



St. Mary's donates 4.8 tons of frozen turkeys to those in need

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Athens, Ga. – Just before the holiday season began, St. Mary's Health Care System and its colleagues and volunteers donated 380 frozen turkeys to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia to help families in need this holiday season – a total of 9,700 pounds or 4.8 tons.



Colson Holt, right, Relationship Manager for the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, accepts a frozen turkey from Beth Patrick, St. Mary's Chief Human Resources Officer

Each year, St. Mary's gives a free turkey to each colleague and volunteer as a sign of appreciation for their dedication and service. During the week before Thanksgiving, St. Mary's leaders personally hand out frozen turkeys at St. Mary's Hospital in Athens, St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital in Lavonia, and St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital in Greensboro, as well as at ancillary facilities in Athens, Bogart and Watkinsville.

St. Mary's makes it easy for colleagues to donate their turkey to those in need, if they wish to do

so: they simply don't pick it up. The Food Bank collects the donated turkeys on the Monday before Thanksgiving in time to distribute them to families in need before Christmas.

"Every year I'm amazed and moved by the number of colleagues who choose to donate their turkey," said Beth Patrick, St. Mary's Chief Human Resources Officer. "It's a sad reality that the number of people who have food insecurities in our community continues to grow. We're thrilled that so many colleagues and volunteers love getting these turkeys, and we're just as thrilled that so many donate them to help others who are in need. It's a true testament to our commitment to our core values."

Colson Holt, Relationship Manager at the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia, said, "St. Mary's shows what it means to truly care for this community. They give from the heart, and those donations translate directly into meals and relief for families who are feeling the pressure of rising costs. We're honored to partner with an organization that leads with compassion and follows through with action."

Holt explained that the donation comes at a time when many neighbors are facing difficult choices. "We continue to see many of our neighbors pushed to make tough choices about food, housing, and healthcare. Acts of generosity like this help make those choices a little less difficult. Our partnership with St. Mary's is a reminder that when this region comes together, we nourish neighbors and strengthen the wellbeing of the entire community," he added.

In 2024, the Food Bank provided more than 15.5 million pounds of food to families through over 230 member organizations – including food pantries, senior centers, churches and other non-profit hunger relief organizations – in 15 counties: Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Elbert, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns and White. The Food Bank estimates 91,600 people in their service area face food insecurity, including 1 in 6 children and 1 in 12 seniors.

For more information about the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia and the agencies with which it partners, visit www.foodbanknega.org. For more information about St. Mary's, please visit www.stmarys-health.org.

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