



# Thank Goodness I'm Fed



## Summer Food Service Program for Youth

### **TGIF Summer 2017 Synopsis:**

This summer, TGIF is back - bigger and better than ever! This summer, we will be serving children in Norwood AND Hoover. GBM's summer feeding program will be providing meals at 3 sites in the Norwood and 2 sites in Hoover. This summer we expect to feed close to **400** children! This is nearly double the amount from last summer!

We are need in of volunteers to purchase, prepare, and deliver the meals to the site locations. GBM has funding to “help” with the purchasing of food items. However, our funds are limited.

We are asking volunteers to commit to a minimum of one (1) week of service. Groups may select as many sites as they can accommodate. TGIF will operate in Norwood from June 5<sup>th</sup> – August 4<sup>th</sup> and in Hoover from June 5<sup>th</sup> – July 28<sup>th</sup>.

For more information and to sign up to volunteer, please call GBM at [205-326-6821](tel:205-326-6821) and ask for Carolyn Foster or Tari Williams. They can also be reached by email – Carolyn ([carolyn@gbm.org](mailto:carolyn@gbm.org)) and Tari ([tari@gbm.org](mailto:tari@gbm.org)).

### **TGIF Background:**

In 2014, Thank Goodness I'm Fed (TGIF) began as a weekend/holiday-feeding program that distributed shelf-stable and kid-friendly foods to school-aged children in low wealth communities, began with a donation from the Pleaid Foundation. This program was created in response to the harsh reality that Alabama has one of the highest rates of childhood poverty and is one of the most food insecure states in the country. Community and volunteer response was overwhelmingly positive.

In 2015, due to generous second donation from the Pleaid Foundation and a large number of dedicated volunteers, GBM expanded TGIF to include the long hot summer months, when children are the most vulnerable. TGIF provided summer meals 110 kids in the low wealth neighborhood of Norwood. In partnership with 2 local daycare centers, 14 different faith communities and 5 community based groups (including UAB), nearly 5,000 nutritious meals were prepared, stored and delivered to disadvantaged children in Norwood.

In 2016, GBM worked with the Adelante Alabama Worker Center, local congregations, community partners, community members and stakeholders to



expand our TGIF summer feeding program to serve low-wealth children in Hoover. Even though it has one of the highest-incomes per capita in Jefferson County, Hoover is home to children who urgently need nutritional benefits the most, but are not receiving them – especially when school is not in session. Hoover has a large, and often overlooked, immigrant population. These families are the most food insecure and receive little to no SNAP benefits. Sadly, U.S. born children in “mixed status” families typically do not participate in social/government services due to fear of action being taken against the undocumented members of the family. Some of these families fear participating in school nutritional programs because they fear it will result in the detection of undocumented parents and/or other household members.

Last summer, between our Norwood and Hoover sites, TGIF feed well over 200 children. In the summer of 2017, we have plans to double that amount. The growth of TGIF is evidence that hunger never takes a vacation. Faith communities and community-based groups from across the metropolitan area have stepped-up and partnered with GBM to purchase, pack, serve and deliver food for children in need during the summer.

### **TGIF Strategic Overview:**



While GBM works to feed those in need, GBM also believes that systemic changes must be made if there is going to be an end to hunger. TGIF allows for GBM to provide the community, volunteers and faith communities with a teachable moment about the systemic problem of hunger. Hunger ultimately is a poverty issue, and GBM believes part of ending hunger is ensuring that supportive laws and policies are in place to help families climb out of poverty.

In 2017, GBM is going to be even more strategic in helping congregations understand and address issues related to poverty. GBM is a place where people of different faiths come together to work with and on behalf of the poor. Yet many of us don't know what it's like to have to choose every month between food, utilities and/or health care. GBM's **Poverty Simulation** is a valuable tool that is now available to help your congregation learn more about the challenges our poor neighbors face everyday. The facilitated simulation is a thought provoking experience that will help guide congregations and organizations in conversations and actions affecting the poor. Please contact Carolyn Foster at 205-326-6821 to schedule one for your congregation and/or organization.

GBM encourages all who care about the issue of hunger to be informed and engaged citizens - follow legislative actions and advocate for policies that will help ensure access to food for all members of our community. TGIF has expanded the number of ways in which GBM can engage faith communities, as well as build and deepen relationships with our community neighbors. TGIF has made the connection between faith and justice easier to grasp. At GBM, it is our whole-hearted belief that charity cannot make up for the lack of justice.