On an overcast June day, more than 100 people gathered on Oregon Food Bank’s Community Farm to mark the beginning of a new partnership that unites community and helps people struggling with hunger. Leading the effort is Shantae Johnson of Mudbone Grown. “We want to share the love of growing food with our community,” said Shantae. “It is also important to change the narrative of what it means to be a farmer, especially for those in the black community.”

Oregon Food Bank’s NE Portland headquarters includes adjacent land that is the home of the Learning Garden and a one-acre Community Farm. This year, farming operations are run by Mudbone Grown and the Black Food Sovereignty Council. To honor this collaboration, the land was renamed Unity Farm.

People of color make up 28% of Portland’s population. Recent events in the city and around the country have increased stress and tension. “Some of the things we’re going to be doing at the farm is to just bring all communities together to grow and heal,” said Shantae. Food grown on the farm will go to several groups working to curb food insecurity. Volunteers will also be given the option to take home a portion of the harvest.

“We hope that with this Unity Farm everyone feels welcome here,” said Shantae. “The soil really does heal us and gets us to take a time out from the hustle and bustle of the world.” You can sign up to help at oregonfoodbank.org/volunteer.
Most people know Pendleton for its famous rodeo, but few realize the community's deep, agricultural roots. From wheat and oats to potatoes and melons, a wide variety of crops are produced in the northeast corner of Oregon.

“We had all these conversations about food and food insecurity going on, but it needed to be shared,” says Colleen Sanders of Oregon State University Extension Service. Colleen took the lead with five other local organizers to bring Oregon Food Bank's FEAST (Food, Education, Agriculture, Solutions, Together) program to Pendleton and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. The committee also surveyed farm workers during an outreach event. “Our county is ready for the conversation about how food affects everyone. FEAST made it easier for people to become connected around a shared goal.”

Thanks to you, we are able to help each community tailor the FEAST program to fit their needs. In Umatilla County, new partnerships are being built to strengthen the food system, more Cooking Matters classes are forming and communities are coming together to brainstorm ways to make sure everyone has enough to thrive. You can learn more about FEAST by visiting oregonfoodbank.org/FEAST.
30 years and still going strong thanks to you
More than one million raised to feed those struggling with hunger

From smooth dancing and talented artists to perfect weather and dedicated fans, the 30th anniversary of the Safeway Waterfront Blues Festival presented by First Tech Federal Credit Union was a big success. More than $1.2 million raised through the event will go to purchasing food and offering programs that alleviate hunger.

Festival goers were treated to headliners Chris Isaak, Joss Stone and Big Head Blues Club, along with popular local acts Ty Curtis, Karen Lovely and Curtis Salgado. “We are grateful to the fans, artists and sponsors for their support,” said Oregon Food Bank CEO Susannah Morgan.

A special thank you to our major sponsors: Safeway, First Tech Federal Credit Union, iQ Credit Union, KOIN 6, Oregonian Media Group, FedEx, KINK 101.9, Deschutes Brewery, Coors Light, Buick GMC of Beaverton and HepC Hope.

Join us at the table for Oregon Harvest Dinner

Across cultures, food unites and helps build community. But thousands of our neighbors don’t get enough nutritious, affordable food. You can show your commitment to ending hunger by attending our annual Oregon Harvest Dinner on Saturday, October 21. The evening features stories from people affected by hunger and recognizes those who support and champion resilient communities. For sponsorship opportunities or to purchase tickets, visit oregonfoodbank.org/harvestdinner.
What is SNAP?
The first in a series of articles about the importance of SNAP to people struggling with hunger.

A single parent raising two kids while working and getting a degree, a retired military veteran who volunteers at the neighborhood school, and a young adult with autism who struggles to keep a job — all of them have something in common. Each benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the Food Stamp Program. SNAP recipients make grocery purchases with a type of debit card and are able to purchase foods that meet their dietary needs and cultural preferences. Above all, SNAP benefits help people to be healthy and successful.

SNAP is the most important anti-hunger program in the country, especially during economic downturns. The federal government pays the full cost of SNAP benefits and splits the cost of administering the program with the states, which operate the program. While eligibility rules and benefit levels are set by the federal government, the states are able to tailor certain aspects of the program as they see fit. SNAP benefits are spent in grocery stores, corner markets and farmers markets in nearly every community — helping strengthen local economies for everyone.

Surviving with just the essentials
You help amplify the VOICES of hunger

“I try to eat as well as I can, but it’s hard,” says Marleen. “Eating more fruits and vegetables is better for my health, but they’re really expensive. I do use the food bank, especially for meat and fresh vegetables, and it really helps. I attend Portland Community College and it just opened a farmers market. I can use my SNAP benefits there.”

Marleen has lived off and on in Portland for 20 years and is working on her degree.

Housing is the biggest worry. “If I didn’t have housing assistance I would be homeless. I had to wait four years,” she adds.

She’s also concerned about those around her. “The situation with high rents is out of control. Folks just getting by are living in fear every day that their rent is going to go up and they’ll be out. That’s no way to live, every day wondering if you’ll be able to make the rent next month.”

Your generous support gives a voice to our neighbors facing hunger. Find more stories at oregonfoodbank.org/voices.
Improving health and creating connections
A three-way partnership results in targeted education for diabetics

In a small room at Portland Open Bible Community Pantry, a half dozen people gather to learn about their diabetes. About 287,000 Oregon adults have this chronic condition. “We see a lot of people with chronic illness that are also food insecure,” says registered dietician Michele Guerrero of Rosewood Family Health Center. “They don’t have enough good food like fruits, vegetables and proteins.” Many of Rosewood’s patients are on Medicaid. Together with Oregon Food Bank and Open Bible, Michele developed a plan to educate diabetes patients and provide them with nutritious food.

“It’s really part education, part support group,” says Josie Riggall also a registered dietitian with Rosewood. “[Patients] have to set goals and check in each week. We celebrate wins and brainstorm ways to overcome barriers.” The six-week class covers blood sugar management, meal planning and much more. After each class, patients receive a bag of pantry staples and can choose from a variety of produce and specialty items.

Through your generosity, this partnership is helping reduce the cost of care for people with diabetes. The benefits go beyond health; Michele adds, “A lot of our patients are socially isolated, so having a support group helps them connect with others.”

You are helping diabetes patients control their disease and live healthier.

Reclaiming the land
Native group connects generations through gardening, gatherings

Tucked away in a quiet spot on the back of Oregon Food Bank’s Community Farm is a place set aside for the Oregon Inter-Tribal Breastfeeding Coalition. “We are still figuring out how to best utilize the land; we’ve started by planting traditional foods that can be shared among the elders and our pregnant and breastfeeding mothers,” says Roberta Ortiz, the group’s founder. “Native women who use the WIC program will be able to get credit for breastfeeding and gardening classes.” Plans are also being made to [continued on back]
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create a welcoming space for children and elders so everyone can learn together. “Many of the people I work with haven’t had the opportunity to be connected to the land – it’s a truly spiritual thing,” adds Roberta, who is encouraging more Native organizations to join the project. Your support is strengthening communities and opening up opportunities for all people, especially Native Americans as they reconnect with the land and their traditional foods.

Thank you to our corporate partners for your generous support!

This year, physicians at Providence Health & Services elected to make a $25,000 donation to Oregon Food Bank in honor of Doctors’ Day on March 30, 2017.

Pacific Power Foundation once again supported Oregon Food Bank’s work by providing funds for nutrition education and gardening classes.

And thank you to the following:
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