The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter

July 2022

Open Invitation *– if you volunteer in St. Augustine, we'd love to have you join us in Palatka, and if you volunteer in Palatka, we'd love to have you join us in St. Augustine.*

Volunteer Management Software

We are excited to announce the purchase and implementation of our new volunteer management software. "**Get Connected**" by Galaxy Digital will take volunteer management, engagement, recruitment, communication, and reporting to a whole new level. Epic-Cure has grown a lot in its three years of existence. We rescue more food and serve more families every month. Keeping track of our efforts requires a more efficient resource management system, one that can scale along with Epic-Cure.

We are currently training volunteers to take the lead; however, the success of this program will require everyone's involvement. In the next couple of days, we will send an email to everyone with more information.

Please keep an eye for it. In the meantime, if you want to learn more about the program, please visit the Galaxy Digital site at www.galaxydigital.com.

Operations & New Sources

We are excited to announce the launch of our Fresh Food Connect program. Fresh Food Connect is an app that enables home and community gardeners to donate a portion of their fresh grown produce to support local hunger relief efforts. Our wonderful volunteer Hazel Robinson has completed training and is taking the lead in launching this program for Epic-Cure.

This picture shows our first delivery. Arthur Culbert, Interim Executive Director of Compassionate Saint Augustine and Epic-Cure volunteer, drops off kale, tomatoes, carrots, and a cantaloupe from his Lincolnville garden.

You'll get a great idea of how it works by checking out their Facebook posts:

Link: FreshFoodConnect

If you interested in putting your green thumb to work helping others, please contact us at growers@epic-cure.org.

Beginning on July 14th and running every other Thursday, we rescue food at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station Commissary – NAS Jax. Rescued food from this resource will go to Palatka. Store rescue is the only way to get consistent meat, so we need to start building there. For the Mayport Commissary, we are on call to pick up when they have excess food.

Lineage Logistics operates a cold storage facility in Jacksonville. This month, they began giving us their rejected pallets. In our first two weeks, we were able to get over 20,000 pounds of frozen spinach, brussels sprouts, and other miscellaneous frozen food. Because we received such an abundance, we were able to share six pallets with St. Johns County food pantries. We supplied the remaining 20 pallets – too much for us to take, because our Palatka freezers are not quite ready –to our friends at Southeastern Food Bank, and they distributed this excess all over Central Florida.

This table tells 3 stories.

Month	Fuel Cost	Pounds In	Pounds Delivered to Other Agencies
Jan	1,108	279,452	895
Feb	1,344	320,028	5,571
Mar	1,840	345,916	1,024
Apr	1,815	334,062	5,097
May	2,247	344,571	20,070
June	3,092	438,910	22,213

Story 1

Our fuel costs have risen dramatically, and we are driving more than ever to rescue more food. Our fuel cost has risen nearly three times since January 2022, and the food that we have rescued rose by almost 160,000 pounds, allowing us to provide other food banks with more than eleven tons of food for food insecure people.

Story 2

Rescuing more food = more food to give away not only to our patrons, but also to fellow food banks and soup kitchens. They too are experiencing further strains on their food and money resources.

The biggest beneficiary of the increase in food rescued has been Putnam County. To be sure, our Putnam County patrons have experienced continued acute need.

Story 3

We need help with fuel costs.

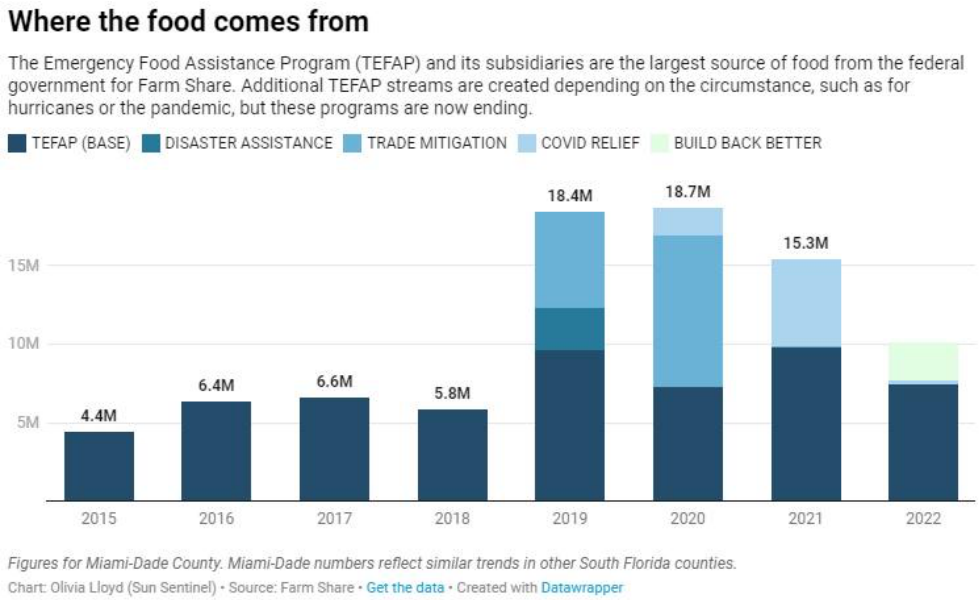
Small donations will, as you can see, make a significant difference in the lives of good people in need.

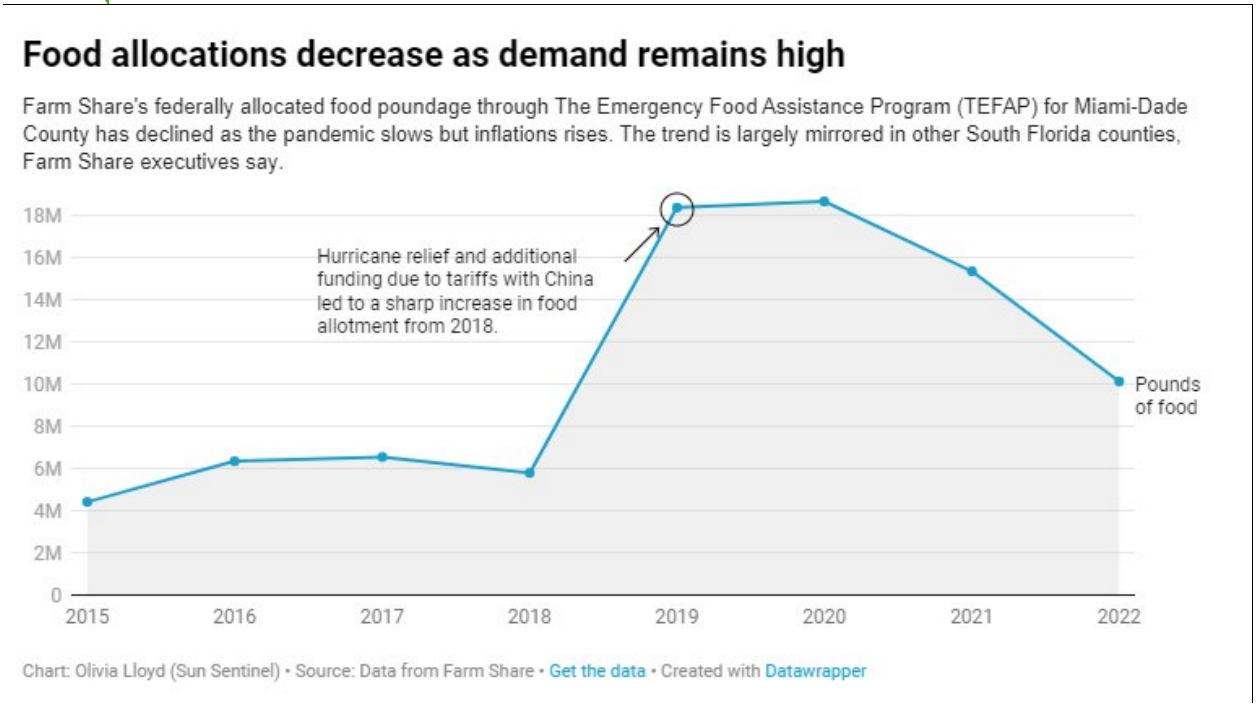
We are sharing Farm Share's Facebook post about the decline in food.

> *Food Banks fear a potential food shortage that will have those under food insecurity fighting for themselves if help is not received!!*
>
> *"We've got staff making phone calls on a daily basis trying to find additional sources of food products through the private sector, through the wholesalers, the brokers, the grocery store chain, the local farmers," Shelley said. "Trying to find where we can to supplement the food supply, until something else is done about it."*
>
> > *From: "As federal programs dry up, South Florida food banks struggle with inflation and increased demand"*
> >
> > *An article By Olivia Lloyd from the Sun Sentinel*

This is a potential crisis if Florida food banks do not receive help soon.

The graphs on the following page are part of this post and illustrate clearly the nature of this decline.





Let's look at some very high-level facts. As boring as statistics are, please bear with us – we have a point or two to make, here. According to the Congressional Budget Office (CBO), the 2022 projections for the U.S. deficit and debt are as follows:

Outlays:	$ 5.9 trillion
Revenues:	$ 4.8 trillion
Deficit:	$ 1.0 trillion
Debt:	$24.2 trillion

Our first point is that this is what $1 trillion looks like with all its zeroes:

$1,000,000,000,000.00

That is 12 zeroes after the "1" and before the decimal place.

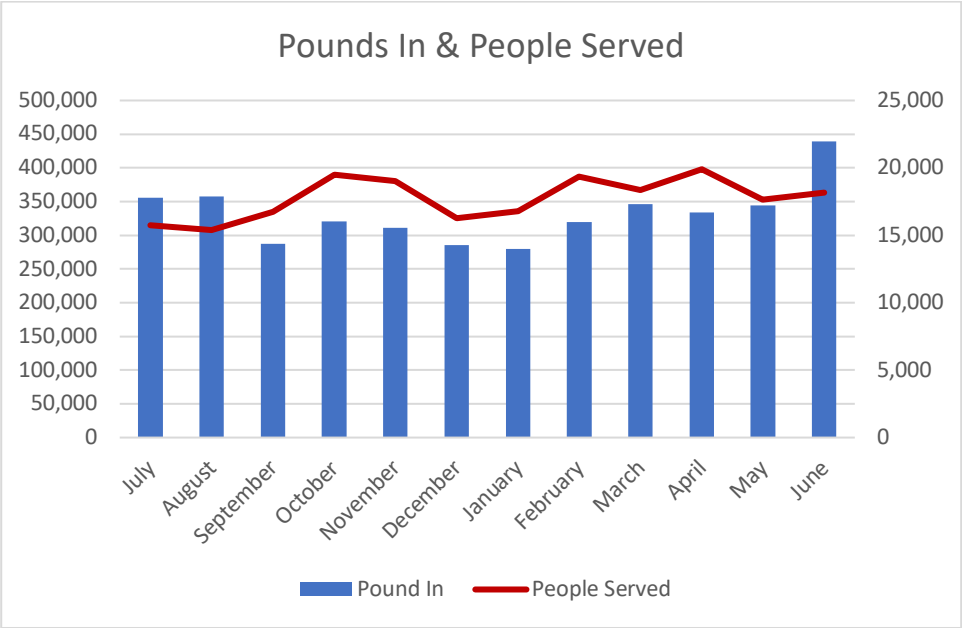
One trillion dollars would stretch nearly from the earth to the sun, and it would take a jet flying at the speed of sound (Mach 1) about fourteen years to roll out a roll of $1 bills that is $1 trillion long.

That $1 trillion is just this year's Federal deficit, and this challenge is clear and present. So, now we turn to our second point. We at Epic-Cure believe that we

need to continue to source our own food. As you saw in the table on p. 3, and as implied by ReFed's estimate that more than 108 billion pounds of food went to waste in 2019, the food is out there. We are redoubling our efforts to source food and to find partners to distribute it. This solution is at the core of the Epic-Cure ethos, as we believe in eliminating food waste and food insecurity through the good work of our incredible volunteer army. **We stand on the shoulders of giants**.

Thanks to the National Association of Letter Carriers, United Way of St. Johns County, and you, **StampOutHunger** was a huge collaborative success. Epic-Cure is just one of the many local nonprofits that received donations from this massive food drive … 19,439 pounds of donations to be exact. Thank you, United Way of St. Johns County and the National Association of Letter Carriers for your incredible efforts to coordinate this food drive. Our shelves and distributions will be well stocked.

Here is our PIPS (Pounds In & People Served) graph:



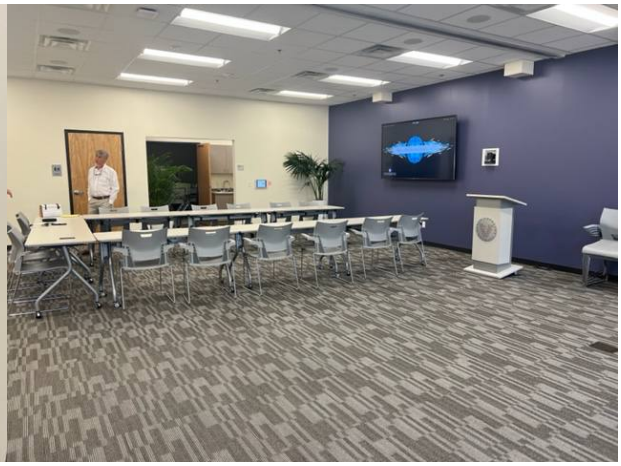
Notes on the graph:

Realized that all of this time the header says People Served and we were including Families Served instead. This graph shows People Served.

See the Operations and New Sources section for the explanation of the increased Pounds In.

Sustain U.

In September, we will begin an eight week BBQ cooking class series every Monday evening at the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic in Jacksonville. We must convert the space below into a working kitchen with 6 stations.



To do that we need some equipment. If you are interested in helping outfit the kitchen, our wish list with items less than $10 up to a $600 oven we need is:

https://www.amazon.com/registries/custom/owner-view?registryId=4RG8O4X5GVN5

Classes are going well at the Boys and Girls Club and at Woodlawn Terrace. Here the students at the Boys and Girls Club are tasting and learning all about fresh herbs and deciding which 3 they want to include in their omelets.

Our Epic Volunteers:

Look out for emails about our new volunteer online platform.

To hear about ongoing volunteer opportunities, please join our Facebook Volunteer Group. Charity Roberts, our volunteer coordinator, posts details about our needs every week. You can reach her at charity.roberts@epic-cure.org if you have any questions.

Volunteer Spotlight

By Janet McNabb

"But I'm not special! Just available." Those are the words of Epic-Cure volunteer Army Coe, but her actions prove otherwise.

Take for instance the night she was at home checking out Facebook and Marketplace. A trucker mentioned he had a 53' truckload of Skinny Pop popcorn that had been rejected by its intended receiver. It was 9 p.m. Army met him at the truck stop, loaded 17 pallets onto her truck, took it to the warehouse and unloaded it at 2 a.m. by herself. She knew the truck would be needed early the next morning.

That 53' truck held about 56 pallets. Because one pallet was damaged, the entire load was rejected and could easily have been taken to the dump. Unfortunately, this kind of waste is not uncommon.

Army has been an EMT, an ER nurse, and has taught nursing and EMT training. She is an Iraqi Freedom veteran and was a Navy corpsman with the Marines. Six years ago, she retired.

She heard about Epic-Cure when she helped pick up food for her neighbor a little over a year ago. While there she happened to mention "Well, I can…" and "I know how…."and that started her volunteer career. At first it was helping on Fridays, but now she jumps in to help whenever she is needed. She drives the Ryder trucks to pick up and deliver food. She researches ways to save money on much needed generators. She likes to "tinker" with things, so she will fix the carburetor if she

can. By looking for used generators she was able to find two units with exceptionally low hours for less than half the price of new ones, saving grant money.

She encourages people to step up and volunteer. “Come play with us!” It’s a great group of people. “Have fun!” Learn how to operate the forklift, the floor sweeper, drive the truck. Learn what chicken paws really are. Meet others, feel useful. It’s great exercise!

Thank you, for being part of the Epic-Cure team!

Fun(draising):

As the world watches the worsening crisis taking place in Ukraine, here is your opportunity to be a part of the solution. **The Shine a Light 5K For Ukraine** is your chance to help innocent civilians caught in the conflict.

BENEFITTING:

World Central Kitchen

A Ripple

Medic-Corps

The Shine a Light-5K race is hosted by Epic-Cure, which believes that every human deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. The founder of Epic-Cure, Sunny Mulford, Dr. Jeremy Caudill, a local physician who volunteers for medical missions, Barry Honan, former alumnus of 3-Star Michelin restaurant Le Bernardin in NYC and Epic-Cure board member Wendy Lantz have come together to gather the resources of our community to help the people of Ukraine.

Wendy, a nurse practitioner, and international humanitarian has recently returned from a medical mission trip in Kyiv, Ukraine. She worked side by side with the above organizations bringing aid to the war-torn families. These organizations provide hot meals, medical services, medications, surgical supplies, and water filtrations to those affected by the war. 100% of the proceeds from this 5K race will fund these relief efforts. This is an opportunity for our community to come together and support the people! Please join us in shining a light of hope for our friends in Ukraine.

100% of the proceeds of this event are going directly to those relief organizations.

Please join us as a sponsor, runner or just for the concert. Link to learn more and sign up:

Shine a Light 5K for Ukraine presented by Epic-Cure

Amazon Smile and Epic-Cure: If you are an Amazon shopper and do not have a charity you are supporting with your purchases, please consider choosing Epic-Cure and login to Smile.Amazon.com when shopping. One percent (1%) of all purchases goes to support the charity you choose.

Date	Account	Amount
08/16/2021	Amazon Smiles	13.21
11/22/2021	Amazon Smiles	25.39
05/31/2022	Amazon Smiles	76.30
		$ 114.90

Upcoming Epic-Cure events and Fundraisers:

Please mark your calendars.

Epic-Cure's First Annual "Skins Game" September 9, 2022

A golf event at The Yards (formerly the Oak Bridge Club)

254 Alta Mar Drive, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

All net proceeds benefit Epic-Cure

The Maine Event October 8, 2022

Co-sponsored by The Rotary Club of Saint Augustine Sunset

The Saint Francis Barracks

82 Marine St, St. Augustine, FL 32084

Net proceeds to benefit Epic-Cure and The Rotary Club of Saint Augustine Sunset, equally

The Second Annual Epic-Cure Golf Classic October 17, 2022

The Ponte Vedra Inn & Club – Ocean Course

Dinner and Open Bar Reception follows at the Surf Club Patio

200 Ponte Vedra Blvd, Ponte Vedra Beach, FL 32082

All net proceeds benefit Epic-Cure

Inflation Update:

Inflation continues to erode the purchasing power of consumers. In other words, inflation is really squeezing the ability of people to make ends meet. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the Consumer Price Index (CPI – inflation) in May 2022 ran at a rate that was 8.6% higher than last year's price level. The Big 3 components of the CPI – shelter, food, and energy prices – had the greatest harmful impact.

The following table breaks down the May 2022 inflation numbers. We have added the highlights, some of which are frightening indeed.

Table A. Percent changes in CPI for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): US city average	Seasonally adjusted changes from preceding month							
	Nov. 2021	Dec. 2021	Jan. 2022	Feb. 2022	Mar. 2022	Apr. 2022	May 2022	Unadjusted 12-mos. ended May 2022
All items	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.8	1.2	0.3	1.0	8.6
Food	0.8	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.0	0.9	1.2	10.1
Food at home	0.9	0.4	1.0	1.4	1.5	1.0	1.4	11.9
Food away from home (1)	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.6	0.7	7.4
Energy	2.4	0.9	0.9	3.5	11.0	-2.7	3.9	34.6
Energy commodities	4.2	1.3	-0.6	6.7	18.1	-5.4	4.5	50.3
Gasoline (all types)	4.5	1.3	-0.8	6.6	18.3	-6.1	4.1	48.7
Fuel oil(1)	3.5	-2.4	9.5	7.7	22.3	2.7	16.9	106.7
Energy services	0.2	0.3	2.9	-0.4	1.8	1.3	3.0	16.2
Electricity	0.2	0.5	4.2	-1.1	2.2	0.7	1.3	12.0
Utility (piped) gas service	0.3	-0.3	-0.5	1.5	0.6	3.1	8.0	30.2
All items less food and energy	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.6	0.6	6.0
Commodities less food and energy commodities	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.4	-0.4	0.2	0.7	8.5
New vehicles	1.2	1.2	0.0	0.3	0.2	1.1	1.0	12.6
Used cars and trucks	2.4	3.3	1.5	-0.2	-3.8	-0.4	1.8	16.1
Apparel	0.7	1.1	1.1	0.7	0.6	-0.8	0.7	5.0
Medical care commodities (1)	0.1	0.0	0.9	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.3	2.4
Services less energy services	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.6	5.2
Shelter	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.6	5.5
Transportation services	0.7	0.0	1.0	1.4	2.0	3.1	1.3	7.9
Medical care services	0.3	0.3	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.5	0.4	4.0

Footnotes: (1) Not seasonally adjusted.

At a 5.5% inflation rate, you might wonder why we highlight shelter. For most people, shelter is their greatest monthly expense, often making up 35% to 50% of their monthly income.

A moderate percentage increase of a large expense can be harmful, indeed.

Outcomes:

Epic-Cure's statistics are impressive. In just over three years' time, we have:

- rescued and distributed more than 10 million pounds of food;
- provided an average of 62 pounds of food over 162,000 times to families experiencing need or food insecurity;
- prevented 4,431 tons of Methane gas from harming our atmosphere; and
- returned $29 in value to the communities we serve for every $1 we spend on our operating costs.

Those are great statistics and a real testament to all the hard work performed by all our wonderful volunteers, work which has yielded good outcomes. We have begun tracking those outcomes using surveys of our patrons. Look at this table summarizing these outcomes. Some highlights follow the table.

Total of Surveyed Locations, including: Saint Augustine, Palatka, and Anastasia Baptist food distributions

Answer	Did you begin receiving food assistance due to conditions caused by Covid?	Before visiting EC, the food that we bought just did not last, and we did not have money to get more.	After visiting EC, the food that we bought just did not last, and we did not have money to get more.	Before visiting EC, we could not afford to eat balanced meals.	After visiting EC, we could not afford to eat balanced meals.	Before visiting EC, did anyone in your household ever cut the size of meals or skip meals because there was not enough money for food?	After visiting EC, did anyone in your household ever cut the size of meals or skip meals because there was not enough money for food?	If yes, before visiting EC how often did this happen?	If yes, after visiting EC how often did this happen?
Often true		107	30	73	22			42	20
Sometimes true		94	98	119	102			85	55
Never true		17	88	26	88			27	77
Yes	95					136	57		
No	122					80	153		
Unanswered	1		2	0	6	2	8	64	66
	218	218	218	218	218	218	218	218	218

Answer	Before visiting EC, did anyone in your household eat less than he/she felt he/she should because there is not enough money for food?	After visiting EC, did anyone in your household eat less than he/she felt he/she should because there is not enough money for food?	Before visiting EC, is anyone in your household ever hungry, but did not eat, because there is not enough money for food?	After visiting EC, is anyone in your household ever hungry, but did not eat, because there is not enough money for food?
Often true	52	18		
Sometimes true	114	75		
Never true	49	120		
Yes			89	40
No			126	171
Unanswered	3	5	3	7
	218	218	218	218

Here are some conclusions that we have drawn from this patron survey.

- 44% of respondents started receiving food assistance for the first time as a result of the conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic crisis it created.

- Before visiting Epic-Cure food distributions, 49% often could not afford to buy enough food to last and did not have more money to get more. Adding those that sometimes found themselves in these circumstances, and this combined measure of food insecurity percentage rises to 92%.
- After visiting Epic-Cure:
    - The proportion of our patrons that often ran out of food and money dropped from 44% to 8%.
    - The proportion of our patrons that often or sometimes ran out of food and money fell from 92% to 43%, a drop of more than 50%.
- The proportion of patrons who did not eat well balanced meals improved from 88% (pre-Epic-Cure visits) to 57%, a material improvement that, nonetheless, needs more work.
- Skipping meals dropped from 62% of respondents (prior to visiting Epic-Cure) to 26% (after visiting Epic-Cure distributions).
    - The number of those that skipped meals often dropped in half, from 42 (or, 19%) to 20 (9%).

Clearly, there have been some solid gains made in dealing with local food insecurity; however, as always, we at Epic-Cure are not satisfied with these results. More can and must be done. We believe in taking urgent, immediate, and continuous action to help nourish our planet and the good people in our communities served. We will not rest until food waste is eliminated; until food insecurity is eliminated; until methane gas emissions no longer rise from landfills; and until we have treated all whose paths we cross with the utmost dignity and respect.

There is much work to be done. We are ready. Because we ought to do this good work, we can and will do this good work.

Ought implies can.

Awareness:

- This is large and bold for a reason…

An easy, impactful way that you can help us is to please …

Save And Drop Off Your Grocery Store Plastic Bags.

You will help reduce waste by allowing us to re-use them.

You will be saving us money by reducing the number we have to purchase.

FYI – we have not had to buy plastic bags in over a year thanks to you all. Before, we were spending about $150 a month on bags. Great job everyone!

Transparency:

Anyone who wishes to see ***Epic-Cure's financial statements*** need only ask**.**

- Our CPA-Audited fiscal year 2021 financial statements have been released and are available upon request.
- Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org