



FALL 2025

CROS CURRENTS

CROS Ministries provides food for the hungry and the food insecure in collaboration with our partners in the community.



Dear Friends,

Hunger often goes unseen. It may be hidden in the child who can't focus in your classroom or the one who only has one slice of day-old bread in his or her lunchbox. It may be hidden in your neighbor who just lost her job and is struggling to pay next month's rent. It may be hidden in your family member who is battling cancer and the medical expenses that go with it.

High food prices, rising housing costs, low wages, and increased unemployment rates are contributing factors to food insecurity. It is estimated that more than 192,000 residents in Palm Beach County struggle with hunger with more than 50,000 of these individuals are children. Without food, we are starving our children of potential and stripping their caregivers of hope for a better life.

Over the past five years, the number of people seeking food assistance from CROS has surged by 71%. The gap between the food secure and those who go hungry is widening.

This increased demand comes at a time when federal funding cuts threaten to significantly limit financial support CROS receives by \$140,000, directly impacting how much food CROS can provide to the increased number of families and individuals facing hunger and food insecurity.

September is Hunger Action Month, a nationwide effort to raise awareness about hunger in America and inspire action. Every action—big or small—is one step closer where no one is hungry. At CROS, we take action six days a week to ensure access to healthy food for all in need, but we cannot meet the rising need alone. Please consider joining us in taking action against hunger.

Volunteer at one of our programs. Help sort or bag food at our warehouse in Lake Worth Beach. Host a food drive at your school, workplace, or place of worship. Give financially to help us stand in the gap for the increased food needed at higher costs and for the loss of federal funding.

Whatever your action may be, take action! Take action so we can restore hope for a better future for hundreds of thousands of our local neighbors whose hunger we may not be seeing.

With Gratitude and Hope,

Ruth

Ruth Mageria, Executive Director

Ensuring Access to Healthy Food for All in Need
GIVE ONLINE – IT'S SECURE & EASY!
www.crosministries.org



2025 Impact

January 1, 2025 - July 31, 2025

Community Food Pantries

69,486

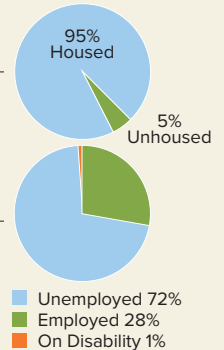
individuals served,
including 27% children
and 12% seniors

3,870

new individuals sought
food for the first time

614,554

pounds of food distributed



Gleaning

460,245

pounds of fresh produce recovered during
the 2024-2025 gleaning season, equivalent to
383,537 meals based on Feeding America's
equation of 1.2lbs of food = 1 meal

Caring Kitchen

23,159

meals served
(Noon Meals and Meals
to the Homebound)

800

meals and after-school
snacks provided to
community partners

9,600

weekend bagged lunches
distributed through partner
Cason UMC

FAISB 5th Graders Become Hunger Warriors

During the 2024–2025 school year, the French American International School of Boca Raton (FAISB) partnered with us for a 5th grade research project on hunger. Guided by Director of Outreach Emily Zarzycki, students gleaned specialty peppers, toured the Caring Kitchen program in Delray Beach, created flatware kits with encouraging notes for homebound meal clients, and visited our Lake Worth Beach warehouse for a bagging project. They also hosted a school-wide food drive, collecting 311 pounds of food.

The year concluded with imaginative presentations that highlighted what the students had learned about hunger locally and globally. From a play showing the importance of food pantries to a PowerPoint on gleaning and worldwide produce, each presentation displayed incredible knowledge and creativity, and they were delivered in both English and French.

Teacher Ms. Jillian May shared: “What an amazing experience from beginning to end! With the incredible help of CROS staff, our 5th grade class was able to take action on local hunger and build relationships to make our community stronger!”



FAISB 5th graders with their food drive collection

Game-Changing Project with Leadership PBC Engage Program

CROS Ministries had the honor of partnering with Leadership Palm Beach County's Engage Program, a 10-month experience where 55 professionals learn about the community while collaborating with local nonprofits on meaningful projects.

The Class of 2025 selected CROS as one of five nonprofits to receive this support. We were blessed with a team of 10 professionals who dedicated their time and expertise to a two-part project designed to streamline and modernize our volunteer protocols.



The group divided into two smaller teams. One focused on creating and producing a new volunteer video that highlights who we are, what we do, and how volunteers make it all possible. The other team worked closely with CROS staff to develop a new volunteer handbook, along with updated policies and forms.

Over the course of the year, the collaboration produced tools and resources that will launch later this year and into next year, strengthening the foundation of our programs and volunteer engagement.

Upcoming Events



Rabbi Marc Labowitz and Temple Adath Or Sponsor Thursday Caring Kitchen Lunch This Summer



My family, our newly rooted temple in East Delray Beach, Temple Adath Or (TAO), and I are helping Caring

Kitchen in Delray, because as we ingratiate ourselves to the community, we recognize that opening a synagogue is not just establishing a place of prayer and Torah study, it is creating a community embodying the values those prayers teach us. Judaism commands us to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the vulnerable.

The Torah says:

כִּי יִהְיֶה בְּךָ אֶבְיּוֹן... לֹא תִאָּמֵץ אֶת לְבָבְךָ וְלֹא תִקְפֹּץ אֶת יָדְךָ מֵאֶחִיד הָאֶבְיּוֹן
“When there is a needy person among you... do not harden your heart or shut your hand against your needy kin”
(Deuteronomy 15:7).

By helping feed the hungry and food insecure, we are fulfilling a ‘mitzvah’, a sacred obligation. The Caring Kitchen program is already on the front lines of hunger relief. By joining with them, we are saying: our synagogue’s light will shine not only inside our sanctuary but across the whole city.

I also bring my wife and children to help because I believe these values must live in our home as much as in our synagogue. The prophet Isaiah teaches:
“תִּיבֵּי אֵיבָתְךָ מִיְדֻרְךָ מִיִּנְעוֹ, דְּמַחֲלֵל בַּעֲרָלָה סוּרְפָּה אוֹלָהָ”
“...share your bread with the hungry, and bring the poor and homeless into your home?” (Isaiah 58:7).

When my family serves at the Caring Kitchen meal site, we are not just giving food, we are bringing this verse to life. Together, side by side meals are served with compassion, dignity, and the belief that every person is created B'tzelem Elohim /in the image of God.

On a personal level, I believe feeding the hungry is one of the most direct ways to touch the divine spark in another human being. A meal is dignity, hope, and life itself. As a Rabbi, I cannot separate prayer from practice, and I cannot sermonize about God’s compassion without living it.

We are very thankful to Shona, Jay, and everyone at the Caring Kitchen program for providing the environment to help feed the hungry and food insecure.

Gleaning Season 2024-2025—That’s a Wrap!

What an incredible season it has been! With the help of volunteers of all ages, the CROS Gleaning Program harvested 460,245 pounds of fresh produce this year — all of it going right back into our community’s food recovery system. Thanks to this collective effort, CROS Ministries and our community partners were able to put healthy, farm-fresh food on the tables of those who need it most during these challenging times.

A huge part of this success comes from our local school partners. From January through April, we welcome faith-based, charter, private, public, and nature schools into the fields twice a week to glean alongside us. This season, more than 2,000 volunteers, from curious 5-year-olds to dedicated high schoolers, rolled up their sleeves to harvest peppers, cucumbers, corn, cabbage, and potatoes.

For many schools, gleaning is more than just picking vegetables for food-insecure families. It is a hands-on learning experience. Students

discover fun facts about the produce they pick, learn about the agricultural community, and, for our faith-based schools, explore the biblical roots of gleaning. For some, the fields even become outdoor classrooms for math, science, or spiritual retreats.



We are also grateful for the teachers, school leaders, and chaperones who guide and inspire their students. It is a joy to see a child’s face light up as they proudly hold their very first harvested vegetable. A simple moment that carries so much meaning.

To all our volunteers, school partners, and community friends: thank you for making this season such a success. Our Gleaning Program could not do what it does without your heart, hard work, and commitment. We look forward to seeing you in the fields again next season.

Students from a local nature school practicing math in the fields while gleaning.

How will you be remembered?

Leave a Lasting Legacy with CROS

Did you know that you can help us stand in the gap for the hungry for perpetuity? We have two Endowment Funds: one with the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, and another with the Florida United Methodist Foundation. Contact Ruth Mageria at 561-317-5319 or rmageria@crosmministries.org to learn more about providing for CROS Ministries for decades to come – whether through estate gifts or present-day contributions.

IRA Charitable Rollover

If you are 70½ or older you may also be interested in a way to lower the income and taxes from your IRA withdrawals. An IRA charitable rollover is a way you can help continue our work and benefit this year. Contact your IRA plan administrator to discuss how you can have your IRA funds be directly transferred to CROS.



In Memoriam: Tom Parker

Tom Parker will be remembered for his cheerful demeanor, steadfast willingness to serve, and his wonderful dry sense of humor. A long-time CROS volunteer, Tom dedicated his time to helping deliver food to our food pantries after being recruited by our current Board President, Ken Treadwell. Like so many roles he held in life, Tom embraced his work with CROS with passion and energy.

"I always enjoyed my conversations with Tom. He was so warm and wonderful. I cherished his analytical mind and think back to the time we were color coding the placards for warehouse deliveries to the pantries. Tom came strolling in with a paper listing the exact number breakdown by base color and specific hue to use for each pantry. He had put so much thought and time into trying to find the perfect color for every site."

– Brian Rowe, Director of Food Pantries



✂ Cut along line and return in the enclosed envelope

WAYS TO CONNECT WITH CROS!

- ☐ Host a Food Drive
- ☐ Pick Fresh Produce at a Gleaning Event
- ☐ Help Bag or Sort Food for our Food Pantries
- ☐ Become a Monthly Donor
- ☐ Remember CROS in Your Will and Estate Planning
- ☐ Volunteer with The Caring Kitchen to Prepare Food or Deliver Homebound Meals
- ☐ Make a Donation
(please make checks payable to CROS Ministries)

GIVE ONLINE!



**Does your company offer a matching gift program for charitable donations?
Consider signing us up for their matching gift program to double your impact! Ask us how.**

Name: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Address: _____

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