

Rescuing Fresh Greens: A Partnership with Duncan Family Farms

The Food Resourcing team always strives to say "yes" to food donations, but when Duncan Family Farms approached us with an offer of fresh-picked salad greens and spinach, we faced a unique challenge. The greens were unwashed and unbagged, requiring extra coordination to make them ready for distribution.

Duncan Family Farms has been a valued food bank donor and partner for more than 20 years, generously donating cabbage and other produce to support our mission. In the past, they have even gleaned cabbage on our behalf from their neighboring farm, Everkrisp Farm, another longtime St. Mary's supporter.

With the help of the Arizona Food Bank Network's repack team in Rio Rico, we developed a process to bag and label the greens. The (AzFBN) first few attempts revealed logistical hurdles — delays in transportation and repacking led to shortened shelf life. However, through trial and error, we refined the system. We learned that lining the bins helped maintain freshness, and we streamlined the transportation timeline to ensure quicker turnaround.

By the third attempt, we successfully processed 15 bins of spinach within four days, and our fourth attempt is now on track to establish a regular cadence. To date, this partnership has rescued 13,280 pounds of fresh lettuce and spinach that would have otherwise gone to waste. Thanks to Duncan Family Farms and our collaboration with the AzFBN repack team, these greens have already reached over 11 agencies, bringing fresh, nutritious produce to neighbors in need.

This initiative demonstrates the power of collaboration in reducing food waste and increasing access to fresh, healthy food. We look forward to continuing this partnership and expanding our impact.



Neighbor & Donor Voices

A Neighbor's Story

"I started coming to St. Mary's Food Bank when I injured my back and went through a short period of unemployment," Cindy said. "To make things worse, my husband is now battling lung cancer."

"We are struggling to make ends meet. The medical bills.... They are piling up, and everything seems to be getting more expensive. It's been an uphill battle. The only thing in my freezer is a bowl of sauce to make spaghetti. I never realized how hard this world would become."

"Social security barely covers the bills and the extra assistance I applied for just isn't enough. It is amazing to have places like this, not just for seniors like me, but for anyone who needs a helping hand."



Why a donor gives to St. Mary's Food Bank

"Everything I have heard about St. Mary's Food Bank has been very positive and you always promptly acknowledge my donations, something not every charity does." - St. Mary's Food Bank Donor

"The gift is in memory of a dear friend and former colleague, Laura Schupbach, who recently passed away after fighting cancer for five years." - St. Mary's Food Bank Donor

