To provide assistance for those in need, moving them from a state of hunger and impoverishment to self-sufficiency, empowerment, and self-reliance.

Our mission statement above says so much about who we are and how important our work is here in Plant City and within the six other surrounding communities (17 zip code area) that we serve: Dover, Seffner, Thonotosassa, Valrico, Lithia, and some limited outreach in Riverview. An even better determinant of our work at the United Food Bank and Services of Plant City is the testimony of our clients. You will hear from some of them in this report. It is their journey, leading up to and out of poverty and food insecurity that inspires me, our board of directors, the staff, and, quite frankly, each other.

I finished my first year serving as the food bank’s executive director in July of 2017. Prior to that, beginning in 2011, I served on the board of directors as president elect and secretary of this agency. I’ve seen some extreme growth in the needs of the East Hillsborough residents that we serve, a near doubling by way of sheer food distribution going up from 612,789 pounds in 2015 to 1,023,472 pounds in 2016. This was all prior to Hurricane Irma. Even as we’re blessed to have less destruction than some areas, we, too, saw an increase following the storm and our capacity was tested. We appreciate our donors: corporate, foundation, and government funders, and FEMA, for helping us through that time.

Given that we are a social service provider in addition to distributing nonperishable and perishable food supplies, it makes our 2017-18 strategic planning updates even more critical. Since we are often a first point of entry for these food-insecure individuals, the vast majority being families and single heads-of-households, it is an opportunity to change lives and strengthen long-term outcomes.

We are not working with the homeless at this food bank; we can’t be all things to all people. We are focusing on the working-poor or those individuals or families that have had an unforeseen emergency derail their lives and just need hope and guidance to get back on track. We have a lot of work ahead and appreciate all of our partners who link arms with us to make a difference.

Thank you for helping me realize some amazing progress this year, including strengthening our outcomes and evaluation plans.

Mary Heguck
The United Food Bank seeks to stamp out hunger in East Hillsborough County through a holistic approach, including community referrals, to reduce some of the causes of hunger: lack of access to SNAP (food stamps), unforeseen or high medical costs, low wages, high housing costs, unemployment, and poor money management. The following programs have been a part of the food bank’s 2016-17 onsite continuum of care:

- **Food Distribution**: grocery stores, donors, cash purchases, Feeding America, foundation partners
- **Emergency Food Distribution**: Funders/FEMA
- **FDIC Money Smart Program**: Regions Bank
- **ACCESS Site**: approved DCF site for benefit sign up and monitoring (food stamps, etc.)
- **Education Center**: computer lab and internet for job search, insurance registration, educational classes and tutorials, GED preparation
- **Children’s Nutritional Outreach**: Hillsborough County School District
- **Diabetes Prevention Class**: FL Dept. of Health
- **Health Literacy**: Hispanic Services Council and Florida Blue
- **Flu Shots**: BayCare’s South FL Baptist Hospital

**Interns**: Hillsborough Education Foundation made possible by Bank of America

**Senior volunteers**: stipends paid by Area Agency on Aging

**Volunteers**: Plant City Housing Authority and many others

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In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, UFBPC compared September 2016 to September 2017: 40,000 individuals and 12,000 families were served in the last 12 months.

- Plant City 49,467
- Dover 4,189
- Valrico 2,160
- Seffner 1,624
- Riverview 208
- Thonotosassa 488
- Alafia 524
- Latha 976
- Hillsborough Education Foundation 205

40,000 individuals and 12,000 families were served in the last 12 months. In the aftermath of Hurricane Irma, UFBPC compared September 2016 to 2017.

**2016 September**
- Inbound Food: 151,567 lbs.
- Outbound Food: 102,933 lbs.
- People Served: 2,470

**2017 September**
- Inbound Food: 155,912 lbs.
- Outbound Food: 157,783 lbs.
- People Served: 3,028

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**Financial Update**

**Disasters Happen in Life**

**United Food Bank Testimonials**

**For Susan**, having three children, ages 14, 16, and 19, would be enough for any mother and husband to coordinate as a family unit. And yet, for this family of five, things got more complicated six years ago, when their ten-year-old daughter was diagnosed with myasthenia gravis, a chronic autoimmune neuromuscular disorder that weakens various muscle groups. It meant, even with a husband who works as a mechanic, sometimes in management, there is never enough money, given their medical bills.

Susan makes plenty of lists, saves plenty of coupons, and goes without plenty, and still she found herself walking into the food bank to ask for help in 2013. It helps her stretch her budget and is a greatly needed resource: a life saver.

Driving to Wal-Mart, she would pass by the United Food Bank sign by the road and one day stopped in. Once her husband was back to work in a production job in February of 2017, he was hit from behind with a forklift and has been on worker’s compensation until authorized to return. Following his loss of work in early 2017, Gladys and her husband faced eviction. It came down to paying the electric, paying rent, or buying food. The food bank has been a life saver. She has only missed two classes since she came to the food bank in the summer of 2015. She is learning to budget.