

## CONTACT

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# PRESS RELEASE

## **Waste Not Want Not Celebrates 35 Years Fighting Hunger and Poverty**

JACKSONVILLE - *Waste Not Want Not* - a leader in food rescue and alleviating hunger in Northeast Florida - announced today that it will hold two fundraising events in celebration of their 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Founded in 1990 by Clay County resident **Debra Smyers**, the organization began by calling local grocery stores to ask if instead of throwing the items away, could they pick up short - dated food to share with hungry people. The first yes came from Publix at Argyle. Thirty-five years later, Waste Not Want Not now rescues roughly 2 million pounds of food a year from that very Publix and **16 other Publix Stores, Trader Joe's, Pepperidge Farms, BIMBO**, and others.

The organization is small but mighty says its **President & Executive Director Kathleen Spears**. "We have just 3.5 paid staff. We are able to do what we do in the magnitude in which we do it thanks in no small part to our hundreds of faithful volunteers who work tirelessly to rescue, sort, and distribute millions of pounds of food to people in need each year." says Spears. Spears goes on to say that without the more than 100 grassroots community-based organizations they work with across 14 counties in Northeast Florida, they would not be able to get that food to hungry people. "Hope is not a one-man band, we have a beautiful ensemble of volunteers, food distribution and hunger alleviation partners, board members, sponsors, and donors who collectively make up a magical symphony" exclaims Spears.

Here's what you need to know about the two upcoming fundraising events.

### **Celebratory Event Details**

**What:** 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala Corks & Forks: *The Jade Edition*

**When:** Saturday September 27, 2025, 6 pm - 10 pm

**Where:** Azaleana Manor - 12 Kingsley Ave, Orange Park Florida 32073

**Featuring:** Retired Jacksonville Jaguars - **Tom "Tommy Mac" McManus** and **Aaron "Beas" Beasley**; Farm to Table Dinner; and a live and silent auction

**Tickets:** General Admission - \$235; 35<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Ticket - \$300 (includes ticket to gala and golf event)

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**What:** Tee'd Up to End Hunger

**When:** Sunday November 9, 2025, 11:30 am - 3:00 pm

**Where:** Top Golf - 10531 Brightman Blvd, Jacksonville Florida 32246

**Featuring:** Simulated golfing, prizes, silent auction, lite bites and refreshments

**Tickets:** General Admission - \$100

Learn more about sponsorship opportunities by visiting [Fundraisers : Fundraisers : Help Fight Hunger : Waste Not Florida](#) or emailing Kathleen Spears at [Kathleen@wastenotflorida.org](mailto:Kathleen@wastenotflorida.org)

**About Waste Not Want Not**

*Waste Not Want Not* is a 501 c3 charitable organization dedicated to fighting hunger in Northeast Florida by preventing food waste. We are not a food bank; we do not purchase food. Rather we are a food rescue; we connect the dots between surplus food and hungry people. We work with hundreds of passionate volunteers, committed food donors, and numerous community-based nonprofit organizations in 14 counties across Northeast Florida to rescue and share food with those in need. Every week, more than 15,000 people eat food provided by *Waste Not* - food that, but for the efforts of our volunteers, would be wasted.

For additional information, to volunteer, or to donate, visit: [www.wastenotflorida.org](http://www.wastenotflorida.org).

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