



St. Mary's donates a ton of frozen turkeys to those in need

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Just before Thanksgiving, St. Mary's Health Care System and its colleagues and volunteers donated 206 frozen turkeys – weighing more than a ton – to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia and the Greene County Food Pantry to help families in need this holiday season.



Sherry Anderson, FBNG Director of Engagement; Julie Carter, St. Mary's Vice President Mission Services, and Raine Dillon, FBNG Lead Food Sourcer, pose with one of the 206 turkeys donated by St. Mary's to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia and the Greene County Food Pantry.

Each year, St. Mary's partners with its food service provider, Metz Culinary, to give a free turkey to each colleague and volunteer as a token of appreciation for their dedication and service. During the weeks 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

and Food Pantry collect the donated turkeys in time to distribute them to families in need before the holiday.

"Every year I'm amazed and moved by the number of colleagues who choose to donate their turkey," said Julie Carter, Vice President Mission Services. "We are keenly aware that the number of people who are food insecure in our community is growing. 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."

Of the 206 turkeys donated, 171 went to the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia from St. Mary's Hospital in Athens and St. Mary's Sacred Heart Hospital in Lavonia.

"St. Mary's has gone above and beyond guiding and serving our region through unprecedented challenges to our public health, which is an incredible feat alone," said Erin Barger, Food Bank of Northeast Georgia executive director. "They have gone the extra mile on behalf of our neighbors to bless hundreds of families through the donation of turkeys for Thanksgiving."

Barger noted that the Food Bank continues to see elevated need across its entire service area. "God bless all of you and thank you for working through the Food Bank of Northeast Georgia to work toward ending food insecurity in Northeast Georgia," she added.

Each year, the food bank provides more than 13 million pounds of food to families through around 200 partner organizations – including soup kitchens, food pantries, senior centers, churches and other non-profit hunger relief organizations – in 14 counties: Banks, Barrow, Clarke, Franklin, Habersham, Hart, Jackson, Madison, Oconee, Oglethorpe, Rabun, Stephens, Towns and White.

In Greene County, colleagues and volunteers with St. Mary's Good Samaritan Hospital donated 35 turkeys to the Greene County Food Pantry. Since its founding in 2007, the charity has served more than 5,500 families – nearly 15,000 individuals – with each family receiving more than 30 pounds of feed each month. More than 30 percent of the Food Pantry's clients are senior citizens living below the poverty level.

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 the Greene County Food Pantry, visit <https://www.greenecountyfoodpantry.org/>.

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