

Summer 2009

generous helpings

You're Feeding
Hungry Children
and Families
this Summer!

houston 
foodbank
Filling pantries. Filling lives.



...look inside for stories of lives changed by your generosity!

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Summer Reality

Dear Friend,

It's hard to believe summer is already here. I always look forward to this time of year because the pace of life seems to slow down just a bit – kids are out of school, we see more sunny days and somehow, we make more time to spend with friends and family. I know my wife and I are looking forward to spending time with our newborn son over these next few months.



Brian Greene
President and CEO

But I also know that not everyone here in southeast Texas is looking forward to summer. For families of children who depend on their schools' free and reduced-price meal program, summer can be one of the most difficult times of the year. Parents must work even harder to provide the breakfasts and lunches their children normally receive at school. And with the economic recession forcing many hard-working southeast Texans out of their jobs, providing for one's family is becoming increasingly challenging.

Summer can also be a difficult time for senior citizens. As Texas temperatures skyrocket over the next few months, so will utility bills. For seniors living on fixed incomes, this often means having to choose between paying for electricity and buying groceries.

Thousands of southeast Texas families, children and seniors are at risk of going hungry this summer – but you play a significant role in ensuring those in need have access to nutritious food all year long. Whether it's groceries from a food pantry, a hot meal at a senior center or a filling lunch from a children's summer feeding site, your gifts are restoring hope to the hungry in our community.

I am so grateful for your partnership as we continue to fight hunger here in southeast Texas. Thank you for your compassion!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brian Greene". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

“You’re providing a vital need for every child’s success”

Tiffany Burks knows the signs of a chronically hungry child.

“A hungry child is an angry child, because he’s missing something vital to his success,” she says.

As the Unit Director of the Boys & Girls Club’s NFL Youth Education Town at James Driver Park in Houston, Tiffany sees firsthand the devastating effects chronic hunger can have on growing children. Fortunately, the Houston Food Bank is working hard to combat childhood hunger through a partnership with this Boys & Girls Club. Thanks to the Food Bank’s Kids Cafe program, which your gifts help make possible, the Club provides a nutritious lunch and a filling snack to an average of 230 children each day during the summer months. Through the Food Bank’s summer feeding efforts, nearly 1,000 hungry children throughout the Houston area have access to nutritious summer meals.

Tiffany says most of the children she serves come from large, low-income families who struggle to provide enough food for everyone in the household. She knows that for many of these kids, the meals they receive through Kids Cafe are the only ones they eat all day – especially now that summer is here

and they aren’t receiving free and reduced-price school meals.

“The meal is very important to our kids,” she says. “When we say ‘lunch’ – they run down here!”

Tiffany shares the story of a family in the neighborhood with five children who have been especially impacted by the meals they receive through the Kids Cafe program. Their dad recently lost his job and their mom works part-time in the evenings – Tiffany says she knows their mom goes hungry sometimes so her kids can eat. The nutritious meals from Kids Cafe have been a lifeline for these five kids, and their parents are so glad to know their children’s needs are being met even as they work hard to provide for them.

It’s your gifts to the Houston Food Bank that

enable agencies like the NFL Youth Education Town Boys & Girls Club to provide children in need with nutritious meals, alleviating the burden for their families and helping them grow to their full potential.

“You’re providing a vital service and a vital need for any and every child’s success,” says Tiffany. “Thank you!”



YOU'RE FIGHTING SUMMER HUNGER!

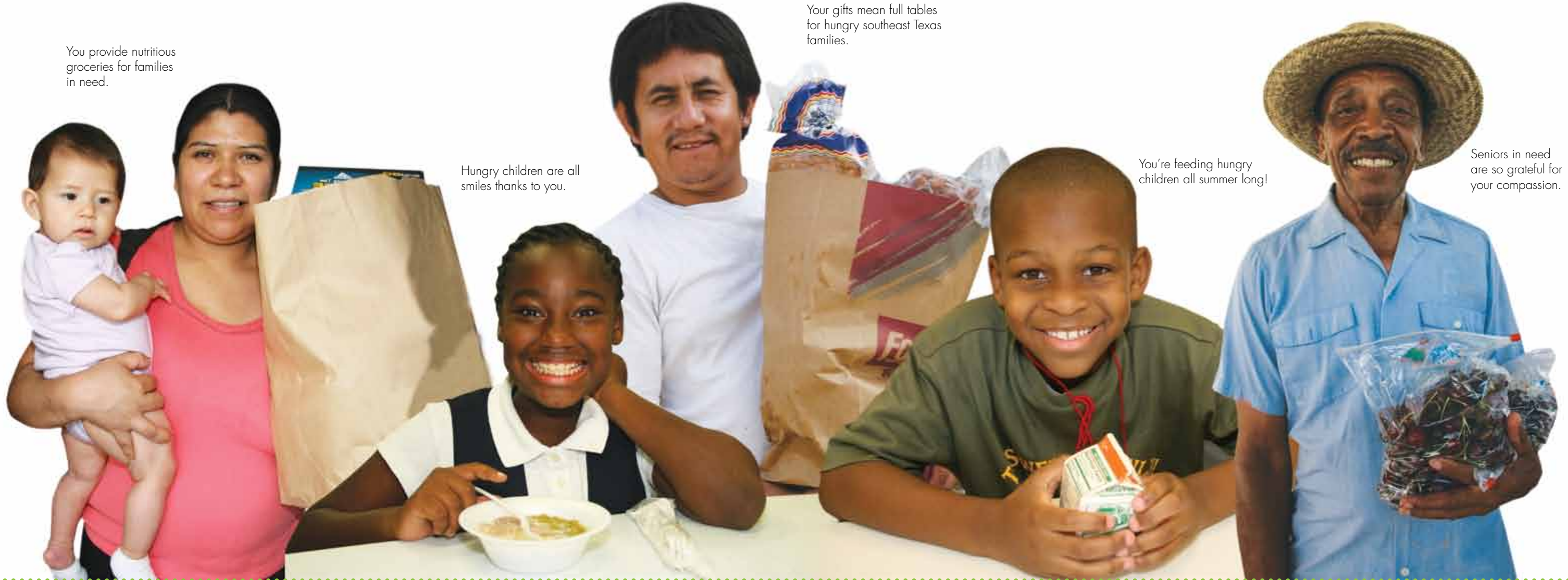
You provide nutritious groceries for families in need.

Hungry children are all smiles thanks to you.

Your gifts mean full tables for hungry southeast Texas families.

You're feeding hungry children all summer long!

Seniors in need are so grateful for your compassion.



THANK YOU!

MAXIM EGG FARM AND UNITED EGG PRODUCERS

The Food Bank was thrilled to receive a special Easter gift of 255,000 eggs from our very own local Maxim Egg Farm and 144,000 eggs from United Egg Producers. High quality protein-rich foods like fresh eggs are some of the most difficult items for the Food Bank to come by, so this gift is especially generous. Because of Maxim Egg Farm and United



Egg Producers, thousands of families who wouldn't have been able to afford fresh eggs were able to enjoy this nutritious treat!

EMPTY BOWLS

A very special thanks to everyone who participated in Empty Bowls on March 21st – more than 900 bowls were sold, raising over \$56,000! Thank you also to presenting sponsor Whole Foods Market for making the fifth annual Empty Bowls such a huge success.



NATIONAL LETTER CARRIERS FOOD DRIVE

The largest one-day food drive in southeast Texas was a huge success again this year. Thank you to the many dedicated letter carriers who picked up hundreds of thousands of pounds of food from homes all over our service area and delivered it to the Food Bank and our partner agencies. And thank you to everyone who contributed by placing food by your mailbox!

SAVE THE DATE!

CHANNEL 11 SPIRIT OF TEXAS FOOD DRIVE

July 12 – 25

The annual Channel 11 Spirit of Texas Food Drive is coming up! From July 12th – 25th you can participate at your local grocery store

by purchasing a pre-packed food bag or by placing nonperishable food items in the red barrels. You can also make a monetary donation at the checkout of your local Kroger. Please help make this year's drive the biggest yet!

HOUSTON RESTAURANT WEEK

August 10 – 23

Love to eat out? Looking for an excuse to try a restaurant you've heard so much about? Well there's no better time than August 10th – 23rd to go out on the town in Houston – it's Houston Restaurant Week, benefitting the Houston Food Bank! More details are coming soon at houstonfoodbank.org, so check back often.

“It’s so invaluable in so many ways”

When Hurricane Ike devastated the Texas Gulf Coast last fall, the Houston Food Bank depended on friends in the community to help us provide immediate relief in the form of food, water and ice for those affected by the storm. Whether it was through financial support or by rolling up one’s sleeves to volunteer, this community stepped up to the plate. One of those generous community partners is NRG Energy, Inc.

The Texas region of NRG, located in Houston, held a company-wide volunteer day on October 23, 2008. Employees were given the day off to volunteer at five different area nonprofit organizations, including the Houston Food Bank. Ten NRG employees came to the Food Bank to help with disaster-relief efforts in the wake of Hurricane Ike. NRG Texas President Kevin Howell says the new partnership with the Food Bank is so important that they plan to give their time and talent again this summer during NRG’s National Day of Giving when NRG regions across the country will go out and volunteer in their communities.

“It’s a long-term relationship into the future,” Kevin says of NRG’s connection to the Food Bank.

Time wasn’t the only thing this incredible company gave to help southeast Texans in need. NRG generously donated more than \$500,000 to Texas charities last year, including a \$200,000 gift to the Food Bank to help purchase two refrigerated trucks. These trucks not only help transport food but they keep perishables from going bad – something that’s especially important during crises like Hurricane Ike.

“During Hurricane Ike, the Food Bank’s refrigerated trailers were no longer in a condition where they could reliably use them for delivering food, so they had to rent trailers,” Kevin explains. “By donating the money for new trucks, we can provide the Food Bank with the resources it needs. It helps day-to-day and it helps during the crises. We couldn’t imagine any better way to help!”

Kevin says giving back to the community is an integral part of NRG’s company culture, and he looks forward to a lasting partnership with the Food Bank.

“It’s so invaluable in so many ways,” he says of partnering with nonprofit organizations in the communities where NRG employees work and live.



We are endlessly grateful to NRG Texas for its generosity and the hard work of its employees. We simply couldn’t do the work of feeding hungry southeast Texans without the support of dedicated community partners like NRG!

THE MOST IMPORTANT SOCIETY YOU WILL EVER JOIN

The Houston Food Bank’s *Full Plate Society* recognizes and honors the generosity and vision of those who have made a lasting commitment to fighting hunger through a bequest or other estate gift to the Food Bank. Full Plate Society members receive special recognition and invitations to annual Food Bank events. Induction into this honorary society is simply a matter of notifying the Food Bank of your legacy gift, such as a bequest in a will or trust, a Charitable Remainder Trust, or designation as a beneficiary in a Life Insurance Policy or Retirement Plan. Please remember the Houston Food Bank in your will or estate plan.

Volunteer by visiting houstonfoodbank.org or contact Volunteer Services at 713-547-8609

“Without you, this would not be possible!”

Michael's life is a testament to the fact that things can change forever in a matter of minutes.

Several years ago, he was the victim of a terrible hit-and-run motorcycle accident that broke both his back and leg in several places, leaving him to recover in the hospital for nearly four months. Though his doctors said he would never walk again, he's able to get around on his own – but he admits his body will never be the same.

Before the accident, Michael owned his own business and didn't worry about making ends meet. But he can't work like he used to, so he was forced to give up his business. Without a steady source of income, he started living off of his assets – but before long, he had nothing left.

Now Michael lives in a boarding house and his only income is the small disability check he

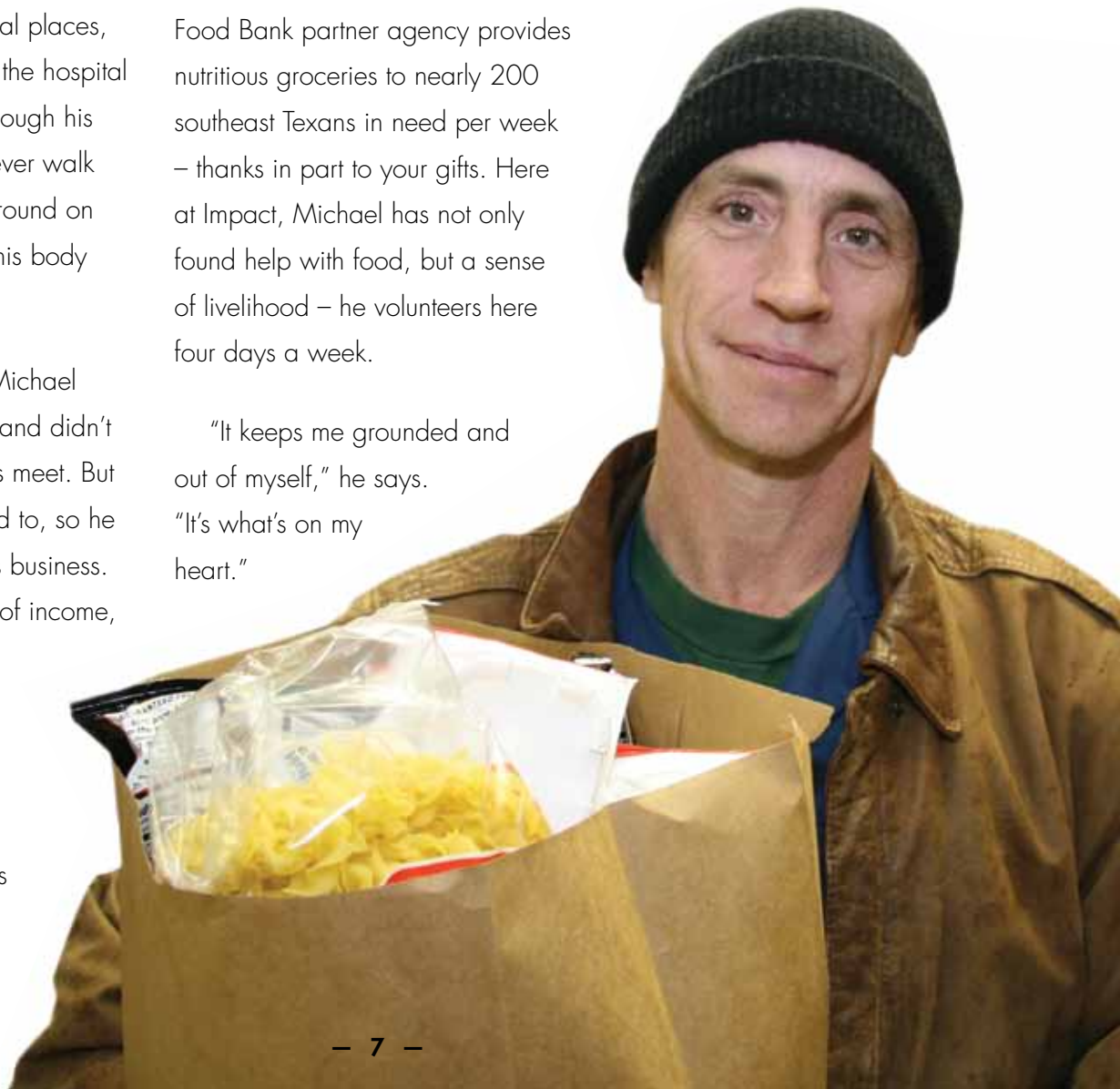
receives – which isn't nearly enough to pay for his housing and food each month.

Fortunately, Michael has found hope at Impact, the food pantry at Houston Church of Christ. This Food Bank partner agency provides nutritious groceries to nearly 200 southeast Texans in need per week – thanks in part to your gifts. Here at Impact, Michael has not only found help with food, but a sense of livelihood – he volunteers here four days a week.

“It keeps me grounded and out of myself,” he says. “It's what's on my heart.”

Michael is grateful for the food he receives. He knows it's the generosity of friends like you that help make it all possible.

“Thank you for volunteering your time and money to make this place possible,” he says. “There are people who need help...the low-income and the physically and mentally incapable. Without you, this would not be possible!”



“It doesn’t just help me - it helps a lot of other people”

Tyra can't help but smile when she talks about her two sons, ages 10 and 15.

“They are big!” she says. “My youngest is almost as tall as me, and my 15-year-old – he’s even taller!”



Tyra loves her boys and would do anything for them. But lately, life has been tough. In fact, for the past few years, providing the best for her family has been anything but easy.

She and the boys first moved to the Houston area in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina forced them to evacuate their hometown of New Orleans. Although the transition was scary and difficult, Tyra says the boys have adjusted well and really like their new home.

“I try to keep them in activities to keep them out of trouble!” she says with a smile.

Raising two children on her own hasn't been easy, but Tyra had been able to make ends meet. But on Christmas Eve,

she was laid off from her job. Tyra was devastated – she felt like she'd let her boys down, and she wasn't sure where to turn.

She's been looking for a new job every day, but with the difficult market, it's been nearly impossible for her to find any work. Without a steady source of income, it's getting harder and harder to feed her children – especially now that summer is here.

Fortunately, friends like you are helping families like Tyra's every day. Thanks to your gifts to the Houston Food Bank, she can come to Katy Christian Ministries, a Food Bank partner agency, for nutritious groceries when she needs them. She's so grateful for the food she receives – and for your compassion.

“Thank you!” she says. “Without this place, I don't know where I would be – maybe a homeless shelter. It's a big help. And it doesn't just help me – it helps a lot of people.”

Thank you for restoring hope to hungry families and children like Tyra's here in our community. Your gifts truly do make a difference.

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Filling pantries. Filling lives.

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