



Fall 2021

FEEDING *the* HUNGRY

Letter from the CEO

Fall is my absolute favorite season! I feel certain I have written about this previously. If I had to rank the seasons in order of preference, the list would always begin with Fall and end with Summer. Spring and Winter tend to shift on my list based on pollen counts and ice accumulation.

Aside from the actual weather, Fall is my favorite because it is a season of Thankfulness. I recently celebrated my 24th anniversary at the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas. Some of the biggest blessings in my life have been the people I have worked with throughout these years. For this issue, a couple of our team members have shared a little bit about themselves so you can get to know more about our Food Bank family.

For what and for whom are you thankful? As you make your "Thankful List," please remember that, for some, Fall may be a season of angst as they wonder how to put food on the table each day, much less plan a special Thanksgiving meal. Your continued support of the Food Bank gives hope to people facing hunger by providing food assistance.



With Gratitude,

Christie Jordan

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PO Box 2246
Jonesboro, AR 72402
(870) 932-3663
FoodBankofNEA.org

Staff Directory

Marty Black, Warehouse Associate & Truck Driver
Jennifer Bryant, Agency Relations Coordinator
Jeff Fielder, Compliance & Facilities Manager
Ethan Frazier, Warehouse Manager
Allan Garner, Director of Operations
Donna Gilbert, Agency Relations Coordinator
Jordan Griffin, Development Officer
Jennifer Hannah, Outreach Coordinator
Rebecca Hendrix, Chief Development Officer
Amber Horton, Corporate Partnerships Coordinator
Christie Jordan, Chief Executive Officer
Cody LaRue, Warehouse Associate & Truck Driver
Keith Livesay, USDA Coordinator
Bonnie Mamula, Administrative Assistant
Scarlett Mullins, Service Insights Coordinator
Vicki Pillow, Grant Writer
Abby Thomas, Programs Coordinator
Mark Ward, Warehouse Associate & Truck Driver
Sheila Wilson, Development Assistant

For all the latest information,
visit our website at
FoodBankofNEA.org
We're very social!
Join us on:



@FoodBankofNEA

Sheila's Story

Sheila grew up in Chicago with her parents. They were a successful upper middle-class family. Both of Sheila's parents worked full-time while she attended the number one high school in the state of Illinois. After high school, Sheila attended Malcolm X College and then the University of Chicago where she earned a degree in Marketing and Finance.

"I always wanted to wear a suit and heels to work, and come to find out, I did not want to be a bank teller," said Sheila.

So instead, Sheila began work in the medical field. First as a Certified Nursing Assistant then as a monitor tech and phlebotomist. She worked full-time to pay the mortgage on her home where she lived with her mother and four children.

"I had a regular life. I could do whatever I wanted to because I knew if I ever needed anything, I just had to work extra hours or pick up a part-time job."

At a regular doctor's visit in February of 2016, Sheila's doctor gave her a clean bill of health. Two months later, while Sheila and her friends were on a trip to Nashville, she began to feel sick. She asked a friend to call an ambulance. It was in the emergency room that Sheila found out she was having a heart attack. After surgery and a brief ICU stay, Sheila left the hospital — \$1 million





Sheila and Miracle (second row, first on the left) pictured with some of the staff of the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas.

in debt and unable to work full-time. By September, Sheila had no source of income and had been denied long-term disability.

"I had to live off of what was in the bank, the sale of the house, and whatever my family gave me. I gave away everything besides my washer and dryer, my books, and my dishes. Basically, now I am starting over."

It took two years for Sheila to receive low-income housing assistance, and recent adjustments to her medical benefits have left her with some difficult choices.

"When it comes to medical, I'm pretty much on my own. I used to be on 26 medications. I probably take about 18 now. What we had to do was go through my medications and figure out what I can live without." Sheila's first visit to a food pantry was a couple of years after her heart attack.

"I never thought I'd catch myself in the food line. I'm always on the other side volunteering. But now, here it is. I'm actually in this line."

And yet Sheila is always assured that her family will have food to eat, including her one-year-old granddaughter, Miracle. Miracle was born in August 2020, in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. Sheila became Miracle's legal guardian when she was just three months old.

"I had to make a choice – and this is where you figure out how strong of a person you are. I had a few problems with WIC because I had not adopted my granddaughter at that point. And I wanted to adopt her. That means I need to maintain a household; I need to maintain employment. And I realized I need to go back to work and so that was my choice."

That choice brought Sheila to the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas. She began working with the Food Bank in December of 2020 through a temporary staffing agency. In April 2021 the Food Bank had an opening for a part-time Development Assistant. Sheila was a natural choice because of her skills and the fantastic work ethic she modeled as a temporary employee. Sheila is also a full-time student seeking a degree in Psychology with a minor in dietetics.

Life for Sheila now is very different from what it was five years ago, but Sheila won't be down for long.

"Just because this is my situation, this is not my path, nor will I allow it to be my future."

Employee Profile

Jordan Griffin

Q What brought you to the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas?

A I was on the fence about moving back to the area from Northwest Arkansas and saw the job posting online. It was honestly a strange feeling, but I felt the job description was written specifically for me. After doing some research, I was impressed with the work the FBNEA was doing and just knew I wanted to be a part of something bigger to make a difference in my community.

Q Favorite part of the job?

A Through managing the volunteers, I have the opportunity to meet like-minded people each week that truly value our Northeast Arkansas community and bond with complete strangers over accomplishing a common goal. Being able to meet people with such servant hearts that give so freely of their time is such a joy, especially through all the dark times of the last year and a half.

Q Least favorite part of the job?

A Wrapping pallets.

Q Favorite line from a movie?

A "FLORALS ... FOR SPRING? GROUNDBREAKING."
– Miranda Priestly, *The Devil Wears Prada*.

Q Most impactful moment at work?

A Driving to Cross County for a Commodity Distribution during the ice/snow and seeing the number of individuals and families venturing out in the weather to secure their boxes of food.

If you could have dinner with any 5 people, dead or alive, who would it be?

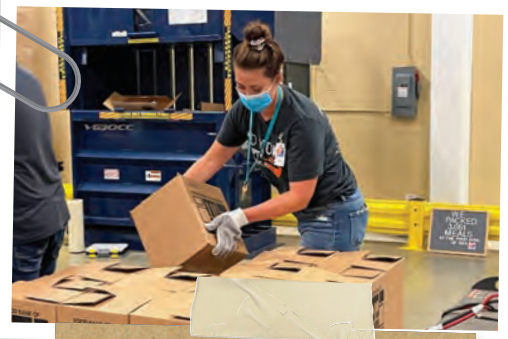
- 1 Robin Williams
- 2 Freddie Mercury
- 3 Jesus Christ
- 4 Barack Obama
- 5 Dolly Parton



Jordan Griffin, Development Officer.



Jordan Griffin moves a pallet of boxes packed by volunteers at the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas.



Jordan Griffin stacks boxes during a volunteer event at the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas.