

Building a Community Without Hunger

Annual Report 2019-2020



CORA is a member agency of Chatham County United Way. 

Executive Director's Message



During this year of change, growth, challenges, and accomplishments, the certitude of the words, **CORA feeds people**, has kept us focused. You, the pillars of CORA, have inspired our perseverance with your commitment to our shared mission.

It has been an extraordinary year. Pre-pandemic, during the early months of the fiscal year last fall, you helped CORA meet a sudden and dramatic increase in demand for our services. We expanded service in Siler City through our Mobile Market and in the northeastern part of the county by partnering with the Take & Eat Food Pantry. CORA builds these types of relationships throughout the county with clients, organizations, and other members of our community so we can all collaborate to better meet the needs of the entire county.

In the spring we were blindsided with COVID-19. The strength of our conviction that nobody should go hungry has been tested in unimaginable ways. At times, food simply could not be purchased in bulk. The entire community came to CORA's aid to ensure that the most vulnerable among us would be fed. The relentlessness of hunger during this pandemic was met with resilience, kindness, hope, and FOOD! I am grateful for your commitment to CORA and to eliminating hunger in our community. While we look forward to returning to some new version of business-as-usual in a post-pandemic world, we know there is still much to reflect on and ask that you consider a donation to help those facing food insecurity in the coming weeks and months. You can donate online at corafoodpantry.org or use the enclosed envelope. Together, we are building a community without hunger!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa Driver Beard".

Melissa Driver Beard
Executive Director

Help us continue our important work and make a donation at corafoodpantry.org today!

Volunteers Crucial to CORA's Mission

Volunteers are the heart of our organization. Last year, more than 300 CORA volunteers generously contributed 6,613 hours of their time – equivalent to three full-time staff. The most important work in our fight to build a community without hunger is performed by volunteers. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic we relied on nearly 30 volunteers a day to help us meet the needs of our families. These duties included sorting, stocking, client intake, client services, and ensuring food did not go to waste through our Retail Recovery program.

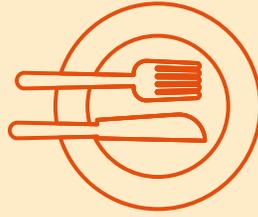
Although our environment has changed dramatically in the last few months of the fiscal year, volunteers remained critical in helping us to pivot our services to curbside delivery. Volunteers took on a new and crucial role of packing bags full of food for distribution and continued to sort and shelve food. We look forward to welcoming all CORA volunteers back when the time is right, and it is safe to do so. In the meantime, if you are not in a high risk group and are interested in lending a hand, please email info@corafoodpantry.org.





**57,530
People
Served**

**1.3 Million Meals
Distributed**



**This is enough food to
feed all of Chatham
County for two weeks!**



**28%
Served Were
Children**



**642,000 Pounds of
Food Donated**



**This is the weight of five
African Elephants!**



**1,504 Children
Served by SNACK!**



**This represents 17% of all
Chatham County
students!**



**100%
Client Requests
Filled**



**Mobile Market
Served 3,471
Individuals**

Relieving Hunger in Chatham County

In FY2020 (July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020), CORA served 50% more people than the year before.

We served 1.3 million meals to more than 57,000 people all across the county.



In fiscal year 2020, CORA had the greatest impact on food insecurity in our 31-year history. We started the year with a considerable increase in demand for our services. Prior to the pandemic, we were already experiencing an unexpected increase in need. In addition, as families faced a loss of income due to COVID-19 in the spring, many relied upon CORA's emergency food for the first time.

- Through the Pantry, SNACK! program, and our new Mobile Market, **CORA served over 1.3 million meals in FY2020.** We also provided assistance to over 700 new families. We share this extraordinary achievement with many organizations and our supportive community.
- With the assistance of the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina, we serve the most vulnerable in our community through federal programs CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program) and TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program). **Both of these programs supplement the diets of low-income families by providing them with emergency food in addition to CORA's provisions.**
- **Our SNACK! program relies on partnerships throughout the community to feed more than 1,500 children each summer.** These partnerships include the faith-based community, libraries, youth centers, and community groups.
- **Our new Mobile Market initiative in collaboration with Chatham Hospital served over 65,000 meals in its first year.** This program is crucial to expanding healthy food access for all in our community, especially in the food deserts in the west and the most rural areas of the county.

The true strength of our community lies in our ability to come together and care for each other, especially in times of need and uncertainty. At CORA we are in awe of this community's unwavering dedication to compassionate care of others. As we look forward to the year ahead, CORA is focused on continuing to build partnerships across Chatham County to ensure that all families facing food insecurity do not go hungry.



CORA has been a lifeline for my family and extended family. When things are hard, we know we have support in the community to see us through and help us with the most basic need, healthy food. Thank you to the great staff and volunteers who make it happen.
- Jerry, Moncure



CORA means so much to me. The friendly faces let me know I will get the help that I need the moment I walk through the door. Thanks to your help I have been able to feed my family and keep my cabinets from staying empty.
- Linda, Pittsboro

Empty Bowls, Filling the Pantry Shelves

Thank you to Galloway Ridge, all the sponsors, restaurants, potters, volunteers, and supporters who made Empty Bowls a wonderful event. More than 375 people came out to Galloway Ridge in February to pick out pottery, enjoy homemade goodies, taste soups from 14 local restaurants, and raise more than \$21,000 to help keep our Pantry shelves stocked with nutritious food for Chatham families in need.



Expanding CORA's Services

Since launching our Mobile Market in Siler City in October of 2019, CORA is even more focused on building partnerships across Chatham County to ensure that all families facing food insecurity do not go hungry. CORA has recently partnered with Bonlee Baptist Church to help feed people in that community. Each month, CORA provides food to the church to be distributed to those in need two times a month. Each month, the church serves over 500 individuals.



Bringing the Issue of Hunger to the Table

In October, Carolina Public Press worked with CORA and other community partners to hold a forum on hunger at Chatham Community Library. This event featured five panelists, including our own Melissa Driver Beard, to discuss existing solutions to hunger in our community, as well as current challenges and how we can work together to address them.



Retail Recovery Partners Support Hunger Relief

Food Lion, Lowes Foods, and Harris Teeter support CORA and help us serve our clients better by participating in our Retail Recovery program. Last year these stores donated over 100,000 pounds of fresh produce, meats, bakery items, and shelf stable foods so our local families do not go hungry. Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who pick up donations directly from the stores and deliver them to the Pantry.



Carolina Meadows, A CORA Champion

The Carolina Meadows raised more than \$81,000 in support of the Pantry and CORA's other crucial programs. More than \$59,000 of this was raised from 230 donors through their annual spring fundraising drive.



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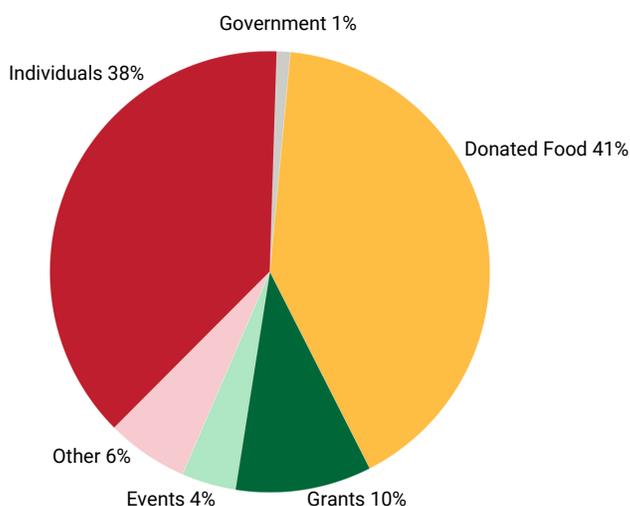
Sign up for the latest CORA news!

Keep up with the latest news and events through periodic emails.

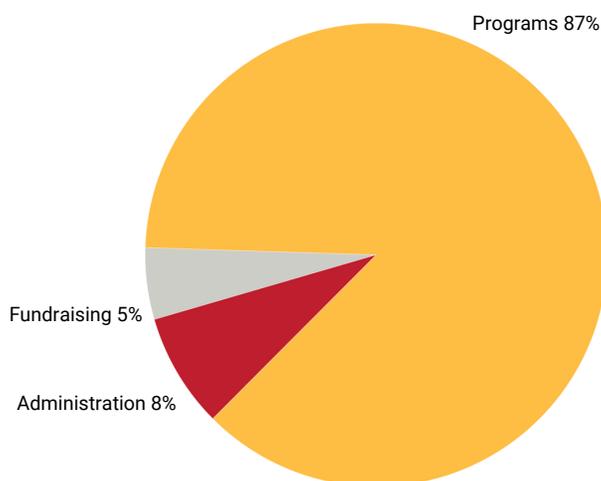
Visit corafoodpantry.org for more information.

Thanks to the generosity of the entire community, we were able to meet the enormous increase in need over the past year and still close fiscal year 2020 in very good financial health. In FY2020, we secured \$2,550,118 in support. CORA is poised to expand our work in 2021 and continue to build a community without hunger in Chatham County.

Income by source:



Expenses:



Ferrington Village, A Partner in the Fight Against Hunger

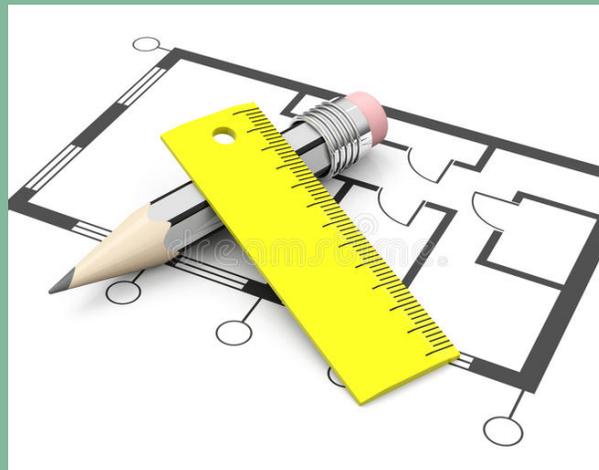
CORA is a place where the community comes together to help ensure that none of our neighbors go hungry. Thanks to the vision, generosity, and hard work of hundreds of individuals, businesses, churches, and organizations, CORA is a thriving organization. One of these important partnerships is Ferrington Village, which supports our work in several ways.

- PORCH Ferrington** inspires residents to come together and has an immense impact on CORA and the families it serves. Since 2011, PORCH Ferrington has been coordinating food collection from 25 neighborhoods, contributing more than 220,000 pounds of food to the Pantry and nearly \$70,000 in cash donations during the lifespan of the program. “Our amazing neighborhood coordinators faithfully organize this collection every month, and our drivers and helpers get it to CORA. I am proud to live in such a generous and caring community, and this project is so important in a county where the need is great,” shared Roz Darling, one of PORCH Ferrington’s leaders. CORA truly appreciates their hard work each month that provides much needed food to families facing hunger in our community.
- Women of Ferrington** has been a steadfast supporter of CORA’s work, especially our SNACK! program that provides meals to children over the summer. Through this group’s competitive grant program, CORA has received \$37,600 since 2008 to support our work. Support from the generous Women of Ferrington and other community partners is what enables us to continue to meet an increasing need and work toward creating a community without hunger.
- The entire Ferrington community** has been a beacon of light for all those facing hunger in Chatham County. More than 1,200 Ferrington Village residents and businesses support our work each year.



Expanding Our Footprint and Service in 2021

In July 1989, CORA provided food to its first clients: a family of six, two adults and four children. Thirty-one years later, we are distributing over 1.3 million meals to over 57,000 people over the course of the year. With this growth in our services, it is not surprising that we have outgrown our current space. **We are excited to announce that a construction bid was accepted and we have a contract in place for the new building.** Chatham County generously donated the land and has also committed over \$300,000 to the construction of our new building. In addition, you, our supporters, have contributed over \$150,000 to upfit the new building and update our existing building to best accommodate the needs of our clients, community partners, and staff. Our community has continually been at the ready to help those most vulnerable in the community facing food insecurity - thank you!



The new building will double our current space to store food. This larger space will allow us to streamline operations and more safely and effectively implement CORA's multiple programs. The pantry will also double in size to allow for a more pleasant shopping experience. Relocation of the pantry will enable us to create a spacious reception area, larger children's room, resource room for clients, and more administrative space. Construction should begin by October 2020 and we hope to welcome you and the public to the new Pantry in early 2021 when it is safe to return to indoor service for our families. We truly appreciate everyone's patience with this important project!

PORCH Chatham Making a Difference

CORA is very fortunate to collaborate with 19 neighborhoods in the county through PORCH Chatham. **Over the past year, PORCH has filled our shelves with more than 89,000 pounds of food, from cereal, canned fruit, and peanut butter, to pasta, beans, and toiletries.** In addition, since the COVID-19 outbreak, many PORCH programs changed their collections from food donations to cash donations to ensure the safety of their contributors. **More than \$75,000 was donated to CORA!** It is truly remarkable how communities that come together once a month can have such an enormous impact on our neighbors in need. Thank you, PORCH Chatham, for your amazing generosity! If you would like information on how to start a PORCH program for CORA, please contact Rebecca Hankins at rebecca@corafoodpantry.org.

PORCH Partners

- Bingham Ridge
- Briar Chapel
- Bynum
- Carolina Preserve
- Chatham Forest
- Fearington Village
- Galloway Ridge
- Governors Club
- Highland Forest
- Jones Ferry Landing
- Jordan Hills
- Miles Branch
- Park Point
- Potterstone Village
- Powell Place
- Redbud
- River Forest
- The Hamptons
- Westfall

Share the work of CORA with your friends and family!



CORAFOODPANTRY.ORG

“

Please accept my grateful appreciation for the food I have received from CORA. Almost every time I've visited, I had nothing to eat in my home. Nothing at all! So, you can easily understand my urgent need and know that your volunteers, staff, and contributors have made a truly generous gift to my life and health.

Fran, Siler City

Thank you so much for being there for my family when we are at our lowest. When I visit CORA, I feel cared for and feel like I am with friends. We really appreciate all the food you supply, and my kids especially enjoy the cakes and cupcakes. These are a rare and special treat for them.”

Milly, Goldston

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Photography by Kim Hawks, Chatham News + Record