We would like to share some of our many accomplishments over the past several months. These achievements would not be possible without the leadership commitment of caring friends like you.

### Addressing Child Hunger

Our *Food4OurKids* program feeds hungry children on weekends throughout the year.

Palm Beach County is the 11th largest school district in the United States, and more than 62% of our school-aged children qualify for free or reduced price school meals. For many of these children, the breakfast and lunch they receive at school may be the only meals they have each day. Weekends are especially hard without access to school meals. Blanca and her son Kenneth both said how thankful they are for the food they receive through the program. Blanca and her husband both work but they struggle to make ends meet. “Please continue the help,” she says. “Many families need it.”

In 2013, the Palm Beach County Food Bank launched *Food4OurKids* to help meet the needs of these children and families over the summer weekends, when it is often more difficult to access food. Beginning with the 2016-17 school year, we extended the program to include weekends year-round. This year we are serving 200 children at two elementary afterschool programs with high rates of children at risk of hunger. That means we are distributing almost 170,000 pounds of food to feed hungry children in our community.

### Food Recovery & Distribution

The Palm Beach County Food Bank collects, recovers, and distributes food to soup kitchens, food pantries, and homeless shelters in Palm Beach County.

The Food Bank’s refrigerated trucks pick up and receive food donations from local farmers, distributors, and retailers. Up to 50 percent of the product we receive is from the local agricultural community. The food is brought to our 30,000-square-foot refrigerated warehouse and sorted by groups of dedicated volunteers. Food is then allocated for distribution at no cost to our partner agencies that directly feed the hungry from their community-based facilities.

79-year-old retiree Richard greatly appreciates the food. He and his wife struggle to get by on their fixed retirement budget. As he enjoyed a hot meal at one of our partner soup kitchens recently, he said: “I think people who support the Food Bank and local pantries are wonderful. This soup kitchen even stayed open during Hurricane Irma.”
Benefits Outreach Program

The Food Bank’s Benefits Outreach Program helps individuals and families apply for federal food assistance. In Palm Beach County, more than 195,000 residents depend on food stamps received through the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

However, there are more eligible seniors and families who do not receive these benefits for a variety of reasons. Sometimes, they don’t know they’re eligible or it’s too difficult to navigate the process. Many times, they are just too embarrassed to seek help. That’s where the Food Bank comes in. The number of people we have helped has increased from 985 in 2016 to 3,220 in 2017. The average recipient of federal food assistance receives about $46 a month. When you are struggling to make ends meet and your children are hungry, every penny counts!

Elsa and her husband Alexander recently received assistance. They found themselves out of work after Hurricane Irma. Their savings dwindled and the couple worried about how they were going to feed their 12-year-old son. Struggling to hold back tears, Elsa said, “I am very grateful for all the help we received here.”

Emergency Relief

Palm Beach County Food Bank was proud to be able to quickly serve the needs of our partner agencies and hungry residents in Palm Beach County following Hurricane Irma. Despite being without electricity, phones or Internet, the Food Bank began distributing food just three days after the storm hit.

Despite the hardships brought on by the storm, the community rallied together. A generous outpouring from our donor family allowed us to meet the increased need throughout the holiday season.

While assisting those during an emergency situation, the ongoing need to help hungry families every day becomes painfully clear. About 200,000 hungry men, women and children face a hunger crisis every day in Palm Beach County. This remains our ongoing “invisible” emergency.