



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter

September 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.

Operations

We received the best news we've had all year this month. Farm Share is adding us to the USDA commodity program in Putnam County. This will significantly increase the resources, including dairy, produce, dry goods, and meat to help the families in that county. While we wait to finalize paperwork and inspections, they have already begun pushing surplus commodities our way. The very first shipment they sent at 7:00 am on 8/29 was a semi-truck full (over 36,000 pounds) of grapes, nectarines, and mixed produce boxes. (Yes, our volunteers are amazing and got up early to receive it!)

We had so much food that week that we added a distribution at the Melrose Fire Department on 9/4 to spread the resource around the county. The Fire Department's assistance is in addition to the Putnam County distributions we hold every week in Pomona Park and Crescent City.

What is the source of USDA commodities? The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP) is a federal program that helps supplement the diets of low-income Americans, including elderly people, by providing them with emergency food assistance at no cost. Through TEFAP, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) purchases a variety of nutritious, high-quality food, and makes it available to state distributing agencies.

The amount of food each state receives is based on the number of unemployed and the number of people with incomes below the poverty level in the state. States provide the food to local agencies that they have selected, usually food banks, which in turn distribute the food to local organizations, such as soup kitchens and food pantries that directly serve the public.

While this will be a big boost in the amount of food we can distribute, we are still seeing increases in participation at our distributions and still have a large waiting list for shopping appointments in Palatka. In a Feeding America webinar in August, we learned (no surprise) that, due to inflation, **food insecurity is the same now as it was at the height of Covid**. Inflation is unlikely to end anytime soon, so we expect the need to keep rising. We remain focused on sourcing more food.

We have begun distributing our **"Rejected Pallet" donation flyers**, which has been positively received so far. We hope that this effort will become a major source of food in the coming months.



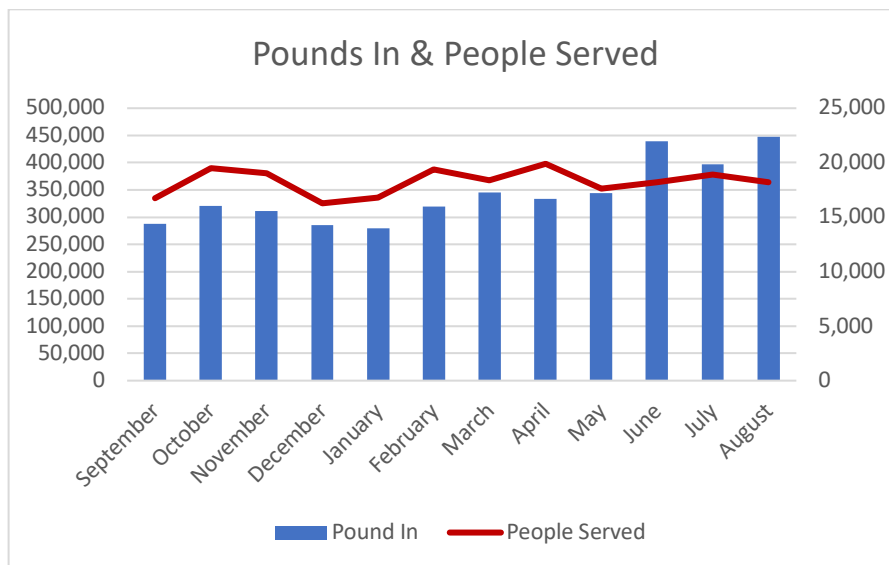
Let's do a quick reminder about the other benefit of rescuing food – it helps the environment. In 2019, the U.S. let a huge 35% of the 229 million tons of food available go unsold or uneaten. We call this unused food “surplus food,” and while a very small portion of it is donated to those in need and more is recycled, the vast majority becomes food waste that goes straight to landfill, incineration, down the drain, or is simply left in the fields to rot. (ReFed)

Uneaten food is a major driver of greenhouse gas emissions, generating 4% of U.S. and 8% of global emissions annually.

21% of our farmland and 21% of our freshwater resources are used each year to produce food that will ultimately be wasted.

This waste and its pervasive related effects are unacceptable and are at the core of our mission statement: “we take urgent, immediate, and continuous action to end food waste and fight hunger.”

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



Notes on the graphs:

It was a difficult financial decision to increase our expenses to lease the larger truck, but it is what was necessary operationally. In the first month, you can see the difference it is making.

Source	July	Aug	% Increase
SEFB Average	6248	9767	56.32%
USDA Average	6910	8232	19.13%

With the increase in pounds in we were able to provide an average of 72 pounds of food to each family in August. That was up from 61 pounds per family in July.



Sustain U.

Thank you to all the donors who helped outfit the kitchen at the Steven A. Cohen Military Family Clinic! The classes are delayed a few weeks due to the Outreach Director getting promoted, but we are ready to go as soon as they hire and place his replacement. Also, thank you to Lisa & Mike Chismark and Candy & Mike Johnson for helping us move in.



CENTERSTONE

HEROIC
HONORABLE
DEDICATED
DUTY
SERVICE
BRAVE
READY
COMMITMENT
COURAGEOUS
SELFLESS
INTEGRITY
VALIANT

MISSION
PATRIOTIC
RESPECT
ALWAYS
COUNTRY
SEMPER
DEFEND

Cohen Veterans
Network



The Origins of Epic-Cure

Yes, it is true that the catalyst for creating Epic-Cue was the documentary “Wasted: The Story of Food Waste.” If you haven’t already watched it, we highly recommend it. If you do, you will understand exactly how and why we created and implemented the business plan you see today.

Besides the documentary, there was Ms. Vickie Leese, our next door neighbor and tireless good Samaritan. Whenever anyone saw her headed in his or her direction, one said “yes” – even before she asked – because whatever she asked for would directly and immediately impact a family or child in need. Before her, we had never known that a single person could do that much good. She opened our eyes to how great the needs in our community are, despite its affluence. When such a simple solution to fighting hunger presented itself, there was no choice but to make it happen.

What we did not plan on was being a 100% volunteer organization. We hoped to raise enough money to hire Ms. Vickie and her husband Dr. David Rice. When we shared our business plan, several people in the food pantry business told us that our budget, which included staffing, was too optimistic. They were correct.

It was a lesson in how difficult fundraising can be. We were forced to abandon the possibility of hiring anyone. We also learned that we didn’t need to hire anyone. As we progressed and continued to grow, our volunteers kept showing up and making it all happen. Because they did, we were able to turn our focus to grants for capacity building and infrastructure. The grants began to come through, particularly those for capital expenditures. And then the ARPA grants in Putnam and St. Johns counties boosted our operational funding. Our amazing volunteers showed up in greater numbers and with unbridled enthusiasm and energy to help. Epic-Cure made good use of all the increased infrastructure: volunteers moved mountains of food and many food insecure people were made a little less food insecure.

We have an incredible group of team leaders that have allowed us to eliminate all “key man risk.” There are no jobs that we do not have team leaders cross trained to handle: warehouse operations, distributions, and logistics, accounting, and administration.

While we are there now, it was not always the case. In the early days, we struggled for volunteers. There are three people that unfailingly stayed as long as it took whenever it was needed for us to get the job done – Michele Anderson, Theresa Burch and Charity Roberts (in alphabetical order since their order of importance is equal). They have our eternal gratitude and respect. They embody the spirit of good works, kindness, respect, and charity. They are the ethos of Epic-Cure.

Fun Fact: The original business plan also included pet food manufacturing. We thought that meat waste would be significant and had all the permitting and recipes in place to use it to manufacture pet food. We quickly learned that 98%+ of all the meat we receive (391,285 pounds in 2022 through August 31st; and 1,392,416 pounds since our inception) is good to give to people and so dropped that part of the plan for a lack of that one key ingredient – meat!



Fun(draising)

Grants: This month has been hyperactive for grant writing. We have more than \$750,000 worth of grant requests pending.

The American Rescue Plan Act (2021): This amount does not include our efforts for St. Johns County ARPA funds. While the Putnam County Board of County Commissioners did not feel that ARPA funds should be allocated to the charities that stepped up mightily to meet the pandemic induced, increased need of the people of their county, the Commissioners in St. Johns felt differently. They have allocated to St. Johns County nonprofits \$6.7 million of the \$51.4 million that the US Treasury allocated to the county through ARPA. We have begun the process of applying for a share of the ARPA funding source. Regarding this process, here are some key dates to watch:

Wednesday, September 7, 2022	9:00 am	Workshop for public comment – allocation process
Wednesday, September 7, 2022	After workshop	Grant workshop for nonprofits
Monday, September 12, 2022	5:00 pm	Notice of Intent to Apply
Friday, September 16, 2022	5:00 pm	Deadline for Questions re: funding availability
Tuesday, September 27, 2022	5:00 pm	Responses to Q's: www.unitedway-sjc.or/arpa
Friday, October 21, 2022	5:00 pm	Submission Deadline
November 22, 2022	9:00 am	Public Workshop for Public Comment - allocations
Friday, December 2, 2022	5:00 pm	Notice of Conditional Selection or Non-Selection

Epic-Cure has already submitted its Intent to Apply, a receipt for which we have received from the United Way, which is managing the Funding Availability process for the county.

No one may lobby the St. Johns County Commissioners or The United Way on behalf of their nonprofit. Here is the language from the Notice of Funding Availability issued by the county and the SJC United Way:

Any applicant, or person acting on behalf of an applicant, is prohibited from lobbying the County, UWSJC Staff, ARPA Steering Committee and the evaluation Committee with respect to a funding application. If an applicant has any questions regarding the announcement of availability of funds, the applicant shall contact the person identified in the announcement as the contact person for UWSJC. **Applicants who fail to comply with this prohibition are subject to automatic rejection of their application, without further recourse, and disqualification from consideration for funding.**

PLEASE NOTE THAT IF ANYONE LOBBY'S ON EPIC-CURE'S BEHALF, EPIC-CURE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE DISQUALIFIED AND UNABLE TO EVEN PLEAD ITS CASE ("without recourse").

Please do not lobby on our behalf.



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](https://smile.amazon.com) when shopping. One percent (1%) of all purchases goes to support the charity you choose.

Upcoming Epic-Cure events and Fundraisers

Please mark your calendars.

Epic-Cure's First Annual "Skins Game"

September 15, 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

904 Now & Urban Asado Masters of Fire

October 16, 2022

More on this will be emailed to everyone soon so save the date!
They have 5 celebrity chefs booked for the event.

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
www.birdease.com/EpicCureGolf
All net proceeds benefit Epic-Cure

The Maine Event

November 5, 2022

Co-sponsored by The Rotary Club of Saint Augustine Sunset
The Saint Francis Barracks
82 Marine St, St. Augustine, FL 32084
<https://staugustinesunsetrotary.com/buy-tickets>
Net proceeds to benefit Epic-Cure and The Rotary Club of Saint Augustine Sunset, equally

Please help us spread the word about these fundraising events. They are fun, indeed.



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



Team Palatka thanking the USDA!