

[nourish news]

January 2026 Community Update from *Waste Not Want Not*

[From the Executive Director]

Happy New Year, friends!

What an exciting year we have ahead of us.

After a long wait, we're thrilled to share that we have **finally** broken ground on our castle renovations. Thank you to our incredible castle volunteers and hunger alleviation partners for your patience as we navigated this process. And thank you in advance for the patience and perseverance you'll show as we temporarily operate out of Celebration Church during the renovation. It will be tight. It will be challenging. But it will be temporary, and it **will be worth it!** Our updated castle will provide a more comfortable environment for volunteers and much needed space to expand our mission. Special thank you to Pastor Rob Bass of Celebration Church for hosting us temporarily until our renovations are complete.

Also arriving this year: **upgraded technology!** Thanks to a grant and the generosity of local businessman **Brian Knight**, we'll soon begin recording rescues directly into tablets at the castle. That means no more pen and paper...or squeezing numbers into those tiny boxes! This upgrade will allow us to track rescues in real time and use technology to fill partner orders more efficiently. **Linda** and our volunteer tech guru **Dave Krippner** are hard at work developing a training plan and rollout timeline.

I must share that **Kelly Gentry** has resigned, her last day was January 24, 2026. We are in the final stages of hiring her replacement. This new hire will be part-time and focus solely on keeping our mission in motion by ensuring smooth operations at the castle.

Since Kelly's replacement will be part-time, we've hired **Christie Hingst** to take on hunger alleviation partner development, quality assurance, leading community engagement efforts, and implementing processes that position us to put the food we rescue into the best places at the best time to allow us to achieve maximum impact in fighting hunger and reaching those with the greatest needs. Castle volunteers should contact Kathleen regarding daily partner orders until we have hired Kelly's replacement. We will let you know who that is once a final hiring decision has been made. Christie, Linda, and I are united in ensuring that our very important work continues without missing a single step. Our team is as strong as ever and will only get stronger!

Now, let's officially welcome Christie! Many of you may already know her from **Grace Anglican Church** or from the castle because she was once a Tuesday volunteer herself. She is (much to the chagrin of John and Linda Boyd) a proud *No/e*, having earned her bachelor's degree from Florida State University, and she also

holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration from George Washington University. Christie served as a city planner implementing programs to improve city services. She took a pause to start a family and has returned to the workforce with enthusiasm, energy, and experience that will serve Waste Not well.

Thanks to Christie joining the team, Waste Not Want Not can continue moving forward without missing a beat. And thanks to this amazing team - **including you, our volunteers and supporters** - I can continue focusing on organizational strategy, increasing visibility, and raising funds to expand our footprint. And expanding our footprint means **one thing...feeding more people in need...**the reason we are all here.



Here's to an amazing 2026!

Excitedly yours,

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

[Community Nourishment]

Our support from Delaware North and the Jacksonville Jaguars has been incredible. We have rescued and distributed over 10,000 pounds of food to more than 20 partner organizations across 10 counties. These rescues have included a mix of shelf-stable items, bread, dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables, and large quantities of prepared foods.

Once the season sadly came to an end, we experienced unscheduled food rescues every day, significantly increasing our ability to support organizations providing hot meals to the community. Several of our partners have individually packaged and delivered food to homebound individuals, while others—equipped with commercial kitchens—were able to prepare and serve meals to various unhoused communities during some of the coldest days of the season.

This has been an exciting time for Waste Not, as we have been able to support our hunger alleviation partners who have expanded their services to include hot meal programs. It's exciting to know that as we

plan to expand our space, our partners are also growing and expanding their reach. Collectively, we have a stronger position in the fight against hunger.

[Partner Highlight]

Southpoint SDA, led by Tina Ephraim and an incredible team of more than 140 dedicated volunteers, serves approximately 3,000–4,000 individuals each month. Tina is an exceptional partner, and her leadership is reflected in the team’s consistency, compassion, and deep commitment to the community. Volunteers are on the ground five to six days a week, providing reliable support. Southpoint SDA picks up food from us every Thursday for distribution on Monday evenings and Friday afternoons, and one Sunday each month they go even further by serving hot meals from a food truck.

What is your mission?

At the heart of Southpoint SDA’s mission is a deep commitment to building personal connections—they make it a goal to remember the name of every individual who visits the pantry.

How do you serve the hungry and impoverished in our community?

The pantry operates as a client-choice model and offers not only food, but also clothing, hygiene products, and household essentials.

How does Waste Not help you execute your mission?

Last fall, WNNW was proud to support their first-ever back-to-school outreach event, which welcomed over 1,000 families—a powerful testament to both the need in the community and the trust Southpoint SDA has built.

What do you love most about your organization?

What we love most about our organization is the dignity and respect we are able to offer every person who walks through our doors. Our attendees are greeted with a warm smile and are given the opportunity to choose their own food from the donations available, allowing them to select items that best meet their needs and preferences. We believe this choice preserves dignity and helps families feel valued rather than rushed or overlooked.

We also love the strong sense of community that has grown through our pantry. By taking time to build relationships, we get to know the people we serve, and many individuals who once came to us in need have since become volunteers themselves. They now help welcome others, distribute food, and ensure that everyone feels respected and cared for. Seeing this cycle of support and transformation is deeply meaningful and reflects the heart of our mission.





Birthdays & Volunteer-Versaries



Happy birthday to our volunteers with January birthdays:

Jennifer Carbajal, Kate Gatien, Lynn Afflick, Bob Johnson, Heidi Myers, and Mike Peterson (celebrating his 70th birthday!)

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

Happy Volunteer-versary to our volunteers who started their journey with us during a January month. We appreciate your dedication, hard work, and the passion you bring to everything you do. Thank you for being such an important part of our community!

Louise Braman – 21 years

Martin Brown – 16 years

Barbara Meeks – 12 years

Scott Fuchs – 8 years

Gary & Jane Bachtell, Sheree Martin, Marsha Stratton,

Kevin Midgett, Michele Banks – 6 years

Mary Barber, Pam Gould, Carl Grays, Bill Spragg – 3 years

Amy Pellitier – 2 years

Leland Tuttle, Hawke Asher, St Gregorious Orthodox Church Group – 1 year

*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 so we can keep our records accurate. Thank you for being part of our community!*

[Volunteer Cheer]

We're excited to introduce our new *Volunteer Cheer* section in the newsletter! Our volunteers do incredible work, and we want to celebrate all of you. The Volunteer Cheer Corner is a space to share the fun, creative, and meaningful moments in your life. Each month, we'll highlight moments and experiences that make life special—whether it's a poem, artwork, a fun adventure, a favorite meal you cooked, or something meaningful you did to celebrate the month.

This month, we are cheering on Robbin Tungett and her husband Tim. Robbin is a substitute rescuer for the Mandarin Publix stores and restaurants. She fills in in a pinch as needed if a scheduled volunteer cannot make their shift.

When not volunteering for Waste Not, Robbin and her husband Tim moonlight as Santa & Mrs. Claus! That's right! We have our very own connection to ol' St. Nick! Pictured here, the Tungetts made an appearance at the Chik-fil-A at corner of Oak Bluff Lane and San Jose Blvd., bringing holiday Cheer to many. Incidentally, that Chik-Fil-A donates to us on Mondays and Thursdays each week ☺☺ She says they are such nice people ☺ thank you Chick-fil-A and thank you Robbin for sharing this fun story!

Want to share? Send your submission to Avery at avery@wastenotflorida.org, and we'd be happy to include it in our monthly newsletter. Let's cheer on our amazing volunteers!



[Supporter Spotlight]

Waste Not Want Not could not fulfill our mission without the dedication of our amazing team of staff, volunteers, and supporters. This month, we are thrilled to shine a light on the generosity and community spirit of **VyStar Credit Union**.

VyStar truly believes in empowering its employees to “do good” in the communities where they live and work. Through initiatives like paid time off for volunteering and an internal platform that connects employees with service opportunities, VyStar fosters a genuine culture of giving back. We are fortunate to count **dozens of VyStar employees** among our hardworking volunteers — including **Tillery Durbin**, a valued board member, and **Minette Torres** and **Joe Sellix**, who lend their time and energy sorting donations for our yard sales. We are also grateful for retired VyStar employee **Darlene Heather**, who leads our Thursday volunteer team at the Castle with dedication and heart.

Last November, VyStar went above and beyond by partnering with us to support children and families affected by government shutdowns and changes to SNAP benefits. During our **Feeding Friends & Neighbors** program, VyStar deployed teams of volunteers to distribute groceries and essentials, provided bags for distribution, and helped cover program costs — making a direct and meaningful impact in our community.

We are proud to recognize **VyStar Credit Union** as not only a valued supporter, but a true **partner in the fight to end hunger**. Thank you VyStar!



Did you know our **yard sale** is now 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 **February 7th!**





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