



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter

June, 2024

Epic-Cure rescued and distributed more than **860,000 pounds** of food and household goods in May, 2024.

The Epic-Cure *Report Card* as of May 31, 2024

Life to Date *(since May 24, 2019)*

Pounds In/Out	23,519,153	
Wholesale Value of Food Distributed	\$46,161,896	
Pounds of Food per Family:	71.33	<i>Average pounds per family per visit</i>
Equivalent Meals Served:	19,599,294	<i>Assumes 1.2 pounds per meal</i>

Families Served

Number of Families Served this month:	7,408	<i>in Month of May 2024</i>
Number of Distributions this month:	79	<i>in Month of May 2024</i>

Pounds of Food/Household Goods

Total Pounds In / Out:	864,532	<i>in Month of May2024</i>
Total Pounds In / Out:	676,355	<i>Average of 3 prior months</i>

Operating Efficiency

Wholesale value of food distributed for each \$1.00 spent on Operations since inception:	\$36.99
Wholesale value of food distributed for each \$1.00 spent on Operations in May:	\$72.42

Environmental Impact

Metric Tonnes of CO ₂ e Diverted:	28,641	
Water Footprint (million Gallons)	1,793	<i>Equivalent to 2,716 olympic swimming pools</i>

Metric Tonnes of CO₂e diverted: Learn more about this calculation [here](#).



5th Year Anniversary

We were thrilled to celebrate the fifth anniversary of Epic-Cure Inc.'s first free food distribution on 5/24/24. Over the past five years, our dedicated team has worked tirelessly to combat food waste and ensure food security in our community. From humble beginnings, distributing food to those in need, we have grown into a robust organization, impacting thousands of lives.

Our success is a testament to the unwavering support of our volunteers, donors, and partners. Together, we have provided nutritious food to families, children, and seniors facing food insecurity. As we mark this milestone, we remain committed to our mission and look forward to continuing our efforts to eliminate food waste and hunger.

Thank you for being a part of our journey. Here's to many more years of service and community support!

Survey: Food Insecurity & Related Chronic Health Conditions

Survey data: There is much silliness around the term “data driven.” The term is meant to imply that its author is simply following the facts – the data. Implicit in that phrase is the idea that there is no subjective judgment applied; rather, the data speak for themselves. “Data driven” has become a term firmly lodged in narratives, one that ignores its very essence as unbiased, mere fact as the authors (scientists, social scientists, research scientists) use subjective conditions to choose: which data to include or exclude; how to collect the data; how to weight the importance of this datum or that (i.e., each datum is not in competition for relative importance, but humans place rankings of the relative importance of each datum); and finally how to interpret the data.

Different data initiatives are subject to this pervasive form of error. We pointed out two opposed narratives on climate change in our last AMEC Newsletter. Are we just emerging from a “Little Ice Age,” or are the oceans set to boil? It depends on whom you ask. Both sides see *all the same data*.

Another danger in data collection and interpretation permeates the Survey we conducted to learn more about food insecurity in St. Johns and Putnam counties. We will present the data as dispassionately as we can, but bias can easily creep into something as simple as the words chosen to pose a question to gather “data.” Compare: (1) How amazing was your meal at our restaurant? (2) Did you enjoy your meal at our restaurant?



The Epic-Cure® survey data: We are dealing with a survey, here. We know that there may be bias in our survey. For example, all the respondents (i.e., the survey takers) were drawn from among those we serve. And, while we know that not every single person that benefits from our free food is food insecure, the vast majority are. So, the questions we have chosen to ask in our survey do try to understand the extent of food insecurity among our patrons; however, their own answers may be somewhat subjective: one person's mild food insecurity may be another's panic-level food insecurity.

We surveyed 512 people primarily in Putnam and St. Johns counties. The survey takers were all present at one or another of our food distributions to collect food and alleviate their presumed food insecurity. So, there is one form of built-in bias in the survey; however, we hold that bias to be harmless, as we are concerned with some aspects of the experience of food insecurity and its relationship to the health of the individuals that Epic-Cure® serves.

Here are the data that we collected.

1. We asked several questions about their food insecurity.
 - a. Do you need to visit food pantries once a week?
 - b. If not, do you need to visit food pantries more than once a month?
 - c. Have you applied for, or do you receive food stamps (SNAP) benefits?
 - d. In the past three months, have you worried that your food would run out before you got money to buy more?
 - e. In the past 3 months, the food you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more?
 - f. In the last three months, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
 - g. In the last three months, did children in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?
 - h. Did visiting food pantries help you pay for other household bills (rent, utilities)?
 - i. Did visiting food pantries help you to pay for medical bills?



2. As Epic-Cure® continues to lay a foundation for its Food Is Medicine drive, we had respondent families indicate the number of people in their household that suffer from the following chronic health conditions that are believed to be correlated with food insecurity:
- Diabetes,
 - High Blood Pressure,
 - Coronary Heart Disease,
 - ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder),
 - COPD (Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease),
 - Arthritis,
 - Stroke, and
 - Asthma.

There are some important findings evident in the tables. That more than half of the respondents (55%) would have run out of food prior to receiving money to purchase more is telling. So too are the results whereby respondents were able to use the money saved by visiting a food pantry helped them to pay rent, utilities, and other bills (72%) or medical bills (almost half: 49%).

Of note is the number of families surveyed that report at least one chronic medical condition for at least one member of the household: 85.2%. Four hundred and forty two families have at least one person with at least one of the listed chronic health conditions.

Some other concerning statistics include the number of families with at least one family member suffering from:

- High blood pressure (hypertension): in **319 of 512 families** (almost 62%);
- Diabetes: in **181 families** (35%);
- Arthritis: in **297 families** (57%); and
- Coronary Heart Disease (18%), COPD (18%), and Strokes (9%).



Epic-Cure Food Insecurity and Health Conditions Survey

Collection period: April, 2024

Answering "Yes" to Food Insecurity Questions:	#	%
Do you need to visit food pantries once a week?	411	79.2%
Do you need to visit food pantries more than once a month? Only if answered "NO" to week question	76	14.6%
Have you applied for or do you receive food stamps (SNAP) benefits?	203	39.1%
In the past three months, have you worried that your food would run out before you got money to buy more?	288	55.5%
In the past 3 months, the food you bought just didn't last and you didn't have money to get more?	288	55.5%
In the last three months, did you or other adults in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?	220	42.4%
In the last three months, did children in your household ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough money for food?	97	18.7%
Did visiting food pantries help you pay for other household bills (rent,utilities)?	374	72.1%
Did visiting food pantries help you to pay for medical bills?	256	49.3%

Medical condition in Household:	#	%
Diabetes	181	34.9%
High Blood Pressure	319	61.5%
Coronary Heart Disease	93	17.9%
ADHD	130	25.0%
COPD	91	17.5%
Arthritis	297	57.2%
Strokes	46	8.9%
Asthma	151	29.1%

# Households with At Least 1 Condition Above	442	85.2%
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These statistics invite further study and reinforce our desire to dig more deeply into the relationship of the problem of food insecurity to the health of those that suffer from it. Food is medicine, on our view; however, we need to study that topic more precisely and scientifically. This survey supports that conclusion, and we at Epic-Cure® will seek partners to collect data about it. In particular, we believe that with the right sponsorship and sound scientific methods, we can create a program whereby we onboard participants, take an inventory of their current level of food insecurity and health conditions, design appropriate dietary guidance for each, assist in their achievement of those dietary guidelines through free food shopping at Epic-Cure®, monitor their health as they progress through the program (i.e., screen their blood pressure and other biometrics over time), and measure their health outcomes from participating in the program.

We believe that healthcare partners such as UF Health Care Connect or the American Heart Association could accomplish much by gaining a greater understanding of the problem as it exists here in Northeast Florida and even produce positive health outcomes to the benefit of both the food insecure and the community in which they live.

Operations

The big headline of the May was over 100,000 pounds of dairy, mostly iced coffee followed by half and half, from a source our partners at foodrecovery.org work with for surplus donations. This source donates 100 semi-truckloads each month nationally and utilizes cold storage space in Jacksonville. We are very excited about this new connection, but it does present a challenge we are working on solutions for.



The challenge to continue receiving these donations is transportation cost. The dairy products are on 53' trailers and the donor stipulated that the loads cannot be split so we can't pick them up in our trucks (our largest truck is 26'). The only option is to pay to have them transported to our Palatka warehouse. From the cold storage warehouse in Jacksonville, the transportation cost is \$750 per load.

If you know of anyone that would be interested in sponsoring the cost of a load, one time or ongoing, please reach out to us at support@epic-cure.org.

We learned the hard way that iced coffee doesn't stack well.



Farm Bill Appropriations Advocacy Update

The ReFED 2024 Food Waste Solutions Summit will be held on 6/11-13. Many attendees, including Epic-Cure, are part of the Zero Food Waste Coalition advocating for the Farm Bill Appropriations. Straight from the Summit to another "Hill Day" on 6/14, the Coalition is making strides to raise awareness and getting major companies to join the movement. Just recently, Amazon Fresh became a sponsor of the event and joined the US Food Waste Pact – see 4/22 press release:

April 22, 2024 Amazon Fresh joins the US Food Waste Pact

<https://refed.org/articles/u-s-food-waste-pact-welcomes-amazon-fresh-as-signatory/>

Representatives from many of these emerging food waste technology companies will also attend both the Summit and Hill Day. You can read about their solutions here:

<https://www.lightspeedhq.com/blog/food-waste-emerging-technologies/>



Wildlife Rescue Coalition



A few months back, we had a racoon stuck in our dumpster in St. Augustine and we called the Wildlife Rescue Coalition to come to the rescue. Their mission is to “ensure respect for all wildlife through education and conservation, while providing orphaned, injured and displaced animals with a second chance at life”. The gentleman that came to rescue the racoon noticed our farm food pile and asked about potentially getting food donations from us. They are a 100% volunteer organization funded by donation so every \$1 they can save is one less they have to raise. (We know what that feels like!)

We have been working with 1 farm in St. Augustine for years that agrees to pick up every day, multiple times if needed, if we promise to hold all food for them. A very reliable, necessary relationship for us to achieve 0 food waste at our warehouse. So, we were not in the position to help. But they stayed in our minds.

Thinking of all the times we’ve been asked for a solution to home food waste since municipal composting is not available, we thought this might be a good connection – getting neighbors to collect and deliver food that they know they will not use before it goes to waste. So, a few of us visited their preserve located at 5250 Porter Rd. Ext in St. Augustine to check them out and learn about their needs.

Impression – they live their mission. And we want to help them. The last 2 months of significant increase in intake have us in a position to do so. At the same time, we increased the food resources at every distribution and to other agencies – feeding people must come first. We do hope this is the new normal. We are all working hard to manage it efficiently on our end to keep the sources thinking of us as a solutions provider.

Jean, one of the volunteers on the tour, agreed to deliver what we could collect in surplus for them every Tuesday. They are coming into their busy season, and they can use more help than we can provide.

The following is a list of the food and supplies needed to aid in the rehabilitation of wildlife that has been orphaned, injured or displaced:

- Boneless Chicken
- Dog Food, Cat Food, Puppy Food
- Yogurt – Whole milk plain flavored only
- Frozen vegetables
- Romaine Lettuce**
- Bananas, Strawberries, Blueberries, Watermelon, Grapes, Apples, Carrots**



- Avocados, Broccoli, Peppers, Turnip Greens**
- Walnuts
- Eggs
- Baby Food – Meat flavor only
- Towels
- Blankets
- Pillowcases
- Clorox bleach, Clorox hand wipes
- Laundry detergent

** All produce must be in good condition for them to accept it.

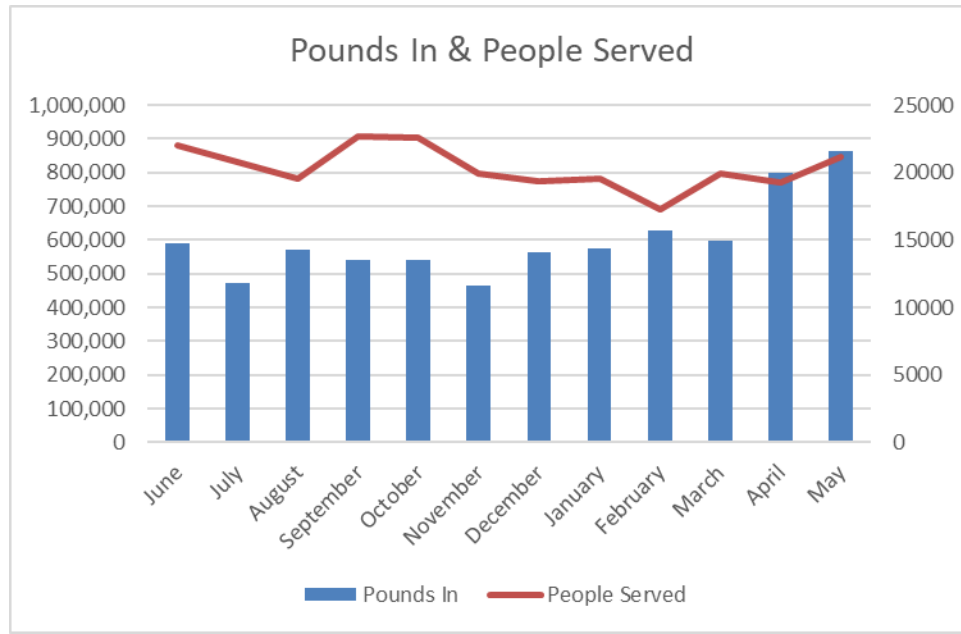
Beyond food and supplies, they also need volunteers. There are a lot of precious animals to bottle feed, but the job does entail a lot of clean up to keep the enclosures are comfortable for these well loved animals. To contact them about donations or volunteering, you can visit their website.

<https://wildlifecoalition.com/>





Here is our PIPS (Pounds In & People Served) Graph



Notes on the graph:

It was a very busy month, again! A lot of the increase was due to the dairy products we received, but it is also the busy season for harvest surplus, so we saw a significant increase in produce intake.

Month	Total Pounds	Bakery	Water	Dairy	Deli	Dry Goods	Frozen Misc	Produce	Meat	Non-Food	Refrigerated Products	Value	# of Intakes
January	575,799	31,514	36,471	66,266	3,445	177,041	33,511	137,892	73,979	6,097	9,583	\$1,111,292	279
February	629,706	24,538	36,006	57,321	2,746	142,831	19,199	255,375	84,422	6,191	1,077	\$1,215,333	280
March	599,137	28,486	42,288	26,439	6,521	174,278	21,808	202,498	91,031	5,344	444	\$1,156,334	308
April	800,221	26,921	44,980	112,966	2,546	197,893	22,347	296,479	89,360	4,637	2,092	\$1,544,427	310
May	864,532	28,591	26,893	165,364	6,622	164,117	23,290	298,190	97,019	7,334	47,112	\$1,668,547	306
Grand Total	3,469,395	140,050	186,638	428,356	21,880	856,160	120,155	1,190,434	435,811	29,603	60,308	\$6,695,932	1,483



(Fun)draising

Shine A Light on Epic-Cure 5k: Saturday, October 12th



Registration is open for the 3rd Annual 2024 Shine a Light 5k! This year's event will take place on October 12th at The AMP, and we can't wait to see you there!

Whether you're an experienced runner or just starting out, this is the perfect opportunity to challenge yourself, meet new people, and have fun! We can't wait to see you at the starting line! Stick around for a FREE concert at the Front Porch of The Amp. The bar will be open, too!

[Shine A Light Event Tickets](#)

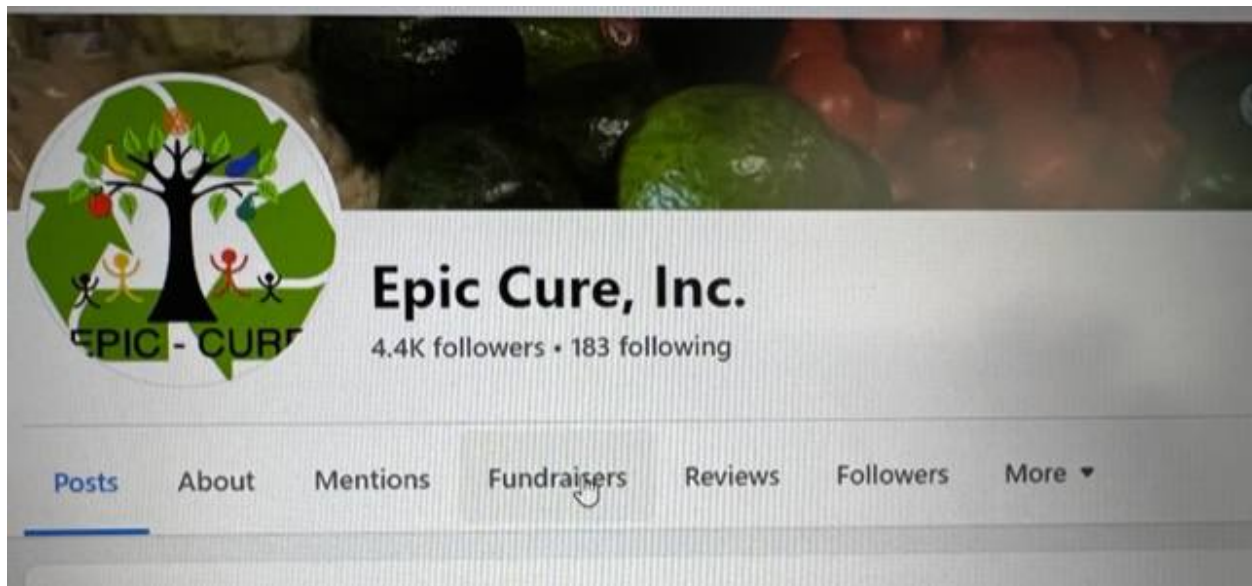
Michele Meyer and the Ponte Vedra High School Honor Society put together a very fun and interesting way to raise funds for us - a sand sculpture contest!! Looks like tons of fun, lots of fresh air, and creativity. At the end of the day, they raised \$816 for Epic-Cure!! So awesome!!





How might you help? If you are interested in doing a fundraiser for Epic-Cure, we would be grateful for the help.

Did you know that you can help raise money to support Epic-Cure's mission by doing a Facebook birthday fundraiser? Facebook sends you a little reminder about a month before your birthday - you can set your birthday goal and give it to your favorite non-profit "Epic-Cure". It's super easy to set up and a notice is sent out to all friends and family. Every effort counts! If you need assistance setting one up, please contact support@epic-cure.org.





Sustain U. ®

Given volunteer summer travel schedules, we are taking a break from our classes at the Boys and Girls Club and New Mt. Moriah Church until September. Thanks to Chef Brian Dowd, our work training program continues once a month at the Elks Club.

On 5/25, Analise, Ta'ryha, and Anna were "chefs" serving up a perfect Memorial Day Weekend BBQ dinner including Grilled Chicken, Grilled Andouille Sausage, Vegetable Kabobs, Grilled Corn, Potato Salad, Macaroni Salad, Vinegar Slaw with Lemonade, Iced Tea, and Strawberry Shortcake Cupcakes.

Thank you so much to Chef Brian Dowd and Chef Maria Crann for volunteering your time to mentor the kids on their journey in life to become more self-reliant and adaptable.







Awareness:

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 save us money by reducing the number we have to purchase.

Transparency:

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

- Our CPA-Audited financial statements fiscal years 2021 and 2022 have been released and are available upon request.
 - Also available on our website.
 - Click here to view: [Epic-Cure's Financial Statements](#)
- Our 2023 Audited Financial Statements will be reviewed by the Epic-Cure Board of Directors on April 7th. If approved by the Board, they will be issued by the [Forde Firm](#), our CPAs, and published on the website as soon as possible.

Please email your requests to Sunny Mulford: sunny.mulford@epic-cure.org