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'Hunger doesn't take a vacation:' Food bank needs 800 volunteers now

Lack of snowbirds leaves the area's only food bank in desperate need of help with its 60 planned summer distributions

Staff Report

Jun 10, 2026





Kelly and Rick Hornback, who have been volunteering for All Faiths Food Bank since 2022, have found deep fulfillment assisting with the Gocio Elementary School Pantry in Sarasota.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY AFFB

As summer approaches and many part-time residents flee the state and escape the heat, All Faiths Food Bank is facing a significant gap in volunteers.

A hundreds-long-sized gap, to be exact.

From May through September, AFFB needs 800 volunteers to cover approximately 12,000 volunteer hours for its 60 planned outdoor mobile food distributions, according to a news release.

The need is particularly urgent over the summer as AFFB increases its output through the implementation of its summer feeding program for children who may be experiencing hunger.

This effort, funded through the Campaign Against Summer Hunger, provides food for local kids throughout the summer months, when they lose access to free and reduced-cost meals at school.

For the 13th year, the hunger relief organization is partnering with the Sarasota and DeSoto County school districts, along with hundreds of community partners, to provide free, nutritious food to children all summer long.

The organization's volunteers are essential in helping it "maximize" its reach and impact, according to a press release.

"Our volunteers are the lifeblood of our operations and the heart of our mission to end hunger in our community," said AFFB president and CEO Nelle S. Miller. "We understand that summer is a time when many people travel, and our usual volunteer base shrinks. But hunger doesn't take a vacation."

Couple Rick and Kelly Hornback have been volunteering for AFFB for over four years.



What started as a church community service project has grown into something deeply personal and fulfilling. Currently, they volunteer every month at the Gocio Elementary School Pantry in Sarasota.

When asked what they find most rewarding, Kelly said it's the people who come to pick up food at the pantry.

Want to help?

For more about All Faiths Food Bank or to learn how you can be a hands-on "Hunger Hero" this summer, visit:

allfaithsfoodbank.org/volunteer

"They share both the good and the difficult moments in their lives with us and remind us how much they depend on us being there," she said, according to the news release. "They always thank us and give us hugs. We've even had the chance to meet their families and friends."

In 2025, 3,200 "Hunger Heroes" contributed more than 59,000 hours to help the food bank in its mission of ending hunger.

Activities that volunteers typically assist with over the course of the year include sorting and packing food, helping to distribute food at mobile pantries, participating in All Faiths' nutrition education and cooking classes, working in the administrative offices, lending a hand at events and more.

"Much of the volunteer work needed over the coming months involves helping at our outdoor mobile food pantries in the sweltering Florida heat. We know it's not easy work," Miller said. "But for those who step up, the reward is immeasurable: knowing



you helped feed a child, a senior or a struggling family during one of the hardest times of the year.”

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