southeast missouri FOOD BANK
foodCONNECTION
HOLIDAY 2026



Home, Hope & Thanksgiving

On Thanksgiving, Barbara will be looking forward to gathering around the table with her son and family, sharing a meal, and making new memories together.

As a single mother to a teenage son, she was grateful to know their Thanksgiving table would be filled with a ham, stuffing, and other traditional holiday favorites.

"He loves food. He exercises his full right to be a teenager," she said with a laugh.

Barbara grew up in Sikeston but left home at 21 to be with her mom in Michigan. Twenty years later, she returned, ready to be closer to family and enjoy warmer weather.

Being home again has made the holiday season especially meaningful.

Barbara loves to cook, especially fried chicken and fish. Preparing meals has always been one of the ways she shows love and care for family and friends.

For most of her career, she's worked as a caretaker, often seven days a week, helping others. There is only one exception.

"On Sunday, I'm going to church, so I'll come after church," she said. "I really wanna be with the Lord and loving on the Lord. That's what you do on Sundays."

After a lifetime spent caring for others, Barbara found that same care reflected back through her community. Thanks to the support of Southeast Missouri Food Bank's Holiday Mobile Food Pantry, she could celebrate Thanksgiving with the people she loves most, gathered around a table filled with food, gratitude, and hope.

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help more. reach more. feed more.

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Our Mission

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

A Season for Coming Together

The holiday season has a way of reminding us what matters most. It's a time to gather around the table, spend time with family and friends, and reflect on the blessings we have to be thankful for. It's also a time when we're reminded of the importance of looking beyond our own tables to the neighbors who may be facing challenges of their own.



For many families across Southeast Missouri, the past year has brought continued challenges. The cost of food and other necessities has made it harder for some households to make ends meet. When there is less room in the budget, putting enough nutritious food on the table can become one more difficult decision for a family, let alone planning a holiday celebration.

We know the need for food assistance often becomes even more apparent during the holiday season. Families who are already stretching their budgets can find themselves facing even greater challenges. We expect this year will be no different. Our neighbors will need their community to come alongside them and help ensure there is enough food on the table during the holidays and in the months ahead.

That is where the strength of Southeast Missouri truly shines.

At Southeast Missouri Food Bank, we see the spirit of community in action every day. We see it in the volunteers who give their time, the farmers and retailers who share food, the organizations that make food available in their communities, and the donors who make our work possible. Each of you plays a role in making sure our neighbors have access to nutritious food when they need it.

As you gather around your own table this holiday season, I hope you'll remember the neighbors who may be facing a little more uncertainty around theirs. Your generosity helps ensure that nutritious food is available to our neighbors today, tomorrow, and throughout the year ahead.

Together, we can make sure more families have food on their tables, and give them the comfort and joy that come from sharing a meal with the people they love.

Thank you for being part of this community, for caring about your neighbors, and for standing with us in the fight to end hunger. From all of us at Southeast Missouri Food Bank, we wish you a happy, peaceful, and blessed holiday season.

Joey Keys

Joey Keys,
President & CEO, Southeast Missouri Food Bank



Expanded Holiday Volunteer Hours

This holiday season, Southeast Missouri Food Bank has expanded volunteer hours on select evenings and weekends in Jackson and Sikeston. Bring a friend, your family, or your group and make the holidays brighter for local families. Find available shifts and sign up at ***semofoodbank.org/volunteer.***



More Than a Meal

Cape Girardeau church combines a shared meal and Mobile Food Pantry to nourish and support its community

For 13 years, St. Andrew's Lutheran Church has opened its doors on the second Friday of each month for Seconds, a home-cooked meal where everyone is welcome.

"We call it Seconds because it's a second helping, but we also serve a God of second chances," said Toni Moll, who helps coordinate the program.

Last year, St. Andrew's partnered with SEMO Food Bank to bring a Mobile Food Pantry to the church on the same night as Seconds. Guests can enjoy a warm meal and take home groceries to help stock their kitchens for the month ahead.

What began with three women who loved to cook has grown into a monthly community gathering, with about 100 people sitting down for a meal and another 50 to 60 meals sent home.

The congregation makes it possible through its generosity. Members fill shopping lists, bring homemade cakes, and give donations to help sponsor the Mobile Food Pantry.

For Toni, the food is important, but so is the connection.

"People are seeking connections, relationships. They want to feel wanted and respected."

During the holidays and throughout the year, Seconds brings the community together, making sure everyone has a place at the table and every table has food.





Share the Gift of Hope This Holiday Season

The holidays are a time to celebrate the people who mean the most to us ... and to remember the joy that comes from giving. This year, share that spirit with a Holiday Hope Card.

For a contribution of $25 or more per card, we'll address and mail a heartfelt holiday greeting on your behalf.

Your gift helps provide nutritious food to neighbors while letting someone you care about know they are being remembered this holiday season.

And every $25 Holiday Hope Card helps provide 100 meals to neighbors facing hunger, making your gift even more meaningful.

Prefer to send the cards yourself? Order 10 or more cards for a contribution of $250 or more, and we'll provide the cards for you to address and mail.

To order your Holiday Hope Cards, call our development team at 573-471-1818 or go to ***semofoodbank.org.***



A Seat at the Christmas Table

For nearly 20 years, Ricky hosted Christmas dinner at his home. Until last year, when his family started a new tradition: traveling to Tennessee to celebrate with his stepdaughter.

"We've been doing it at my house for like 20 years," Ricky said with a laugh. "It's about time they cleaned up the mess."

Ricky shares a home with his partner, his mother, and his brother, whom he helps care for. After 28 years of farming, a heart attack forced him to step away from the work he loved. These days, he picks up odd jobs when he can, but making ends meet can still be a challenge.

At a SEMO Food Bank Holiday Mobile Food Pantry, Ricky received a ham and other holiday favorites to share with his family.

"It helps my family a lot," he said. "We've had hard times, and it really helps."

For Ricky, the holidays are about one thing: being with the people he loves.

"I love Christmas," he said. "I love the holidays."

And thanks to generous supporters, families like Ricky's can spend a little less time worrying about the cost of a holiday meal and more time enjoying it together.

Sending Warm Holiday Wishes

For a blessed Thanksgiving, merry Christmas & happy New Year!

~Southeast Missouri Food Bank

