



## *School-Based Pantry Program*

Blue River Community Foundation Final Report

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# Problem

**Feeding America defines food insecurity as the “lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members and limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.”<sup>1</sup>**

- 12.1% of Shelby County residents are food insecure.
- 14.6% of children in Shelby County are classified as food insecure. This equates to 1,480 children.
- 30% of Shelby County households are employed, but still struggle to make ends meet
- This reality may indicate the need for these households to make trade-offs between basic necessities such as housing, utilities, or medical care and purchasing nutritious food.



# ***School-Based Pantry Program***

**Gleaners Food Bank addresses the issue of food insecurity, especially among families and children through its School-Based Pantry program.**

- Visitors are invited to shop through the selection of non-perishable menu items, produce, and essential hygiene products, to be taken home and prepared independently.
- Provided at no cost to students, families, or schools
- Food items adhere to Feeding America's nutrition initiatives that align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and MyPlate recommendations



Fresh Fruits  
& Vegetables



Meat & protein items



Dairy items such as  
milk, cheese & eggs



Shelf-stable  
meal-making items



# Connection

Joanna Yeend, Site Coordinator at Southwestern Jr. Sr. High School shared:

*“One of our regular pantry participants shared with me that having the pantry allows her family to get the food and toiletry items they need so that they can use their money for paying off bills and saving to move out of their current living situation and to hopefully buy a house. I was encouraged to hear that the pantry is helping them to work towards making a better future for themselves.”*



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# Impact

- During the 2021-2022 summer and school year, the School-Based Pantries at Shelbyville High School and Southwestern Jr/Sr High School served a combined total of **405 Shelby County households**.
- The school pantry at Shelbyville High School was open once per month and distributed a total of **3,542 pounds of food**, including **877 pounds of fresh produce** during the school year.
- The school pantry at Southwestern Jr/Sr High School is open twice a month and during this school year, distributed **11,841 pounds of food**, including **1,097 pounds of fresh produce**.



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# Looking Forward

- The School-Based Pantry program alleviates a significant financial and emotional burden for students and families struggling to budget for monthly food supplies.
- Additionally, the menu items and fresh produce offered through the program provide a healthy dose of nutrients to promote a healthy lifestyle for clients who often lack essential nutrition.
- Last fiscal year, we have added 5 additional School-Based Pantry sites throughout our service area for a total of 60. We will continue enhancing existing sites in order to serve more families, adding additional sites in strategic locations, and connecting schools to nearby resources and benefits like SNAP (Supplement Nutrition Assistance Program).

