March is National Nutrition Month

National Nutrition Month is a month dedicated to awareness of healthy eating. Unfortunately for those we serve, eating healthy is a luxury many can’t afford. Some of the best items to improve anyone’s diet include eating large amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables. That’s why we at the food bank are continuing to develop strategies to acquire significant amounts of produce. Dark and leafy vegetables in particular offer major health benefits including preventing cancer, detoxifying your body, boosting your immune system, and giving you more energy. They are also high in vitamins A and K, folic acid, potassium, and calcium. Next time you come to the food bank, be sure to grab enough produce to give to your clients. Without your help, many will most likely not get these items that are critical to their health as their food budgets restrict them.

In honor of National Nutrition Month, consider ways that you can help your clients improve their nutrition. There are various resources available for educating people on how to eat healthy on a tight budget. Children’s Board Family Resource Centers celebrate National Nutrition Month through workshops presented by certified instructors from St. Joseph’s Children’s Hospital Children’s Advocacy Center. The classes are located all around Hillsborough County on various days and times. There is no cost to attend, however reservations are necessary. Please email Nicole for more information.

Shopping at the Food Bank

Many of you may have noticed by now the construction changes taking place in our Tampa warehouse. While we are excited for a newly renovated warehouse, we recognize the operational challenges during the process.

Our main objective is to make your shopping experience as stress-free as possible. To keep things operating as smoothly as possible during the renovations, please help us by following these simple procedures:

- Please make a shopping appointment prior to arriving at the warehouse. On arrival, check in with the front office staff before waiting in the break room.
- Please limit your shopping time to 30 minutes.
- Please remember that agency accounts are COD (Check On Delivery) and all orders must be paid for with organization check or money order at the time of pickup or delivery. Agencies with an outstanding balance will not be permitted to shop.
- Please take assorted boxes “as is”. Do not open and mix through boxes as this presents an inventory challenge for us.
- For safety reasons, agency shoppers must wear closed-toed shoes, refrain from cell phone use, and stay within designated areas in the warehouse.
- If any box breaks or spills, please bring this to the attention of our staff immediately so that we can assist. We do not want anyone to slip and fall.

Reminder: Starting the week of March 16, shopping hours will move to mornings only.

FATB wishes you a Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

Do you have an inspiring success story? Do you know a family or individual who receives food assistance that would share their story?

Contact Nicole at ntegge@feedingamericatampabay.org

Did you know?

Peanuts are not really nuts at all but rather a legume closely related to peas, beans, and lentils. This tasty treat is cholesterol-free and full of fiber while also packed full of good nutrients including protein, Vitamin E, and Vitamin B. One of the most popular products made from peanuts is peanut butter, which by law, must contain at least 90% peanuts.

Fun Fact

March is National Peanut Month

November is National Peanut Butter Month
Implement a “swap table” during your pantry distributions. You can set out a few extra items on a side table that clients can trade for something in their bag. This helps ensure food that might not be to someone’s taste does not go to waste! Plus, clients love the idea as it gives them more control as to what they receive.

Congratulations to our agency partner St. Anne Catholic Church who recently completed construction and opened a new 4,000 sq. ft. pantry! This pantry, funded completely through donations and grants, was built from the ground up with innovative and practical designs constructed the clients in mind.

Great job, St. Anne, for increasing your capacity to feed families in need!

We are excited to showcase the newly renovated kitchen at the Wilbert E. Davis Boys and Girls Club. Thanks to a grant awarded by BJ’s Wholesale Club and installation by Ovations Food Service, this kitchen now has the capacity to provide more nutritious meals and feed up to 500 children every day!

Agency Tip:

Do you find that lack of money is one of the biggest challenges to your food program? Are you in need of a new refrigerator or bigger truck but just don’t have the money to purchase them? Consider applying for a grant! Grants are one of the best ways to improve your food program’s capability and potential. Writing grants can be tricky and overwhelming, but we are here to help! Come to our training class “How to Find and Write Winning Grants”. The class is designed to teach participants where to find appropriate grant funding opportunities and equip learners with the basic skills necessary to write effective grant proposals that will get funded. This highly-interactive, hands-on training class, taught by Dr. Karen Griffin, will include tips, tools, and techniques that will give you the winning edge!

The class will be held during our agency conference on May 1st. Save the date as these and other workshops will give your agency practical and useful advice on how to grow and sustain your food programs.

FLORIDA SNAP STATISTICS

- Only about 75% of eligible individuals are currently participating in the SNAP program.
- 85% of households receiving SNAP have income below the poverty line.
- 80% of households that receive SNAP benefits in Florida are households with children, the disabled, or the elderly.
- More than 34% of all SNAP participants are in working families.
- The average monthly SNAP benefit per person per meal in Florida is $1.34. The average monthly SNAP benefit for each household member is $138.98.

Moody’s Analytics estimates that $1 in SNAP benefits generates $1.70 in economic activity. SNAP not only helps low-income people buy groceries, it frees up cash for other expenses such as medical care, clothing, home repairs, and childcare.