiscal year 2006-2007, volunteers logged more than 122,000 hours at the Food Bank - *the equivalent of over 58 full time employees!*

The Food Bank has a staff of about seventy full time employees throughout its five branches in Durham, Greenville, Raleigh, Southern Pines and Wilmington. But it is the volunteers who play an ever-growing, essential role in running the Food Bank.

Earline Middleton, currently Vice President of Programs for the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, was the first volunteer coordinator for the organization.

“My official title was Assistant to the Development Director and working with the volunteers was part of my duties,” says Middleton, who joined the organization in 1990.

The Food Bank of North Carolina, as it was known then, was located on Sunrise Avenue in Raleigh and had a total of six staff members: the Executive Director, Office Manager, Operations Manager, Development Director, Assistant to the Development Director and an Agency Relations Coordinator.

Middleton adds, “Just the current volunteer department alone has six staff members! The volunteers back then were just as dedicated as the volunteers that we have now.”

The largest volunteer job back then was to sort food in the warehouse. Volunteers also helped with the bread pickup program where volunteers went to local grocery stores and picked up donated bread. They sorted produce although the variety of produce was not as great as it is now.

Middleton recalls working alongside the volunteer groups, such as longtime volunteers from Wake Chapel, and hearing their stories about how it was important to give back and make a contribution to the community.

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The Food Bank moved to a location near the fairground in Raleigh and really saw a surge in volunteering, particularly during natural disasters.

Volunteers played a major role during Hurricane Andrew.

“That’s when we really saw growth in volunteering,” says Middleton. “Without their help sorting and staging product to get to Florida after Andrew came ashore down there...we simply could not have assisted on a national scale like that.”

The move to the current location on Tarheel Drive, a 40,000 square foot warehouse that also holds the administrative offices for the organization, allowed the program to continue to flourish.

“The volunteer department really expanded with the move to our current location,” says Middleton. “We have more space and can better handle the larger groups that now come in.”

The volunteer department now has a variety of volunteer opportunities such as:

- Warehouse Volunteer
- Office Assistant Volunteer
- Truck Driver Volunteer
- Agency Site Monitor
- Speakers Bureau & Agency Fair Volunteer
- Special Events Volunteer
- Blue Cross & Blue Shield of North Carolina Kids Cafe
- Kids Day

The Food Bank’s Board of Director’s is also another volunteer opportunity.

“We currently organize 700-800 volunteers a month!” said Lee Cheney, Volunteer Coordinator for the Raleigh branch, “And Wake Chapel still comes once a month!”

The Food Bank has regular corporate sponsors that come monthly such as: Genworth Financial, Cisco, IBM, Credit Suisse, L&M, and Progress Energy.

Dozens of church groups are also on the schedule as monthly reoccurrences and special needs groups come in three times a week.

“I get joy as well as a sense of gratitude when I see that the community appreciates the work of this organization,” says Middleton. “It’s all about the volunteers and the people we serve.”

Special thanks to these volunteers who have provided over 5 years of service to the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina:

Durham

Hilda "Cookie" Coppedge, 10 yrs

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Greenville

Steve Murphree, 6 yrs
Annie Edwards, 5+ yrs
Dick Wolf, 5 yrs

Sandhills

John Bonzo, 17 yrs
Austin Sweet, 10 yrs

Raleigh

Cooper Atamanchuk, 16 yrs
Margaret Ferrell, 15 yrs
Loretta Bishop, 15 yrs
Ash Pipkin, 13 yrs
Pat Price, 11 yrs
Haywood Holderness, 11 yrs
Rollie Tillman, 10+ yrs
Ken Grumbine, 9 yrs
Dickey Martin, 9 yrs
Jim Knight, 8 yrs
Monica Barnes, 8 yrs
Doug Gill, 7 yrs
Tommy Gill, 8 yrs
Marilyn Wendt, 6 yrs
Dave Goodrich, 5+ yrs
Haidee Reigel, 5 yrs
Chris Tilley 5+ yrs
Mike Paine, 5+ yrs
Toni Case, 5+ yrs

Wilmington

Council Jones, 18 yrs

To learn more about how you or your organization can volunteer, go to www.foodbankcenc.org and click the "Get Involved" button.

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About the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina

The Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina is a nonprofit organization that provides food for people at risk of hunger in 34 counties in central and eastern North Carolina. The Food Bank serves a network of more than 890 partner agencies offering soup kitchens, food pantries, shelters, and programs for children and adults. In fiscal year 2005-2006, the Food Bank distributed more than 32.6 million pounds of food and non-food essentials through these agencies. Sadly, hunger remains a serious problem in central and eastern North Carolina. In these counties, more than 400,000 struggle each day to provide enough food for their families. www.foodbankcenc.org.