

SUMMER 2024

# AT THE TABLE

NEWS FROM THE HUNGER SOLUTION CENTER AT FOOD LIFELINE



**FOOD  
LIFELINE**  
HUNGER DOESN'T HAVE TO HAPPEN



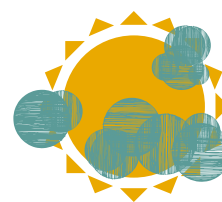
Read  
Silvia's  
Story  
on page 5

*"This is their community, and their families. It's a way to empower them and let them become part of the bigger change."*

— **Silvia Alvarez, one of the Triumph Teen Life Center founders**

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# FAMILIES FACE SUMMER FOOD GAP



Aaron and Ashley Bayliss-White are a self-described “working class family”. Aaron is a school bus driver for the Sumner, Washington school district, and Ashley is a stay-at-home mom that also volunteers for a foster family organization. Their family includes five school-aged children, three of whom are biological, while two of them are adopted. Even though they own their own home, and Aaron has a good job, he says money is still tight.

“You go through life, and you start off at the bottom of the pole, you work your way up, and you expect not to struggle your whole life and when you go from making \$5 an hour to making \$30 an hour, you expect you’d be a little better off than you are. And you’re just not.”

“Before Covid, we were struggling, but we were able to keep food in the fridge. We were not struggling like we are now.”

All five of the Bayliss-White kids receive free and/or reduced meals at school. But during summer vacation, those meals are gone, leaving families like Ashley and Aaron’s to try and

figure out how to replace those 600 missing meals. Last summer, the family made it through by carefully using the last of their Covid SNAP benefits.

“We were able to really stock up on things because we knew it wouldn’t last, and my husband was sure food prices were going to go up”, says Ashley. “I don’t know what we’re going to do this summer. Because our Covid money is gone.”



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*“The food bank has gotten Aaron and I out of a lot of tight spots.”*

**—Ashley Bayliss-White**

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The Bayliss-White family is not alone. Every year, more than 375,000 children in Western Washington receive free and/or reduced meals at school. This represents just over one-half of all students across 17 counties. This means families must replace roughly 120 meals per child over the summer. Not an easy lift. Especially when you have teenagers.

“Anything we buy is gone instantly”, says Aaron. “They eat a lot. And much more during the summer when they’re home.”

Aaron says making ends meet is even harder with inflation and sky-high grocery costs.

“Everything is so expensive anymore. What used to get you a cart of food, today it barely gets you a half cart.” And that’s not the only challenge. “Kids are picky eaters”, Aaron says. “You can’t just buy anything; you have to buy things that you know kids are going to like.” Shopping has become so stressful that Ashley turns the duties over to her husband.



*“In the summer months, having the kids home all day can put a lot of extra pressure on the family food budget,”* says Karla Marfjeren, Program Manager at West Seattle Food Bank.

**Visit [westseattlefoodbank.org](http://westseattlefoodbank.org) to learn more.**

**“I can’t do grocery shopping. It gives me anxiety. Our budget is only \$150 a week. That’s really all we have. So, Aaron does the shopping.”**

The Whites qualifies for a tiny EBT benefit, merely \$7 a month for the whole family. There, they find critical foods such as eggs, milk, and breakfast cereals.

**“The food bank has gotten Aaron and I out of a lot of tight spots”,** says Ashley. Aaron agrees. **“It gives us a bit of a break. It gives us the ability to know that there’s always something that we’ll be able to grab extra, that we can work into a meal.”**

Food banks feel added pressure during the summer months, with parents hoping to find the foods that will bridge the gap until school is back in session.

The West Seattle Food Bank serves hundreds of families every month. Families that are wrestling with tough choices, like choosing between buying groceries or paying a utility bill. The staff here understands these challenges, and they work every year to make as much food available to as many families as possible.



*“It (the food bank) gives us a bit of a break. It gives us the ability to know that there’s always something that we’ll be able to grab extra, that we can work into a meal.”*

**—Aaron White**

**“In the summer months, having the kids home all day can put a lot of extra pressure on the family food budget”,** says Karla Marfjeren, Program Manager at West Seattle Food Bank. **“With so many parents working during the day to keep the basics covered, we try to have items on our shelves that kids can**

**prepare for themselves. We also help share the information about local summer meal sites, where students can get weekday meals and snacks.”**

In addition to local food banks ramping up during the summer months, families will now get a little extra help from the Department of Agriculture and the State of Washington. This year, Washington families who qualify for EBT will also receive **“Sun Bucks”**. For every child, families will receive an additional \$120 in benefits. This program was made possible by the efforts of school districts, anti-hunger groups like Food Lifeline, and an entire community that sees the need to ensure children receive nutritious food, even when the school bell rings for the last time.

Ashley isn’t sure what the future holds financially, but she’s determined to make it work. No matter what.

**“I don’t know how we’re doing it; we’re just doing it.”**



# SUMMER TEEN PILOT INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF LEADERS



OPPORTUNITIES

Teens will have an opportunity to gain hands-on leadership experience in hunger relief work this summer, thanks to a pilot program at Food Lifeline. The program is a chance for tomorrow's leaders to become involved in the mission to stop hunger in our community, as they gain a greater understanding of food justice issues. To complete the program, teens will contribute 20 hours of on-site volunteering, attend at least one workshop, and participate in additional learning activities, including a Food Justice Book Club.

At a time when food insecurity is growing at an alarming rate, teens will be able to explore the complexities of food insecurity and hunger relief, and how advocacy, environmentalism, community engagement, and other innovative approaches can help to end the root causes of hunger. The program will provide inspiration for this type of visionary problem solving, as well as practical hands-on experience in non-profit work.

The flexible program, which runs from July 8 - August 30, encompasses three components. The Volunteer component constitutes 16 hours volunteering to sort and repack food for distribution, and four hours volunteering to help with administrative duties. The second component involves workshops in different areas such as advocacy, food sustainability, community engagement, fundraising, and event planning. The third component encompasses learning activities, such as a

Food Justice Book Club, customer service shifts at the front desk, and take-home activities.

As this program is a pilot, space is limited. For more information, visit: [foodlifeline.org/summer-teen](http://foodlifeline.org/summer-teen).



*"Empowering our youth to lead within food justice efforts will be essential in developing real and impactful solutions to ending hunger."*  
**—Madison Barbee,  
Volunteer Coordinator**



*"We're excited for the next generation of leaders to engage in our mission and learn more about hunger issues and how they can be an agent of change in their community. We can't wait for July!"*  
**—Kaila Korosec,  
Volunteer Coordinator**



# TEENS THRIVE! TRIUMPH TEEN LIFE CENTER



Silvia Alvarez grew up as a child of seasonal farmworkers in Central California. Years later, she married and moved to Skagit County, where she found remarkable similarities to her hometown. Here, she saw Latino families were facing the same challenges she experienced growing up, and she wanted to help.

In 2022, Silvia helped found the Triumph Teen Life Center in Mount Vernon, Washington, with the goal of helping Latino families and teens.

**“I wanted to be part of the change. If we want our kids to be successful, if we want our families to have the right tools to succeed, then we need to be providing those tools.”**

In the beginning, the group served just 20 families. But the work caught the eye of Food Lifeline, who offered the group funding through its Community Food Sovereignty Fund program.

**“Food Lifeline has been a big blessing for our community. They funded our first year, and they’re funding our second year.”**



Team and Staff at Triumph Teen Life Center

Today, these funds are helping the group purchase locally grown foods that are culturally relevant.

**“We’ve been able to partner with local farmers and provide our families with quality food. These are good, organic vegetables grown by our farmers, our Latino farmers. So we’re helping not only our families, but our farmers as well.”**



Silvia Alvarez

Thanks to this work, the group serves between 150-180 families every month. In June, they will open their new “Mercado”, a free grocery store that will be staffed by teens in the program.

**“This is their community, and their families. It’s a way to empower them and let them become part of the bigger change.”**

On a recent visit, Washington Governor Jay Inslee called the program “A safe haven for our families and our children”.

And that’s exactly the goal of Silvia Alvarez and her team.

Learn more about Triumph Teen Life Center at [triumphtlc.org](http://triumphtlc.org)



## Community Food Sovereignty Fund

# CRAFTING A SUMMER LUNCH BOX YOUR KIDS WILL LOVE

*... and parents can feel good serving!*



## GET YOUR KIDS INVOLVED IN THE PREP!

Make peanut butter and jelly fun: Have your child spread peanut butter and jelly onto a tortilla, roll it up and slice into bite sized pin wheels - with a side of sliced apple, carrot sticks, and ranch dressing, you've got a complete meal.



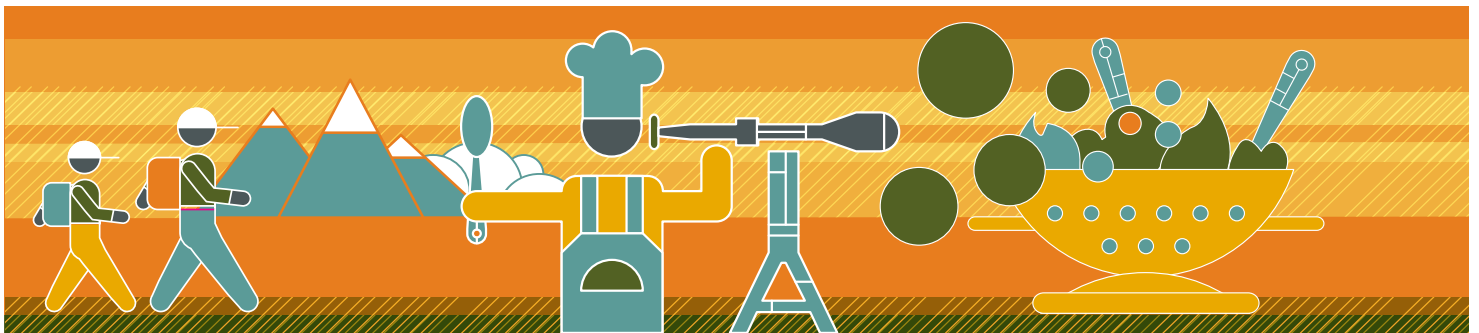
## TURN CANNED PROTEIN INTO A MEAL!

Tuna, chicken, salmon - combined with a little mayo, some crunchy diced veggies like celery, pickle, and carrots, serve with whole wheat crackers, tortillas, or bread for a healthful, delicious, and kid-friendly meal.



## TRY VEGGIES IN NEW WAYS!

Cherry tomatoes right off the vine are surprisingly sweet. Roasting cauliflower and broccoli reduces the bitter and brings out the natural sugars. Chopping up lettuce, cucumber, and carrots makes a simple and satisfying salad!



## INTRODUCE NEW FOODS AS AN ADVENTURE!

When you come across a new-to-you food at your local food bank, don't be afraid to take it home to try it! Explore online recipe sites with your kids. You can enter the food and meal in the recipe builder - like "ground turkey, lunch", then review the options that come up with your child. They're more likely to eat what they helped create! ([Allrecipes.com](http://Allrecipes.com) and [Yummly.com](http://Yummly.com) are two of our faves!)

# SAVE THE DATE



@ FOOD LIFELINE

GET INVOLVED! • ATTEND • DONATE • VOLUNTEER • ADVOCATE

## ROOT OUT HUNGER JUNE 1 - AUGUST 31

Join our campaign to Root Out Summer Hunger! All summer long we'll be raising awareness about the root causes of hunger, including complex issues like poverty, racial inequity, and social injustice. Join us this summer by donating, volunteering, or advocating: [foodlifeline.org/rootouthunger](https://foodlifeline.org/rootouthunger)

## FOOD FRENZY JULY 12 - 26

Your business can join this creative competition to help feed kids facing hunger when schools close for the summer. Your support during Food Frenzy helps ensure that kids home for the summer have the foods they need to learn, grow, and thrive. Last year, 67 teams collected enough food and raised enough money to provide 2.4 million meals for kids and families experiencing hunger! To sign up visit: [foodlifeline.org/food-frenzy](https://foodlifeline.org/food-frenzy)

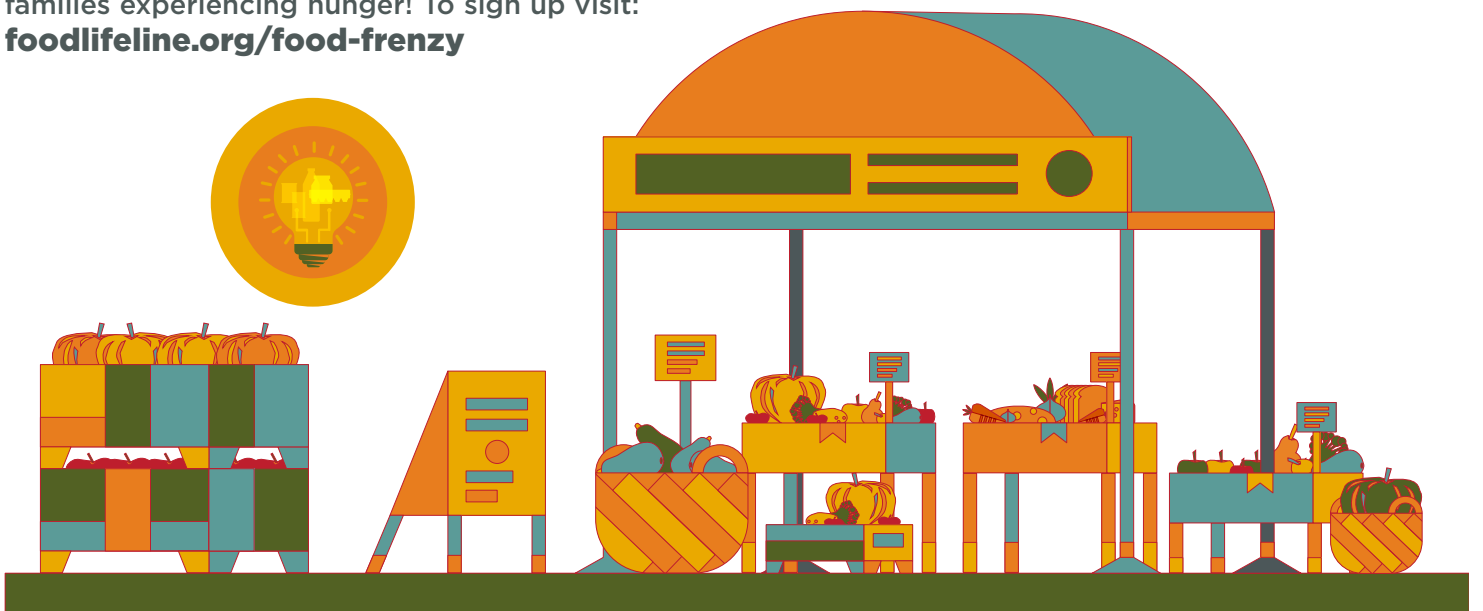


## HUNGER ACTION MONTH SEPTEMBER 1 - 30

September is Hunger Action Month – the Feeding America Network's annual campaign to raise awareness of hunger in the United States and to take action to combat poverty, inequity, and injustice so we can end hunger for good. Your power, voice, actions, and commitment will ensure no person has to make an impossible choice between food and other necessities like medicine, utilities, or childcare. For ways to get involved, visit: [foodlifeline.org/hungeractionmonth](https://foodlifeline.org/hungeractionmonth)

## DRESS DOWN HUNGER OCTOBER 19

Join us for a casual and fun evening filled with merriment as we celebrate our community and raise funds to move Food Lifeline's mission forward. For more information or to RSVP visit: [foodlifeline.org/dressdownhunger](https://foodlifeline.org/dressdownhunger)



# HELP KIDS AND FAMILIES LEARN, GROW & THRIVE



Summer should be carefree for kids. Yet, for the 52% of school aged children who rely on free- and reduced-priced meals during the school year, summer can quickly turn from freedom to uncertainty as families lose access to this needed nutritional support.

When school ends, the average family faces an increase of \$300 or more a month in grocery bills, often in homes where budgets are already stretched far too thin.

Many working families live in that perilous gap – they make too much money to qualify for nutrition assistance programs, but too little to make ends meet. These families make up about 30% of the visitors to our food bank partners throughout Western Washington.

We recently talked with Saeed, a father of school aged children. For his family, food banks offer a lifeline, extending their access to the nutritious foods they need to thrive. “I’m able to take home milk, fish, vegetables and fruits... things that are really expensive,” explains Saeed, nutritionally packed proteins, dairy, and produce they would otherwise not be able to purchase.

Families must have nutritious food to learn, grow, and thrive. That’s why we’re laser focused not only on providing assistance today, but working to solve food insecurity for good. We’re advancing public policy and legislation designed to bolster nutrition assistance programs, expand access to free school meals as part of basic education, strengthen SNAP and WIC benefits, and require that excess food, once destined for the landfill, gets redistributed through the hunger relief network so it ends up on the dinner tables of families who need it.



*“I’m able to take home milk, fish, vegetables and fruits... things that are really expensive.”*

**—Saeed, father of school aged children**



To learn more visit [foodlifeline.org/rootouthunger](http://foodlifeline.org/rootouthunger) or make a gift today

Please cut off the reply form below, and return with your gift.

SUMNEWSFY25

## WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN RESOLVE TO END SUMMER HUNGER

**I want to help families facing hunger receive the food they need to thrive!**  
 Visit [foodlifeline.org/newslettergift](http://foodlifeline.org/newslettergift) to donate

- To help close the summer meal gap
- To help kids learn, grow & thrive
- To ensure year-round nutrition is available
- \$\_\_\_\_\_ To help as many kids as possible
- Contribute By Mail

Mail to: 815 S 96th Street, Seattle, WA 98108-4934

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY/STATE/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 MY EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_



FROM

- I would like to make a one-time donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ using my credit card.
- I would like to have my monthly contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_ deducted from my checking account. *(I have included a voided check.)*
- Please charge my credit card.



Amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_  
 Credit Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
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