

## OUR MISSION:

To deliver food and quality services to food banks and foster relationships in support of our commitment to eliminate hunger.

Established in 1984, AAFB is a private, non-profit organization serving five regional food bank members that reach a network of nearly 1,700 food pantries and agencies. As one of the first state associations in the nation, AAFB was instrumental in the development of a statewide gleaning project, and our advocacy efforts have brought about beneficial state and federal legislation for our members and the people they serve.

The Association of Arizona Food Banks is not a food bank - we help make food banking better.

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## AAFB MEMBER FOOD BANKS COLLECTIVELY SERVE ALL 15 ARIZONA COUNTIES:

Community Food Bank, Tucson  
[www.communityfoodbank.org](http://www.communityfoodbank.org) | 520.622.0525

Desert Mission Food Bank, Phoenix  
[www.jcl.com/foodbank](http://www.jcl.com/foodbank) | 602.870.6060

St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, Phoenix  
[www.firstfoodbank.org](http://www.firstfoodbank.org) | 602.242.3663

United Food Bank, Mesa  
[www.unitedfoodbank.org](http://www.unitedfoodbank.org) | 480.926.4897

Yuma Community Food Bank, Yuma  
[www.yumafoodbank.org](http://www.yumafoodbank.org) | 928.343.1243

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Arizona Self Help - resource pre-screening tool  
[www.arizonaselfhelp.org](http://www.arizonaselfhelp.org)

Health-e-Arizona - online SNAP (Food Stamp) application  
[www.healthearizona.org](http://www.healthearizona.org)

Community Information & Referral  
[www.cir.org](http://www.cir.org)

Valley of the Sun United Way  
[www.vsuw.org](http://www.vsuw.org)

Arizona Department of Economic Security  
[www.azdes.gov](http://www.azdes.gov)



## STAY CONNECTED WITH AAFB:

Stay current on state and federal activities by sending an email with "Subscribe to the AAFB Advocacy Team" in the subject line to Ginny Hildebrand at [ghildebrand@azfoodbanks.org](mailto:ghildebrand@azfoodbanks.org).

Subscribe to the bi-weekly AAFB Email Newsletter by emailing Brian Simpson at [brian@azfoodbanks.org](mailto:brian@azfoodbanks.org).

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## HELP US SAVE COSTS:

Consider receiving FOOD LINES in your inbox. While a print version will be available, saving on printing and postage costs will allow us to direct more resources toward our mission! Email [brian@azfoodbanks.org](mailto:brian@azfoodbanks.org) to receive future issues in your inbox.

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# ASSOCIATION OF ARIZONA FOOD BANKS

- Special Pullout Section: *Making the Pieces Fit for Arizona: The Case for our Social Services Safety Net*
- Special Report on Farms, Food Banks & You
- The Latest from the Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project

## IN THIS ISSUE OF FOOD LINES:

**ADVOCACY IN ACTION:** AAFB's Ginny Hildebrand and executives from St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance pose with Arizona Representative Ben Quayle in Washington, D.C. earlier this month.

**A WELCOMING SIGN:** The Marana Heritage Farm, operated by Community Food Bank, offers a new perspective on farming, food security and building a strong community.



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# FOOD LINES



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## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

GINNY HILDEBRAND, AAFB President & CEO



Dear Friends,

This issue of FOOD LINES illustrates the partnership between farming and food banking. Our member food bank, Community Food Bank, and its Marana Heritage Farm, promote community education and participation for volunteers of all ages while offering the food bank locally grown produce. A longtime supporter of AAFB, Duncan Family Farms is a leading example of local agriculture's generosity to the food bank network, donating produce for over a decade and over a million pounds each season.

The food bank network depends on financial support from foundations, corporations, local, state and federal sources. It also depends on financial and volunteer support and from individuals and groups, professional management and reasonable public policies designed to assist households in time of need. Every piece of this support puzzle is important-withdrawing any part leaves the network weakened and households in need without assistance.

Why is AAFB explaining the complexity of the food banking and social services safety net now? Because this is a critical time to keep all sources of support for the food bank network intact. The loss of nearly 300,000 Arizona jobs since December, 2007 has devastated thousands of families, sending unprecedented numbers to food banks. Our member food banks have increased food distribution by nearly 55% from pre-recession levels. AAFB contributed to this increase, delivering 30 million pounds, the equivalent of 23.4 million meals, to the food banks last fiscal year.

The State deficit is a major concern, estimated at \$531 million in this fiscal year and \$974 million in the year beginning in July. Cuts to child care, senior care, and physical/mental health care, amongst others, have already moved families from frugal solvency to needing assistance from food banks. There is a strong likelihood of further cuts, if not to the food bank network directly, then to the services that help sustain the very households we serve.

At the federal level, the recently reauthorized Child Nutrition Act is slated to assist community agencies and schools beginning in 2012 to provide more summer meal programs for children, facilitate better access to school meals during the year and boost the nutritional value of these programs. There is however, heated debate due to the federal budget deficit situation, about whether the program improvements can or will be funded. AAFB is encouraging Arizona's Congressional delegation to support these important improvements, as well as other nutrition assistance programs under review.

In short, the food banking network and other assistance to families in need are under attack from several directions, including increased demand and from public policy actions, both those taken and those being considered. Please consider how you might become more involved in the solution to the unacceptable condition of hunger.

Please continue your support of AAFB. Help us secure more food, encourage policy makers to address the needs of vulnerable families and keep all the important partners involved. You can make a donation quickly and securely at [www.azfoodbanks.org](http://www.azfoodbanks.org) or use the envelope in this edition of FOOD LINES to send a contribution. Thank you again for your partnership in alleviating the unacceptable condition of hunger.

In gratitude,

GINNY HILDEBRAND, President and CEO

## ...WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

This past holiday season and the still-young 2011 have been kind to AAFB, and so we extend big a THANK YOU to several organizations who have been generous with their support:

- In November, employees of **Walmart** and **Sam's Club** generously voted for AAFB to receive a \$100,000 grant, and the Walmart Foundation followed-up with a second grant for the same amount just one month later, for a total of \$200,000.
- In December, **Switch Restaurant & Wine Bar**, with whom AAFB shares sponsorship of the Central/Encanto light-rail station, generously hosted our staff holiday party and presented us with a \$1,000 donation.
- For the third consecutive year, customers of **Copenhagen Furniture** helped raise \$1,700 for AAFB as part of their Ekornes Stressless Recliner holiday sales promotion.
- Finally in January, the **Congressional Hunger Center** awarded AAFB with a 2010 Victory Against Hunger Award worth \$1,000 for our pursuit of the elimination of childhood hunger.

### THANK YOU WALMART:

A check for \$200,000 is graciously presented by Walmart's Delia Garcia, Senior Manager of Government Affairs & Government Relations. Walmart associates are joined by AAFB's Virginia Skinner and United Food Bank's Bob Evans, beside our Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project semi.



# FOOD BANKS & FARMING: UNLIKELY PARTNERS?

## Community Food Bank's Marana Heritage Farm Promotes Education and Community to Combat Hunger

When you think of a farm, do you think about hunger or a food bank? Do thoughts of sustainability or eating organic come to mind? Do you become inspired to grow your own vegetable garden? Regardless of how you answered, Community Food Bank's Marana Heritage Farm is eager to share its story and serve as a role model for people concerned about hunger and sustainability.

Truth is, most people do not connect farms with food banks, but once they learn about the Marana Heritage Farm, the connections become clear. Nestled along the eastern bank of the Santa Cruz River north of Tucson, a couple miles west of I-10 and surrounded by a growing subdivision, the twenty-five acre Marana Heritage Farm operates as the ultimate community food resource, providing opportunity, education—and food—for nearly everyone.

The land the farm sits on is owned by the State of Arizona, leased to the town of Marana, and operated by Community Food Bank, the AAFB-member regional food bank serving Tucson and all of southern Arizona. The Farm's roots trace back to the 1940s, although land in this area of the state has been used for farming for centuries. Following a period of neglect, Community Food Bank agreed to restore the Farm in 2006, building it into something that provides much more than just food.

The Farm primarily runs on community volunteers, Americorp and four temporary grant-funded positions which oversee the Youth Farm Project and the Composting Operation. Farm Coordinators Cie'na (pronounced See-na) Schlaefli and Maggie Whiteside, both employees of Community Food Bank, are the only full-time paid positions on the farm. Together, they do a little bit of everything: training and coordinating volunteer groups, planting and tending to crops, overseeing the on-site farmer's market, and teaching public classes on a myriad of topics such as organic growing methods and water conservation.

The town of Marana is happy to let Community Food Bank oversee the Farm in exchange for it to be used as a "working farm" and shared with the local community. This means school buses filled with almost every grade level from all over Tucson and Southern Arizona arrive for field trips to learn about growing food in the desert and to see how different types of food ultimately end up on their plates. For many students, this is their first experience being on a farm. For others, it complements lessons they've been learning from their own school's farm or related farm-to-school programs, a new component of Child Nutrition Reauthorization passed last year.

The experience is completely hands-on. Depending on the time of year and needs of the Farm, students could be walking through a tunnel of green beans helping to pick them, feeding chickens, stirring compost, or on their hands and knees planting rows of vegetables. The Farm does not have any mandates on how much food is produced, allowing for planting to be hands-on learning activity—as the not-quite-straight rows of garlic or patches of broccoli alternately planted a little too close together or far apart attest.

Tucked into every lesson is the important message of eating healthy from locally grown sources, another theme highlighted in Child Nutrition Reauthorization and a major component of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign, which stresses eating healthy and staying active to prevent obesity. School meals are becoming

healthier as a result, relying in part more on whole grains and fresh fruit and vegetables, and familiarizing kids with farms and food is grown will help them be more open to the new menus.

Beyond field trips, the Youth Farm Project apprenticeship program, funded through a Community Foods Projects Grant, gives young adults the opportunity to develop their farming skills and learn about the foods they eat and how they can affect their health and well-being. With the guidance of two Youth Farm Coordinators, the youth, along with the volunteers and Americorp members, play a key role in keeping crops planted year-round, which the Farm can do despite Arizona's sometimes extreme temperatures because of a carefully calculated planting schedule that matches crops to their optimal growing conditions. The crops' yields are sold at the farmer's market or donated to the food bank.

In addition, the Farm regularly hosts 4H students from nearby Marana High School to raise a small group of pigs, sheep and chickens. The students learn about humanely raising animals for food and show, while their waste is used for composting, which ultimately helps replenish soil lost to dust storms. The pigs even do some work around the farm, helping to keep the pesky bermuda grass at bay!

Another one of the opportunities the Farm provides is for households to have a small plot of their own to grow vegetables. Promoting sustainability, food security and entrepreneurship, this initiative allows households to keep crops they grow for themselves or sell them at the Farm's weekly market. The Farm provides the land, seeds, water and other tools—all at no cost—in exchange for a commitment that the plots will be regularly tended to and that a small portion of the produce be donated to the food bank. For some households, this opportunity has created much-needed supplemental income and nutrition.

The Farm has also cultivated numerous relationships that further cement its status as a valued community partner. For example, the Farm works with the town of Marana to harvest rainwater from nearby streets into a series of perimeter ditches and native vegetative areas to assist with irrigation and combat dust. If you've ever driven down I-10 in this area, you know dust can be a terrible problem, snarling traffic and stripping the land of nutrient-rich topsoil.

Perhaps most impressively, instead of feeling trapped by encroachment from a still-expanding nearby subdivision, the Farm has worked with developers to steer rainwater from new developments into those same ditches. The Farm has even partnered with Tucson's Reid Park Zoo to receive elephant waste for composting.

At the end of the day, the Marana Heritage Farm works so well because of Community Food Bank's goals to do more than just hand out emergency food boxes. Following the old "teach a man to fish" mantra, crops from the Farm support numerous community gardens and farmer's markets throughout Southern Arizona, and the food bank has helped more farmers' markets accept WIC and SNAP (Food Stamp) benefits. By focusing on community involvement and education, their investment in the Farm is helping raise a new generation of Arizonans who better understand where their food comes from, why buying local is important, and how farming helps combat hunger and bring more people out of food insecurity.



## GLEANNING PROJECT UPDATE

by Jami Kakinuma, Gleaning Operations Administrative Manager

### GLEANNING PROJECT PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: DUNCAN FARMS

Duncan Family Farms is a 2,500 acre produce farm in Goodyear, Arizona owned and operated by Arnott and Kathleen Duncan, specializing in organic baby lettuces for processors who provide bagged salads to the retail and food service industries. They also oversee the Wigwam Farmers Market and Community Supported Agriculture program, keeping the farm connected to the community.

In 1992, the Duncans began offering educational tours for school groups and established a small, seasonal produce stand at their farm site. Since then, Duncan Family Farms has become an extremely popular recreational and educational destination in addition to growing produce.

Duncan Family Farms also operates one of the largest privately run composting programs in the Southwest, turning large quantities of waste from local dairies, chicken farms and other sources into natural fertilizer. The farm also receives truck-loads of tree trimmings, grass clippings and wood chips from local municipalities. This waste, which would otherwise end up in the landfill, is used to create a natural fertilizer.

Since water is such a precious natural resource, Duncan Family Farm is a leader in using a number of state-of-the-art techniques to conserve it, including: water recovery; laser leveling of fields to decrease water use and erosion; using gated pipe, cement-lined ditches and contour farming design to increase efficiency; using above-ground drip irrigation system and plastic row covers to increase germination rates and decrease water use; and using sprinkler pipes instead of furrow irrigation on all fields. Duncan Family Farms also uses "cover crops": crops grown with no intention of harvesting. They help protect and improve the soil by controlling erosion and weeds, and maintaining soil organic matter.

Finally, Duncan Family Farms is a huge supporter of Arizona's food banks and the Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project. Over a decade ago, Arnott Duncan helped establish the Gleaning Project using inmate labor to 'glean' fresh produce from the farm's fields to donate to the food banks. This unique program donates approximately one million pounds of produce each season for a total of more than 12 million pounds to date. It has also become a national model and has been replicated around the state and country.

### CITRUS SEASON UPDATE

Despite bitter cold and frost that plagued much of Central and Southern Arizona, as well as huge parts of Mexico, the Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project had transported 2.1 million pounds of citrus through the end of February, besting the totals transported during the 2010 citrus season.

The Gleaning Project extends a big **THANK YOU** to each one of you who donated citrus to a food bank this year!

## YOUR DONATION MAKES A DIFFERENCE

### YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HUNGER

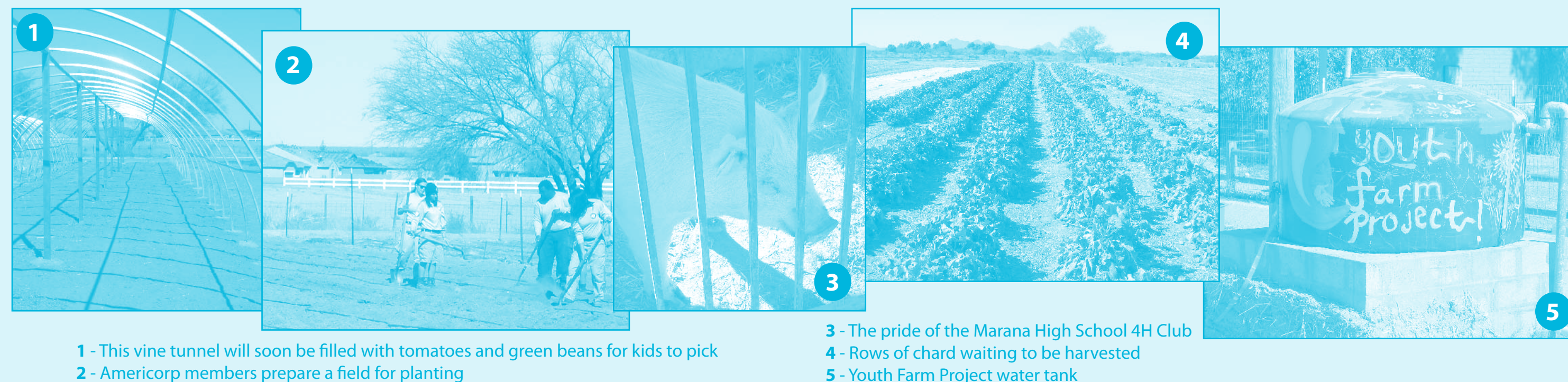
More Arizona families than ever are struggling to feed their children. One in five individuals in Arizona lives in poverty, and one in four children struggle with hunger. You can be a partner in alleviating the unacceptable condition of hunger.

Celebrate the holidays, a birthday, or any special occasion by **making a contribution in honor or memory** of family members, friends, colleagues, or a treasured loved one. Acknowledgements, without dollar amounts, will be sent to your honoree if you wish. Others have chosen to **become monthly donors** by having AAFB charge their credit card each month on the 5th or the 20th, a convenient way to keep supporting our work throughout the year.

Returning the enclosed envelope or making a secure online donation at [www.azfoodbanks.org](http://www.azfoodbanks.org) today helps us deliver much needed food and services to food banks, and advocate for better resources for families in need.

### DOES YOUR EMPLOYER MATCH GIFTS?

Did you know you may be able to double your gift to AAFB through Matching Gift Programs? Many employers offer to match your gift as a way to encourage their employees, and often their retirees, to support charitable organizations. While many of our donors access this opportunity, there are probably many more who may not realize this potential. Please ask your human resources office if your company offers this opportunity to give a "second helping" of generosity to people who are hungry throughout Arizona.



1 - This vine tunnel will soon be filled with tomatoes and green beans for kids to pick  
2 - Americorp members prepare a field for planting

3 - The pride of the Marana High School 4H Club  
4 - Rows of chard waiting to be harvested  
5 - Youth Farm Project water tank

## VOLUNTEERING, PLANT-A-RROW, FARM-TO-SCHOOL & MORE

**VOLUNTEER AT THE MARANA HERITAGE FARM:** As the article mentions, regular and one-time volunteers are always welcome at the Marana Heritage Farm, whether individuals, families, school groups, community groups, or really anyone who is interested. Hours and tasks vary by time of year. In addition, the Farm offers classes each month on growing your own food, harvesting rainwater, composting, and much more. For more information about classes or volunteering, please visit [www.communityfoodbank.org/maranafarm](http://www.communityfoodbank.org/maranafarm).

**GARDENERS:** Not sure what to plant? Here is a sampling of crops perfect for planting in March, April or May:

- Basil
- Chili & Bell Peppers
- Black Eyed Peas
- Cucumber
- Sweet Corn
- Bush & Pole Beans
- Eggplant
- Melons
- Tomatoes

**PLANT-A-RROW:** If you are planting a garden this year, consider participating in Plant-A-Row. Since 1995, Plant-A-Row asks gardeners to plant an extra row of produce to donate to their local food bank. With an estimated 84 million households gardening in the U.S., a significant impact can be made by planting that extra row. Check out [www.gardenwriters.org](http://www.gardenwriters.org) for more information.

**WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT FARM-TO-SCHOOL?** This initiative, which received additional funding in the Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation passed last year, aims to connect K-12 schools with local farms to help serve more healthy meals in school cafeterias while providing agriculture and nutrition education opportunities, all while supporting local farmers. Visit [www.schoolnutrition.org](http://www.schoolnutrition.org) or [www.farmtoschool.org](http://www.farmtoschool.org) for more information.

**WANT YOUR CHILD TO EAT HEALTHIER?** Join First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move campaign to encourage children to make healthy choices, while also improving food quality in schools, access to healthy, affordable food, and reducing childhood obesity. Learn more at [www.letsmove.gov](http://www.letsmove.gov).

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