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PRESS RELEASE

Waste Not Want Not Hosts “Feeding Friends and Neighbors” Event to Shed Light on Hunger and Homelessness in Jacksonville Sponsored by VyStar Credit Union

JACKSONVILLE, FL – Waste Not Want Not, a nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting hunger and reducing food waste, will host its annual **Feeding Friends and Neighbors** event at **James Weldon Park**. The event, taking place during **National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month**, aims to shed light on the ongoing issue of domestic hunger and provide immediate support to neighbors in need. Each year, Waste Not Want Not rescues **millions of pounds of food** that would otherwise end up in landfills and redistributes it through partnerships with more than **150 community-based nonprofit organizations**. Through this effort, the organization provides nutritious meals to those in need – with dignity and at scale.

This year’s event, **sponsored by VyStar Credit Union** and held **in partnership with, Saved 2 Serve, Love Cleans, Hippie Que, and Trader Joe’s**, will feature a **chef-prepared meal**, a **mobile shower truck**, and the **distribution of food, clothing and toiletries**. The event not only addresses immediate needs but also promotes long-term stability and self-sufficiency with partners providing resources. Civic-minded businesses are invited to participate by tabling at the event, offering nutritious food items as well as valuable information and resources to help community members achieve a *hand up*, not a handout.

“We are holding this event during National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Month to shine a light on the problem of domestic hunger,” said **Kathleen Spears**, President & Executive Director of Waste Not Want Not. “Hunger and homelessness persist in our communities. Especially with government shutdowns and the stalemate over SNAP benefits, we must take action. We can either look away or stand up and fight to end hunger and homelessness.”

When asked why VyStar stepped up to support the event, they had this to say: “At VyStar, we believe that strong communities are built through compassion, collaboration, and action”, said Kemal Gasper, VP of

Community Engagement at VyStar Credit Union. "Serving as the title sponsor for the Feeding Friends and Neighbors event reflects our deep commitment to supporting those impacted by hunger and homelessness. Together, we're helping ensure every individual has access to the nourishment, resources, and dignity they deserve, because when our thrive, we all do."

The event will also feature **guest celebrity chef Aaron Beasley**, retired Jacksonville Jaguar. "Hunger and homelessness are challenges we can tackle together as a community, and I just want to do my part," said Beasley, who recently spoke at Waste Not Want Not's 35th Anniversary Gala. "When I first learned about Waste Not, I was immediately drawn to the mission. Taking perfectly good food that would otherwise be wasted and using it to feed hungry people just makes sense – and doing it through partnerships with more than a hundred local organizations is simply smart."

For more information about **Waste Not Want Not**, its mission, or how to get involved, visit www.wastenotflorida.org.

EVENT DETAILS

- What:** Feeding Friends & Neighbors community meal, clothing, and food distribution
- When:** Saturday November 8, 2025
- Time:** 10 am - noon
- Where:** James Weldon Johnson Park
135 Monroe Street Jacksonville, FL 32002
- Cost:** Free to those in need

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