



StarKist® Partners with Feed the Children, Cornerstones, and Fellowship Square for Summer Food Rally to Prevent Food Insecurity in Northern Virginia

Five regional food pantries and nonprofits received more than 21,000 pounds of food and household essentials to prepare for increased summer needs

RESTON, VA (June 6, 2024) – Despite signs of post-pandemic economic recovery in the Dulles Corridor region, thousands of low-income people still face significant food insecurity. Continued inflation, the end of many federal benefit programs, and dramatic increases in housing and transportation costs have made it challenging for families to put food on the kitchen table. To help ensure regional neighborhood pantry programs and nonprofits have enough food for the upcoming busy summer months, [StarKist](#), [Feed the Children](#), and [Cornerstones](#) hosted their third Annual Summer Food and Resource Rally today at Cornerstones’ Food Rescue Empowerment Enterprise, or FREE from Hunger Center, in Sterling, Virginia.

United in their commitment to end food insecurity along the Dulles Corridor region, more than 50 regional business leaders, elected officials, StarKist employee volunteers, and community advocates joined forces today to provide hands-on support and encourage greater community investment and volunteerism to combat food insecurity, reduce food waste, and enhance food rescue initiatives.

“StarKist is committed to helping alleviate food insecurity for families in need,” said Tom Aslin, Vice President, Marketing of StarKist. “Through our StarKist Cares corporate giving efforts across the country, we know food insecurity has a devastating impact on lower-income communities. Our employees actively work to live our vision – to provide trusted, nutritious protein foods to more people. Here in Northern Virginia, where StarKist is headquartered, we are proud to partner again with Feed the Children and Cornerstones and are honored this year to extend our engagement to new community partners working to combat hunger in this region.”

Today’s rally helped bolster food supplies for five regional pantry programs and nonprofits. Each partner received 25-pound boxes of shelf-stable food, including StarKist products; 15-pound boxes of hygiene essentials such as shampoo, conditioner, lotion, and personal-care items; boxes of Avon products; and other items.

- [Fellowship Square](#) is a leading local provider of affordable housing and services to vulnerable seniors with limited resources. With 670 apartment units that are home to 800+ older adults, Fellowship Square ensures that residents have the stability and support they need to live independently.
- [Community Lodgings’](#) mission is to lift families from homelessness and instability to independence and self-sufficiency through Transitional Housing, Affordable Housing, and Youth Education Programs.
- [Dulles South Food Pantry](#) was founded in 2014 and is a community-driven nonprofit serving Dulles residents and the surrounding area, providing nutritious food, personal supplies, and life-changing services to our neighbors.
- [LINK Against Hunger](#) provides food and financial assistance to qualified people in need. Supported primarily by donations of food and funds, LINK is comprised of dedicated churches, organizations, and individuals serving the Herndon, Sterling, and Ashburn, Virginia communities.
- [The South Lake High School PTSA Food Pantry](#) addresses the student hunger gap by serving more than 500 students and families each week. Thanks to the generous support of the community and its all-volunteer staff, students and families can enjoy a cultural variety of food including non-perishables, produce, and protein as well as toiletries and feminine products. As a result, students can more effectively focus their attention on school.

“Food insecurity impacts individuals across all ages from young children to seniors. In fact, more than 5 million older adults in America today struggle with food insecurity. Many have physical challenges that make grocery shopping and meal preparation difficult. Many live on extremely limited Social Security fixed incomes and must often make tough choices when it comes to medications versus groceries. Yet an unhealthy diet can exacerbate chronic senior health conditions like high blood pressure and cholesterol, diabetes, and weakened immunity,” said Christy Zeitz, CEO of Fellowship Square. “With the Summer Food Rally – and particularly with the donation of easy-to-open, protein-rich tuna and chicken products from StarKist – seniors in our Fellowship Square communities get the nutritious food they need to thrive. This contributes to healthier residents and to a healthier Fellowship Square community.” Food from the Summer Food Rally was distributed to the 300+ older adult residents at Hunters Woods Fellowship House in Reston, Va.

For Cornerstones, today’s effort was an opportunity to directly support front-line agencies serving thousands of families and seniors struggling with food insecurity. “Neighborhood food pantries and feeding program partners across the region are seeing a surge in the number of individuals and families seeking food assistance,” explained Kerrie Wilson, CEO of Cornerstones. “According to the 2023 Capital Area Food Bank Survey, an estimated 24% of Fairfax County residents are food insecure. Another major report notes that while the rate is lower in Loudoun County, more than 29,000 people are food insecure. Cornerstones’ FREE from Hunger Center works closely with a growing network of corporate, business, faith, community, and nonprofit partners to rescue excess food, store it safely, and ensure that neighborhood pantry and feeding programs can quickly provide it to families in need. Our Summer Food and Resource Rally with StarKist and Feed the Children was an ideal opportunity to help supplement these vital partners’ summertime food supplies and connect them with new community partners, employee volunteers, and advocates eager to support their mission-driven work. Thanks to opportunities like today, we can help to better expedite distribution of healthy, nutritious food to vulnerable neighbors in need.”

For Feed the Children, the Summer Food and Resource Rally in Northern Virginia is another prominent opportunity to make a tangible, meaningful difference in the region. “Thanks to our generous partners at StarKist and Cornerstones, we can help Northern Virginia families rest a little easier this summer knowing they don’t have to worry about where their next meal is coming from,” said Travis Arnold, Feed the Children President, and CEO. “When we combine our efforts, we have a greater impact on the lives of the families who need us most.”

Throughout the past 15 years, StarKist has contributed over 1,045,134 pounds of tuna and chicken products to help food-insecure children and families across the U.S., and more than \$939,000 to support Feed the Children’s disaster and emergency response efforts. This is the latest in StarKist’s continual efforts to alleviate hunger and food shortages, dating back to 1917 when there was a nationwide protein shortage during World War I and StarKist helped fill the void.

Photos



Regina Haring, 88, brought a list of her favorite tuna fish recipes when she went to the lobby of Hunters Woods Fellowship House to pick up food donations from the StarKist-Feed The Children-Cornerstones Annual Summer Food Rally that distributed more than 21,000 pounds of food and household supplies to five Northern Virginia nonprofits to prevent food insecurity. Fellowship Square’s Hunters Woods Fellowship House in Reston provides affordable housing and support services to 300+ older adults, many of whom live on a limited fixed income of less than \$10,000 a year and must often make tough choices when it comes to medical costs versus groceries.



Residents of Hunters Woods Fellowship House read labels and picked their favorite nutrient-dense foods among the supply donated to the Reston affordable housing community as part of the third annual Summer Food Rally led by StarKist, Feed the Children, and Cornerstones. While the event has traditionally focused on getting food to families with children who no longer have access to free or reduced-price meals at school over summer break, this year it expanded to address the unique food insecurity issues that older adults with limited resources face. Many have physical challenges that make grocery shopping and meal preparation difficult and many live on extremely limited Social Security fixed incomes and must make tough choices when it comes to medications versus groceries. More than 5 million seniors struggle with food insecurity in America today, and in Virginia, 7.5% (142,500) of the 1.9 million older adults age 60+ across the Commonwealth face food insecurity, according to the Food Research and Action Center.

StarKist Vice-President of Marketing Tom Aslin and Fellowship Square CEO Christy Zeitz deliver food to Hunters Woods Fellowship House resident Xue Zhu, 76, as part of the third annual Summer Food Rally to prevent food insecurity. Led by StarKist, Feed the Children, and Cornerstones. An estimated 24% of Fairfax County residents have faced food insecurity. The issue worsens over the summer when schools close and students who receive free or reduced-price meals no longer have access to those meals. Seniors with limited resources face unique food security challenges year-round, as many have physical challenges that make grocery shopping difficult and/or live on extremely limited Social Security fixed incomes that force tough choices when it comes to medications versus groceries. The Summer Food Rally bolstered food supplies and expedited distribution of food to ensure vulnerable Northern Virginians have access to healthy food choices, which promotes improved physical and mental health across all age groups.



About Fellowship Square

Fellowship Square, a registered 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, is one of the leading local providers of affordable housing and services to low-income seniors, owning 670 units and serving more than 800 older adults. Through HUD funding and vouchers, residents of Fellowship Houses – many who live on Social Security or Supplemental Security Income alone, with an average annual fixed-income of \$10,000/year – pay no more than 30 percent of their income toward their housing costs, including rent and a utility allowance. Through professionally managed apartment communities, programming, and services, Fellowship Square ensures that residents have the support they need to live independent and fulfilling lives even in the face of serious obstacles, such as the high costs of housing in the region.

About StarKist Co.

StarKist Co. is a socially responsible company that empowers people to live a healthy lifestyle by providing convenient nutritious proteins. An industry innovator, StarKist was the first brand to introduce convenient single-serve pouch products, which include StarKist Tuna Creations®, Salmon Creations®, Chicken Creations®, and new Beef Creations® in over 30 flavors. As America's favorite tuna, StarKist represents a tradition of quality, consumer trust and a commitment to sustainability. StarKist's charismatic brand icon, Charlie® the Tuna, swam into the hearts of tuna fans in 1961 and is still a fan favorite today. StarKist Co. is a direct wholly owned subsidiary of Dongwon Industries Co., Ltd.

About Feed the Children

At Feed the Children, we feed hungry kids. We envision a world where no child goes to bed hungry. In the U.S. and internationally, we are dedicated to helping families and communities achieve stable lives and to reducing the need for help tomorrow, while providing food and resources to help them today. We distribute product donations from corporate donors to local community partners, we provide support for teachers and students, and we mobilize resources quickly to aid recovery efforts when natural disasters strike. Internationally, we manage child-focused

community development programs in eight countries. We welcome partnerships because we know our work would not be possible without collaborative relationships. For more information, visit feedthechildren.org.

About Cornerstones

Together with our community, Cornerstones promotes stability, empowerment and hope through support, advocacy and community-building for individuals and families in need. Since 1970, we have been a prominent anchor organization in Northern Virginia annually serving 16,000 families and 5,000 children. Our team works to provide equitable access to life-changing resources that address the root causes of homelessness and poverty to ensure strong and stable families and community. Equally important, Cornerstones is a respected advisor to local, state, and national jurisdictions to encourage building and preserving affordable housing; investing in connected and resilient children, youth, and families; creating good jobs and economic security; and advancing systems change to undo racial and social inequity. For more information, visit cornerstonesva.org.