



Time is valuable.

This month I want to talk about how you can join the fight against food insecurity and waste by donating your time. We all know money is a valuable resource and it's great to contribute financially to organizations that are working to reduce food insecurity but perhaps you don't have much money to donate. Maybe you recently lost your job and are in a season of searching for new employment, reaching out to potential employers, waiting for responses, etc. You're low on money but you do have time and you want to keep fighting against food insecurity. We actually had a volunteer who joined us because of that very reason. She has since found employment and continues to help us when she can but what's important and inspiring is that she came to us not only **for** help but **to** help during a tough season in her life. Though she had little money, she used the valuable resource of time that she had available. Whatever the circumstances of your life, if you find that you have time to give there are many ways you can use it to help fight food insecurity and waste.

There are many organizations that help to fight food waste and insecurity all over the world and especially here in the United States. It may be hard to know what to look for in your search for a local place to volunteer. Most people will think of homeless feeding facilities and churches with food ministries. Those are great places to volunteer but I'd like to share some other types of organizations that may not come to mind so easily.

The first organizations I'd like to talk about are food banks. Food banks are basically large warehouse facilities that house food donated by several different types of food distributors like grocery stores and wholesalers. They typically need volunteers to help sort through and organize their incoming shipments. Then, instead of distributing the food directly to those in need which would be extremely difficult considering the amount of food they receive, they sell the food at a steeply discounted price (sometimes they'll give away large loads of perishable goods for free) to organizations that distribute the food to those in need. Here at Grace Klein we actually order food from Community Food Bank here in Alabama in order to provide a better variety of nutrition to our monthly food delivery recipients. Contacting a local food bank is also a great way to find local food distributors you could volunteer with or donate to since their main design is to provide food for those types of organizations.

Another way to use your time to fight food insecurity is by gleaning. To be honest, I'd only ever heard the word "glean" from reading the bible and I really had no idea what it meant until recently. A few months ago some friends and I decided to check out a screening of a food waste documentary called Just Eat It (www.foodwastemovie.com). There were some representatives from a nationwide gleaning community called the Society of St. Andrew (SoSA) there who told us they gather volunteers to go and glean at local farms throughout the year. If you're like me and you have no idea what that means, gleaning is the act of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been commercially harvested or on fields where it is not economically profitable to harvest. Often there is plenty of good, useable produce left on the ground after the

commercial harvest is through. SoSA and other gleaning organizers then make that food available to food distribution organizations including food banks. Often, a lot of the free produce we get from Community Food Bank was gleaned by SoSA. You can check SoSA's website to see if they glean anywhere near you or you could even organize your own gleaning crew. More information on how to start your own group or finding other gleaning groups near you can be found at this web address (goo.gl/wfe9cX).

I hope these tips will help you find a way to give your time fighting hunger and food waste. Not everyone wants to volunteer at a homeless feeding facility or soup kitchen or even a church, but it may be helpful to know that there are other options that may better suit what you're comfortable with. If time is a resource you're low on but you do have money to donate, please consider supporting our organization and/or others like us financially. A \$30 donation to Grace Klein Community feeds one of the nearly 250 families we serve with our monthly deliveries for an entire week. Even a little bit of money or a little bit of time here and there can make a huge difference in the life of a food insecure family. Thanks for reading this month's letter and joining us as we work daily to lower food waste and food insecurity!

- Giorgio

How Can You Help?

Grace Klein Community is growing and with growth comes more responsibility and costs. Please consider making a donation to help us serve families in need. A donation of \$30 provides a box of food to feed a family for one week.

Donations can be given online through gracekleincommunity.com/donate

OR

check donations can be mailed to:

Grace Klein Community,
1678 Montgomery Hwy #104, Birmingham, AL 35216.

