

# [nourish news]

April 2026 Community Update from *Waste Not Want Not*

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## [From the Executive Director]

It's time to come home.

After months of renovation, we are proud to announce that Waste Not Want Not is returning to the Castle, restored, expanded, and better equipped than ever to fight hunger. This homecoming marks more than a return to a building, it represents expanded capacity, strengthened infrastructure, and an even greater commitment to fighting food insecurity across our region.

This milestone would not have been possible without the extraordinary generosity of those who stood beside us during our temporary relocation. We extend heartfelt thanks to our castle volunteers and food rescuers. We are also incredibly grateful to **Pastor Robert Bass and Celebration Church Orange Park**, as well as **Katie Vineyard and Challenge Enterprises**, for opening your doors and making space for our mission to continue uninterrupted. Because of your partnership, the work of helping people in need never stopped.

Over the past several months, more than \$200,000 has been invested into transforming the Castle into a stronger, more efficient hub equipped to strengthen food safety and to expand food rescue and community impact. Upgrades include air conditioning, installation of commercial refrigeration, enhanced workflow systems, and improved spaces designed to better support our volunteers, partners, and the families we serve. These improvements position us to

rescue more food, reduce more waste, and deliver even greater service with dignity from a center of excellence.

We are deeply grateful to the **Warren and Augusta Hume Foundation, The Winn-Dixie Company, Baptist Health Systems, The Community Foundation of Northeast Florida, Jacksonville Jaguars Foundation, Dave Pruetto, HCA Healthcare Florida, Wiggins Construction Company**, and so many others for investing in this vision. Your support strengthens our ability to serve with greater reach and long-term sustainability.

We will officially resume service operations at the Castle on **May 3, 2026**.

To celebrate this exciting chapter, we invite you to join us for our **Ribbon Cutting and Lawn Party / Sneak Peek Tour on Thursday, April 30 at 3:00 p.m.**

In addition, I will be at the Castle on **Friday, May 1 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.** to welcome volunteers and food rescuers who would like an early look at the newly renovated space before operations resume.

Please note: distribution from Celebration Church will conclude at the end of service on **May 2, 2026**. All partners should plan to resume pickups and operations at the Castle beginning **May 3**.

We are excited to welcome you back home — to a space renewed for purpose, built for growth, and ready to serve! We cannot wait for you to experience it!

With excitement,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathleen N. Spears, PhD, MHA  
President & Executive Director



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# [Community Nourishment]

Waste Not Want Not nourishes not only children, families, seniors, veterans, and unhoused neighbors in need, but we also nourish spirits!

Every Tuesday, Thursday, and some Fridays, spirits are lifted when volunteers from **Club Challenge at Challenge Enterprises** come to the castle to sort bread and other items. Their spirits are lifted, but so are ours! One club member greets everyone with a high-five and another with a hug. How can your day not be brightened by this?

Always jamming along to 1980's rock, the Club Challenge crew process thousands of pounds of bread and baked goods a week. We estimate that the value of Club Challenge volunteers exceeds \$2,548 – A WEEK – in the gift of time and...spirit lifting! Thank you Jim and the Club Challenge Crew! We couldn't nourish our community without you!



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# [Partner Highlight]

## What is your mission?

Grace Ministries Without Walls is a faith-based nonprofit organization committed to sharing the love of Jesus Christ through service, compassion, and outreach. Our mission is to be the hands and feet of Christ by meeting both the spiritual and practical needs of our community.

We serve individuals and families in need by providing food, clothing, and support to those facing hardship. Each week, we prepare and distribute hot, home-cooked meals to the homeless, creating

not just a moment of provision, but an opportunity for connection, dignity, and hope. We also extend assistance to low-income families, helping them with essential resources during difficult seasons.

Beyond meeting physical needs, we are passionate about restoring lives through Soul Care, wellness, and education. We offer guidance, encouragement, and faith-based support to help individuals heal, grow, and walk in purpose.



### **How does Waste Not help you execute your mission?**

At Grace, we say "God provides, we deliver". We are extremely blessed to receive food, clothing, toiletries, and household supplies from Waste Not. We use much of the food to prepare meals or stock our pantry. The other items, we are able to distribute out into the community. Waste Not has also kept us aware of programs, funding opportunities, and other missions in the area that

we can work with and combine forces. No matter what it is, whatever God provides to us through Waste Not...we deliver.



### **What do you love most about your organization?**

I love that we meet people where they are in their greatest time of need. Whether on the streets, a hospital bed, hotel room, or in transition, we help. Regardless of gender, age, race, your personal struggles, we don't judge, we help. Just as Christ would do.

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## **Birthdays & Volunteer-Versaries**



📅 **Happy Birthday** to our volunteers with April birthdays:

John Boyd, Eugene "Gene" Bruns, Gray Chandler, Frances Fisher, Carol Geib, Al Giroux, Karen Henley, Mary Holtcamp, Melissa Louckes, Tom McNamara, Kevin Mutell, Dennis Ramsey, Bob Toovey, and Binion Williams!

*We make every effort to ensure our birthday and anniversary list is accurate and up to date. If we missed your birthday, please let us know so we can update our records. If you prefer not to be included in the monthly birthday "Well-Wish List," please let Avery know by emailing [avery@wastenotflorida.org](mailto:avery@wastenotflorida.org)*

## **Welcome, New Volunteers!**

We are so excited to welcome the newest members of the Waste Not Want Not family! Anthony "Tony" Gardner, Alise Lykes, Warren "Coop" Kendrick, Bob Papuga, Benjamin "BJ" Hartley, and Kent Frazer — we're thrilled to have you with us. Your willingness to show up and serve makes all the difference, and we can't wait to see the impact you'll make in our community!

## 📅 **April Service-versaries**

Every month, we celebrate the volunteers who first joined the Waste Not Want Not family during that same month — however many years ago. These are the folks who said "yes" in April, and have kept saying it ever since. Thank you for showing up, and showing up, and showing up again. We are endlessly grateful!

### **35 Years**

Binion Williams

### **21 Years**

Bill & Irene Harrell

### 19 Years

Joe & Diane Clairmont

### 15 Years

Bob & Alice Toovey

### 11 Years

John Conlin

### 6 Years

Gray & Nancy Chandler

### 4 Years

Dennis & Laura Ramsey

### 3 Years

Mike Locke

Minette Torres

Carmelita Ubas

### 1 Year

Michelle Jenks

Heidi Myers

*If you've been volunteering with us for many years and happen to know the year you first got involved, **we'd love to hear from you**. Please send anniversary date to [Linda@wastenotflorida.org](mailto:Linda@wastenotflorida.org) so we can keep our records accurate. Thank you for being part of our community!*

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[ Volunteer  Cheer ]

### Happy Volunteer Appreciation Month!

April is Volunteer Appreciation Month, and we cannot let it pass without saying what we mean every single day but don't always say loudly enough: we could not do this without you.

Every pound of food rescued, every meal that makes it to a family's table, every senior who doesn't go hungry this week — **that's you. Our volunteers are the engine** behind everything we do. You rise before the sun to complete food rescues. You sort, you pack, you deliver. You show up rain or shine, week after week, because you believe no neighbor should go without.

We see you. We are grateful for you. And we are so excited to celebrate YOU at our first-ever **Volunteer Appreciation Spring Soirée** on **Sunday, April 26th at 1:30 PM** at the **Orange Park Woman's Club**. Please join us — this one's for you.

*This section belongs to **YOU** — and we want to fill it with your stories! Submit your Volunteer Cheer to Avery at [avery@wastenotflorida.org](mailto:avery@wastenotflorida.org). Taken an exciting trip? Welcomed a new grandbaby? Created something beautiful? We want to celebrate with you and share it with our whole community!*

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## [Supporter Spotlight]

This month, we're shining a light on a few of our awesome supporters who would prefer to stay behind the scenes. Their generosity isn't driven by recognition, but by a genuine commitment to the mission of Waste Not Want Not.

First, we celebrate a small business with a big heart: **Park Avenue New York Bagel**, located at 1177 Park Avenue, Unit 14 in Orange Park. The owners **Leonardo & Claudia Albarracin** answered an SOS call without hesitation, jumping in to help unbox new refrigeration equipment and tackle last-minute tasks as we prepared the Castle to reopen. Their support doesn't stop there. Park Avenue New York Bagel consistently donates hundreds of pounds of authentic New York-style bagels and spreads, helping provide nourishing food to those in need.

**Thank you, Park Avenue New York Bagel, for your generosity and partnership.**



We also shine love and appreciation on **Dave Pruette of Pruette Electric**, who has dedicated his time, talent, and expertise to upgrading the Castle's lighting and electrical systems. A master electrician and experienced instructor, Dave ensured our facility is equipped to safely support new appliances and air conditioning. Though he specializes in pool lighting, his skillset in all things electrical has been invaluable to us.

Dave came to us through a recommendation from our founder, Deb Smyers. As it turns out, his wife, Melissa, was one of Waste Not Want Not's very first volunteers. In those early days, she and Deb worked side by side rescuing food throughout the community. Today, that same spirit of service continues through their family.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you to these supporters who give so selflessly, without expectation of recognition. ☐



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Did you know our **yard sale** is held monthly? Join us **every first Saturday** of the month outside of Challenge Enterprises, 526 Kingsley Ave in Orange Park, at 8 AM, and get some great steals and deals while helping **fight hunger + poverty!** We hope to see you on the sidewalk on **May 2nd!**

**Does your church give to Waste Not Want Not?** Many local faith communities are already helping us fight food insecurity in Northeast Florida and we would love to grow that circle! If your church is not yet giving to us and you think they might be interested, please reach out to Christie Hingst at [christie@wastenotflorida.org](mailto:christie@wastenotflorida.org) with your church name and a contact person. Together we can do so much more!

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