

Chatham OutReach Alliance, Inc.

CORA is a member agency of Chatham County United Way

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Chatham OutReach Alliance (CORA) is dedicated to acquiring and distributing emergency food to Chatham County residents who need temporary community support to keep themselves and their families fed.

CORA By the Numbers

(7/1/2013–6/30/2014)

- **6119** families served (**19,620** Individuals) an increase of 13%
- **215** tons of food distributed (191 previous year)
- Enough food for **412,020** Meals
- **1056** Children received food for weekday meals in the summer **SNACK! Program**.
- **11** Backpack Programs received monetary and technical support.

Hunger In Chatham County: Hiding in Plain Sight

Hunger and food insecurity continue to be a growing problem in Chatham County, yet many people are unaware of how serious and widespread this problem is. The following commentary from John Kushman, CORA board member and economist, sheds light on the forces contributing to rising hunger and how CORA is working to help those in need.

Chatham County is among North Carolina's larger counties and it is very different east to west and north to south. The northeast corner is relatively affluent and has significant populations of Triangle commuters/ professionals and retired people. Developments like Governor's Club, Fearrington Village, and Briar Chapel typify this prosperous corner of the county.

Chatham County to the west and south of Pittsboro has suffered long term economic decline that is not immediately apparent to many in and outside of Chatham. This area is a great example of the collapse and closing of traditional industries (furniture, textiles, tobacco,

and chicken processing). Chatham Outreach Alliance (CORA) was born as a free standing nonprofit food pantry in 1989 to provide food support to the increasing numbers of displaced workers. In its first full year of operation, 1990, CORA served 253 families. The collapse of the chicken processing business and all its upstream effects was a rapid and deep blow to the county outside the area allied with the Triangle. The Great Recession of 2008 was like a wave topping a wave when it was added to the collapsing industrial base. When the churches that founded the pantry were overwhelmed by the need the pantry faced starting in 2007 and 2008, CORA hired a part time Executive Director and part time Pantry Manager and began to address food insecurity on a larger scale as industries continued to shrink and disappear.

CORA has stood with the people of Chatham to help make the transitions required by the massively changing
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Be a SNACK! Angel: Sponsor a Child for 2015

For only \$13 a month you can give a child a hunger-free summer.

Fifty-percent of Chatham County school children receive free or low-cost meals at school through the federal school lunch program because their families live at or near poverty level. Without these meals during the summer, these kids get little proper nutrition if any. SNACK! (Summer Nutritional Assistance for Chatham Kids) fills this food gap for 1000 children every summer. Your sponsorship of \$13 a month for 12 months provides a low income Chatham County child with food for 5 breakfasts,

5 lunches and healthy snacks every week during the summer break. It also helps provide more fresh fruit, fresh vegetables, and more milk to children whose families too often make less healthy choices due to low income. You can also sponsor a child for a one-time donation of \$150 or three monthly donations of \$50 each. Please see the enclosed CORA donation form for information and instructions on how to become a SNACK! Angel for the Summer of 2015.

Volunteer Stories

This Fall, CORA set up a simple way for our Volunteers to record their memorable experiences at the Food Pantry. This is one of them.

Dick Kahler, a CORA "stocker" responded to the ringing of the back door bell, where donations are brought to CORA. A young woman was there with bags of groceries to donate to CORA. As is always the case, the donation was weighed and recorded and Dick asked the woman if she would like a receipt for her gift. She responded: "no ... I'm just so glad I can make a contribution ... only a few months ago I was a recipient of CORA's support and generosity and this donation is the least I can do to say 'thank you' and show my appreciation for CORA's support when I needed it ..."

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economic times, as well as against the constant challenges of family disruption and health problems. We serve people with skills who need time to find a new job and people who are not working because they have debilitating health problems. Our clients

typically make it through their transitions without using all the CORA support available to them.

We now serve the original year's number of clients in two weeks. We've grown by a factor of 24. Last year about one of every ten people in Chatham County got some assis-

tance from CORA.

We are proud to say most of the work done to make CORA operate is done by volunteers, more than 200 at the pantry and another 200 for the SNACK Program. Volunteers serve clients, organizing food collections, stock shelves and raise

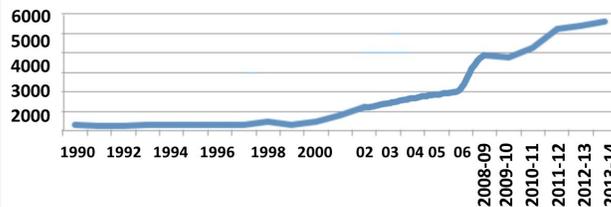
donations. They bring their time and skills into the CORA operation to benefit those in need and the county as a whole.

CORA is a happy place — despite its challenges — and is a successful community partnership as a result.

It's amazing.

The record for number of families served in one day is 62 on the Monday before Thanksgiving this year. That's one family every 4.8 minutes!

CORA Food Pantry, Pittsboro NC Number of Families Served

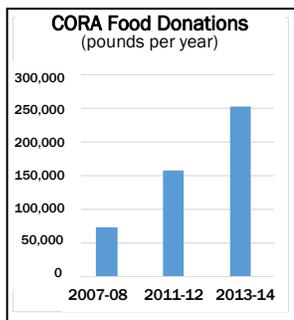


Since 1990, the demand for CORA's services has increased from 253 families to 6119 families. In 2013-14 CORA distributed 215 tons of food, enough to feed 19,620 people for an entire week. In the current year, CORA expects to distribute 230 tons of food to feed 21,000 people.

How does CORA manage the increase in demand for its services?

The amount of donated food has increased dramatically.

Food drives, PORCH programs, local grocery stores, community gardens and local farmers donate 40% of our food — produce, baked goods, canned goods, frozen meats (including venison) and all manner of food items that CORA does not purchase. These donations save us dollars and add to the variety of foods available to our clients.



Cora also receives food each month from TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) part of the USDA surplus program. **CORA only helps those with a verified need for food support.** Every client must have a referral to the Food Pantry for every visit.

CORA takes referrals from more than 20 human services agencies and from church pastors that verify the need for food. Clients are allowed 6 visits per year, but most don't use all 6. **CORA stretches your donation dollars by paying an average of 84 cents per pound for food.** Most food pan-

tries pay about \$1.50 per pound. Because CORA is an affiliate of the Durham Food Bank, we can purchase in bulk from the national Feeding America Food Banks where the cost of high quality shelf-stable food is extremely low.

What Can You Do?

Volunteer. CORA is a volunteer-based organization with more than 200 volunteers who sort food drive contributions, transport food, stock our shelves, directly serve our clients, and provide administrative and fundraising support.

To attend an orientation: call 919-542-5020 or email volunteer@corafoodpantry.org

Donate. CORA is a private nonprofit organization recognized under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Your gift is tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law. For your convenience, a donation form is included with this newsletter —

Or Donate On Line at www.corafoodpantry.org

89 cents of every dollar you give goes directly to CORA food programs.