

March Is National Nutrition Month

Food For Thought from Michelle Douglas, CEO



Did you know that March is National Nutrition Month? Started in 1973, National Nutrition Month is a time when people are encouraged to learn about making informed food choices and develop healthful eating and physical activity habits. At EFN, we deeply value making healthful food choices (we even highlighted it in last month's Food for Thought), but we recognize that the ability to make healthy choices can be complicated for a variety of reasons, especially for lower-income households. Lower-income households often live farther from grocery stores with fresh produce, struggle to afford healthy options, and may have less time to spend on cooking healthy items due to working long hours or multiple jobs.

Read full article: [here!](#)

Critical impacts to nutrition ahead: <https://tinyurl.com/FRAC-Updates>

Hunger Walk 2023

Taking Steps To Feed Our Neighbors In Need



This year's Hunger Walk is on Saturday, May 6th at Fort Steilacoom Park. In addition to a walk around the lake, registrants will enjoy music, kid-friendly activities, and giveaways from local vendors!

If you're not able to join us at the park, virtual registration is also available.

[Register For Hunger Walk](#)

Already Registered?

Don't Forget To Use Your Fundraising Page To Help Feed Neighbors In Need!

Successful Spring Break Bags

Thank You For Your Amazing Contributions

Spring break is right around the corner and many students eagerly await this time off from school. For the 52% of students in Peirce County who rely on free and reduced-cost lunch, however, break means worrying about how they will eat when they don't have access to school meals.

In partnership with St. Leo's Food Connection, EFN's Break Bags Program steps in to nourish these students and ensure they can enjoy their break worry free. Every Break Bag contains nutritious staples, and snacks, and for each fall, winter, and spring break, EFN volunteers assemble 2,000 kid friendly bags for distribution to Clover Park School District and Tacoma Public Schools.

- This Saturday, all 2,000 bags for spring break will be packed, and EFN wants to thank everyone that contributed to our Break Bags Food Drives over the last several weeks. As a community, we collected: 2,160 packets of Apple Sauce Packets
- 970 Macaroni N' Cheese Cups
- 3,700 Granola Bars
- 300 jars of Peanut Butter
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Thank you: Waste Connections, Sharon Snuffin, WestRock, General Federation of Women's Clubs, Rotary 8, Pierce Transit, Heritage Bank, Coordinated Care, and all of the individuals that brought in these items!

Look for updates in the fall for more opportunities to get involved with Break Bags so that all kids can return to school nourished and ready to learn!

From The Fields

February Updates From Mother Earth Farm



Spring is right around the corner at Mother Earth Farm, and we are more than ready. Over 18,000 plants have already been seeded for our spring crop including kohlrabi, collard greens, tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, kale, bunching onions, and lettuce. We've made an effort to seed a large number of flowers for our pollinator strips as well. These rows of flowers are beneficial to the local pollinator friends including bees, butterflies, other insects and birds. They feed our local wildlife as well as pollinate the fruit on the farm to create produce and our next generation of seeds. Pollinator Strips also combat soil erosion and create a more inviting microclimate for the makeup of our soil.

Spring is a perfect time to come out to the farm to witness the emergence of our perennial plants, orchard blossoms, and transplanting of our first crops. Sign-up with this [link](#), to schedule an individual Friday volunteer session or get a group of friends or family to come to our 2nd Saturday a Month Group volunteer sessions (reserved for groups)! See you at the Farm!

Help us Stock Our Hygiene Corner

Toiletries Needed

We love being able to provide hygiene items to EFN Home Delivery Recipients when they are needed, and right now we need your help to stock our hygiene corner! Please consider hosting a Food & Fund Drive for these items or just picking up a few extra on your next trip to the store! We are especially looking for:

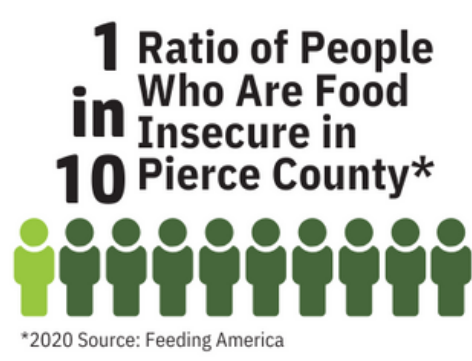
- Menstrual Products
- Baby Wipes
- Grooming Tools (ex. razors, combs)
- Dental Care Items



To get started, please register your food drive [here](#) or contact CarolineC@efoodnet.org, and reach out with any questions! Donations can be dropped off at EFN (3318 92nd St S, Lakewood WA 98499) anytime Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.

SNAP Benefits Decreased for Families in March

Serving Our Community Through the "Hunger Cliff"



*2020 Source: Feeding America

This month marked an important change in the hunger landscape in our community: the end of SNAP emergency allotments, or EAs. During the pandemic, emergency allotments increased benefits to the maximum for a person's family size in participating states.

A study from the Urban Institute found that these increases reduced poverty by 10% and child poverty by 14% in the states that participated. The study also found that the EAs significantly reduced poverty among Black and Hispanic people, helping to close economic disparities. At the end of February 2023, EAs expired nationwide, and researchers are calling the coming increase in need for food assistance a "hunger cliff."

The drop-off in benefits will affect all SNAP users, resulting in an average reduction in benefits of \$82 monthly, according to the Food Research and Action Council (FRAC). With fewer benefits to cover a food budget already stretched by inflation, we anticipate that many families and individuals will turn to our Partner Programs for help. We especially anticipate increased need among seniors, who could experience a reduction of over \$250, according to FRAC.

To help EFN and our community navigate the coming "hunger cliff," there are many ways you can help. You can support EFN's distribution of healthy staples by volunteering at the Repack Project, or help us grow fresh, organic produce by volunteering at Mother Earth Farm. You can help food pantries prepare for new guests by hosting a Food & Fund Drive. You can also support EFN directly with your funds – just \$0.50 allows EFN to distribute [a meal to a hungry neighbor](#). Finally, share EFN's "Find Food" resource with your network – knowing where to find a food pantry could help a neighbor in your life navigate the "hunger cliff" with a little more support.

EFN Is Hiring!

Join Our Team

There are 2 impactful positions opening at Emergency Food Network!

Repack and Warehouse Associate

EFN is seeking an experienced, full-time Repack/Warehouse Associate who will have primary responsibility for the Repack Project here at EFN. To apply send resume or application to jobs@efoodnet.org.

Development Manager

EFN is seeking an experienced, full-time Development Manager who will manage key fundraising activities including staff oversight, event implementation, and donor expansion. To apply send cover letter and resume to jobs@efoodnet.org.

[Full Position Descriptions](#)