

## A Little Help to Build a Strong Future

Torrance has always valued hard work and responsibility. At 21, he's already trained in brick and block laying and has experience in construction.

After attending school in Sikeston, Torrance chose to transfer to Job Corps at age 17.

"I never got in trouble, I just didn't like regular school," he explained.

At Job Corps, he earned his diploma and completed training in a skilled trade.

***"You do a lot of work, they teach you to be responsible," he said. "There were a lot of benefits."***

Now living on his own, Torrance is proud of his independence. He remains close with his family — four brothers and four sisters.

"We talk every day," he said. "They come visit with me all the time."

Like many young adults starting out, Torrance sometimes finds it hard to keep up with rising expenses.

This was his first time visiting one of Southeast Missouri Food Bank's partner pantries, and he said he was grateful for the help.

Torrance's visit to the pantry was a chance to get some extra support during a time when things felt tight. For young adults working to build a stable future, resources like the food pantry can make a real difference.



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*Our Mission*

*To end hunger and leverage  
 the power of food to build  
 healthy communities.*



# Why Advocacy Matters in the Fight Against Hunger

At Southeast Missouri Food Bank, we work every day to help families, children, seniors, and veterans who are facing hunger. We provide food assistance to about 80,000 people each month — but we can't do it alone. Strong federal nutrition programs, supported by sound public policy, are essential in ensuring that no one in our region goes without the food they need.



Programs like The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) are vital to our work. TEFAP connects surplus American-grown food with families experiencing hunger while supporting U.S. farmers and rural economies. CSFP serves nearly 5,600 low-income seniors in southeast Missouri each month, providing nutritious, shelf-stable food that helps them stretch their limited budgets.

Both of these programs — along with SNAP, which provides temporary grocery assistance to families — are part of the Farm Bill, a critical piece of legislation that shapes our nation's nutrition safety net, while supporting American farmers and producers.

That's why advocacy is so important. Earlier this year, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to join colleagues from Feeding America food banks in conversations with lawmakers. We met with the offices of senators Hawley, Schmitt, Thune, Rounds, Hoeven, and Congressman Jason Smith to talk about how federal decisions affect families right here in southeast Missouri.

We also hosted a roundtable discussion this spring with congressional staff and representatives from our partner agencies to highlight the challenges our neighbors face — especially in rural areas — and the critical role federal nutrition programs play in meeting those needs.

And throughout the year, our staff remains in contact with state and federal lawmakers, keeping them updated about the state of hunger in southeast Missouri.

***Decisions made in Jefferson City and Washington, D.C. have a direct impact on whether families and seniors have reliable access to nutritious food. Advocacy helps ensure their voices are heard, and together we can work toward lasting solutions to hunger.***

If you'd like to join us in this important work, please sign up for our advocacy updates by scanning the QR code. Together, we can ensure no one in southeast Missouri goes hungry.

*Joseph Keys*

**Joseph Keys**,  
 CEO, Southeast Missouri Food Bank



**Scan with your smartphone camera & complete survey to receive SEMO Food Bank Advocacy Updates**

# Getting Back on Her Feet

Barbara and her husband enjoyed a happy life together until health issues altered their path. Last year, their world changed when her husband fell ill.

“My husband was sick, and our children placed us in assisted living,” she said.

It was a difficult decision, but a necessary one.

“I had shoulder surgery,” Barbara shared, explaining her injury made it impossible to care for her ailing husband on her own. “He passed away in November, and I stayed (in assisted living) because I was having surgery and needed therapy.”

Barbara remained in assisted living for six months, accompanied by her dog, Petey, who was her constant comfort. “He’s been my lifeline,” she said.

Once her therapy was complete, she returned home, and to an empty kitchen.

Struggling to get back on her feet, she began visiting one of Southeast Missouri Food Bank’s mobile food pantries.

*“I don’t always take everything, because I don’t need it,” she said.*

Even in her own time of need, Barbara remains mindful of others. She only takes what she truly requires and makes an effort to give back whenever she can, tithing to the church that hosts the mobile food pantries.



## ON THE MOVE: How We Distribute Food to Neighbors Facing Hunger





## Program Spotlight: Backpacks for Friday

In southeast Missouri, **1 in 4 children face food insecurity**. Southeast Missouri Food Bank's Backpacks for Friday program helps fill that gap by providing nutritious, shelf-stable food to children at risk of hunger over the weekend.

Through partnerships with 25 school districts, the program delivers food packages each week to 1,100 students so they can return to school on Monday ready to learn. Each package contains kid-friendly foods that are ready to eat or easy to prepare.

If you'd like to support the program, it costs \$200 to feed one student each weekend for the entire school year. Or volunteer to pack Backpacks for Friday bags at our Jackson volunteer center.

Together, we can help children in our communities thrive.

# Hunger Action Month: *Ending Hunger Together*

This September for Hunger Action Month, Southeast Missouri Food Bank invites you to take simple, meaningful steps to help neighbors facing hunger. Because we know ending hunger is possible ... together.

Here are some ways to get involved:

### GO ORANGE

Orange is the color of hunger awareness. On **Tuesday, Sept. 9, Hunger Action Day**, wear orange to show your support. You can purchase our Hunger Action Month t-shirt (in orange, of course!), or other food bank apparel online at [bonfire.com/semofb-go-orange](http://bonfire.com/semofb-go-orange)



### MAKE A GIFT

A monetary gift is one of the most effective ways to help. Every dollar you give helps provide food for four meals to families, seniors, and children in southeast Missouri. **To donate, visit [semofb.org](http://semofb.org) or text SEMOFB to 91999.**

Want to make an even greater impact? Set up an automatic monthly donation and join our **SEMO Full Plate Club**, a simple way to provide reliable, ongoing support all year long.

### VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Spending a few hours volunteering can make a big difference for our food bank, partner agencies, and neighbors. Whether you're sorting food, packing boxes, or helping at a distribution, your time helps ensure families receive the nutritious food they need. Sign up to volunteer at our Jackson or Sikeston locations or Good Neighbor Pantry by visiting [semofb.org](http://semofb.org) and clicking "Get Involved."



## LET'S SACK HUNGER!

*We're teaming up with Redhawks football to Sack Hunger again this year! Visit our tailgate before the **Sept. 6 home opener** against North Alabama. Scan the code to purchase tickets to the game and support the Redhawks and SEMO Food Bank!*

