



The Almost Monthly Epic-Cure Newsletter

April 2023

Thank you!

This edition of the AMEC Newsletter is filled with our gratitude for all the help we receive each day. We thank our volunteers, of course. They make this charity run (and run well). But there are more to thank.

Gratitude is due to all who helped with this fundraiser. It was such a fun evening. The **Speakeasy Casino Night at The Treasury** was also a wonderful kick-off to our capital campaign to purchase a warehouse which will provide permanence and sustainability to our mission to provide food for the food insecure in our community.

Thank you to our sponsors:

Eric Pollard	Cool Transport Jax	Flagler Health+
Marsh Creek Home Sales	Angela Joy & Co. 'A Hair Salon'	Old Moultrie Surgery Center
Superr	Herbie Wiles Insurance	Benton House of St. Johns
Logical Improvements, Inc.	Diane Vespucci, Realtor; RE/MAX 100 Realty	

Check out these pictures from the event: [Casino Night Pictures \(Life and Love Studio\)](#).

We get very excited about refrigeration and the increased capacity to store food.

When we had to put our refrigerated trailer to use doing store pickups, we were a little stressed about how we would manage overflow refrigerated storage in St. Augustine. We made one call to our friends at the St. Augustine and St. Johns County Board of Realtors, and, in just a few days, we were approved for a grant to cover the cost of purchasing a new (to us) unit that is much larger than the one we had.

From all of us - thank you, thank you, thank you! Seriously, thank you.



This is what we used this grant for:





We also want to thank Mr. Willie Simon, the owner of [Ancient City Paving](#). He visited our Palatka warehouse and couldn't help but notice the rough shape of our parking lot. He offered to repair it for free if we could purchase the stabilizer. When we said we couldn't afford to, Mr. Simon got his friend Derek from River City Rock and Supply to donate the materials. This past Thursday, he brought his grader and compactor and now our potholes are no more.

More about Mr. Simon and the wonderful work he and his family do to make the world a better place:

Through the success of his business, he founded Simon's House.

Simon's House helps people who desire a better life—by providing resources to help them take the first step. Simon's House advocates for change by evaluating an individual's commitment to change, diagnosing the steps needed, and supporting the process for a better life. They offer mentorship, coaching, support, and encouragement to effectively instill change. As a God-centered community, Simon's House believes there is good in every person. They work with less fortunate people: homeless, poor and needy, veterans, single parents, and children. For individuals just released from prison, they provide mentorship to help ensure a long-term successful re-entry into society. To learn more, visit <https://the-simons-house.org>.



Epic-Cure's 2023 Capital Campaign

Building Acquisition: To Create a permanent and sustainable presence in St. Johns County to help the most vulnerable in our community.

We have identified a site and have negotiated with a builder that is willing to construct a 10,550 square foot warehouse with the required three-phase electrical capacity. This building will house Epic-Cure's St. Johns County

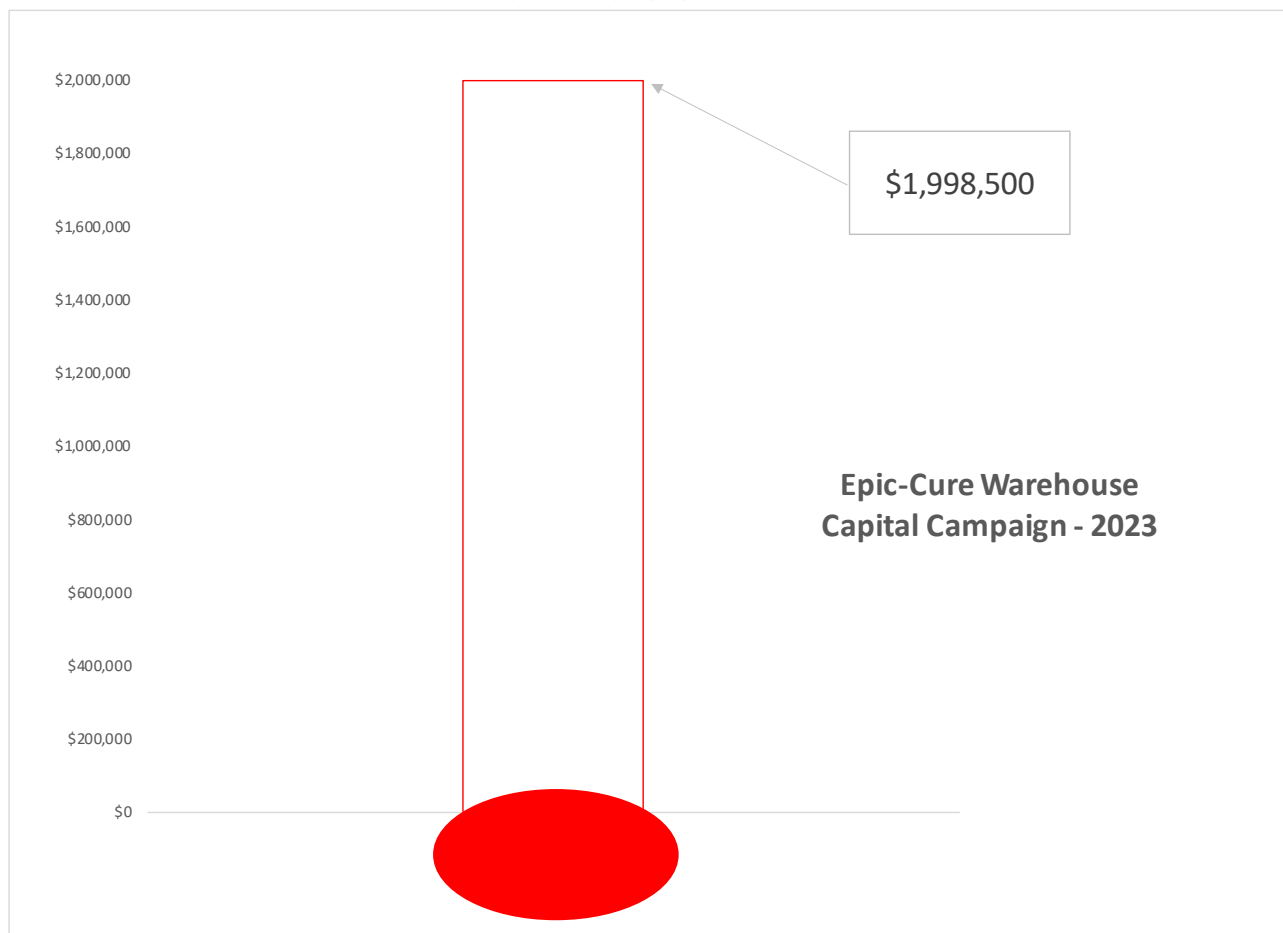


operations as well as provide space for our Sustain U.® Cooking Classes and [Hopefull Handbags](#), who has been our warehouse mate for years now.

The site is located on Inman Road in St. Augustine, just off SR-16 near I-95 (exit 318) and is ideally situated for logistics – ready access by trucks for food and household goods collection as well as safe access by surface roads (35 mph) for staff, volunteers, and patrons (recipients).

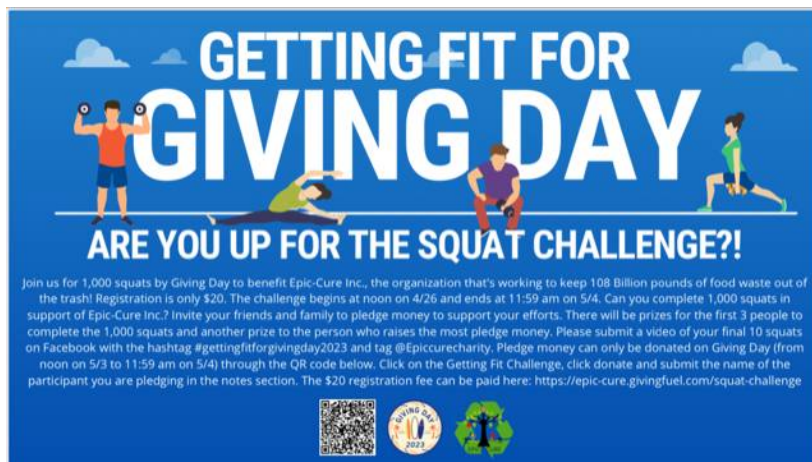
The building will cost \$1,998,500 (includes construction and build-out costs) and will take approximately six to eight months to construct once some additional permitting has been achieved.

To date, we have raised \$9,775 towards our Capital Campaign goal.





We have some fun ways you can sign up to support Epic-Cure on St. Augustine Giving Day.



*** To scan the QR codes, you'll have to open the pdf attachments. ***

To see an example of a video submission, click this link:

[Just Eat It Challenge video](#)

We look forward to seeing what all the creative cooks come up with! The challenge is open to all ages.



Masters of Fire & Ice: An event for the benefit of Epic-Cure:

M A S T E R S O F
FIRE & ICE
PRESS RELEASE

April 6, 2023

Contact 904-501-1482 info@asadolife.com www.asadolife.com

St. Augustine, May 12 & 13, 2023 ~ Urban Asado Presents
Masters of Fire & Ice.

An ensemble cast of the finest chefs & bartenders join forces
for the **ULTIMATE** live fire grilling & cocktail making exhibition.

This 2 day event will take place on Friday, May 12th, and Saturday, May 13th, featuring
Chefs and Bartenders who are Masters of their craft.
Portion of proceeds benefiting Epic-Cure Inc.

Ticket price includes 3 courses prepared by the 3 featured chefs, and 3 signature cocktails
crafted by the 3 featured bartenders. Two additional drink vouchers included for beer,
wine, or non alcoholic beverages are included in the ticket price.

Starting at 6pm. Choose 1 day, or both. Tickets are \$225 each day,
or \$400 for 2-day package.

Chefs

James Beard Winner,
Chef Michael Schwartz:
The Genuine Hospitality Group,
South Florida

Chef Matthew Brown:
Executive Chef Partner at Asado Life &
Executive Chef and
Co-Owner of Leña Asado.

Chef Sean Woods:
Executive Chef, Amelia Island Club

Chef Eric Butcher:
Director of PGA Global Home

Chef Andrew Blanton:
Congaree & Penn

Chef Christina Conde:
Private Chef

Asador Sous Crew
Nicole Stover
Beach Girl Grills

Bartenders

Kelley Fitzsimmonds:
Beverage Director at Asado Life

Jon Mateer:
Beverage Director at
TPC Sawgrass

Josh Davis:
Brown and Balanced
Chicago, Illinois

Shaun Traxler:
Fayetteville, Arkansas

Koky Lopez:
Charleston, South Carolina

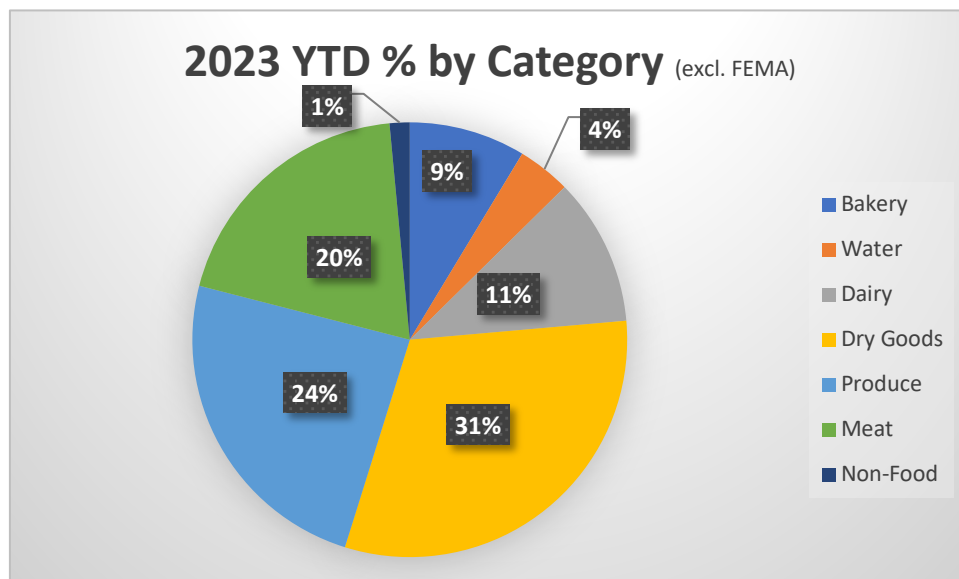
Portion of the proceeds to benefit:
Epic-Cure Inc.

Epic Cure is a charity dedicated to
eliminating food waste, ending hunger,
promoting success through self-sufficiency,
and connecting generations.
www.epic-cure.org



Operations

People ask us all the time what types of products we get, and the answer is almost everything you see at every grocery store comes through our warehouses. This chart shows the percentage of overall pounds we process by category. In this edition of the newsletter, we are going to focus on produce.



We could find no reliable data on the volume of produce waste, and the EPA is working to better understand food loss at the farm level.

There are several reasons edible crops do not make it to market. In some cases, market prices for those crops may be too low to justify the cost of making additional passes through the field or orchard to harvest crops. In other cases, not being able to find labor to harvest the crops means that they are left to rot. Finally, since fruits and vegetables ripen at different times across regions, growers may struggle to find buyers for their produce towards the end of their harvest period, as wholesale buyers switch to other suppliers when better quality produce becomes available in other regions.

Food loss is a particular problem in the produce industry, as it is more perishable than other crops such as grains. Overripe fruit that must be consumed within one to two days does not enter the wholesale market and may be marketed directly to consumers at farm stands. In the absence of these markets, overripe fruit or “cosmetically challenged” fruit can end up in landfills or is simply dropped to the ground by field workers during harvest.

Industry and entrepreneurs have come up with various solutions to reduce food loss at the farm level. A market for “seconds” has emerged, referring to crops that do not receive the top grade needed to enter the conventional wholesale market but are still edible. Specialized companies with a mission to reduce food waste have entered the market to collect and deliver to consumers produce that is too big, small, or blemished for the conventional market.



When harvested produce is not of high enough quality to be purchased by a wholesaler, diverting crops away from the wholesale supply chain could avoid wasting further resources. In this instance, food loss at the farm level would be preferable to loss at a later stage in the supply chain.

[USDA Blog: Food Loss at the Farm Level](#)

As we did with meat last month, let's discuss the many conditions in which we receive produce.

So far in 2023, we have processed 311,811 pounds of produce. The four largest sources of produce were:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| • Feeding Northeast Florida | 143,693 |
| • Southeastern Food Bank | 55,476 |
| • Farm Share | 47,315 |
| • USDA | 46,910 |

After that, it is a list of individual retail grocery stores and the Veritas School gift garden donations.

Feeding Northeast Florida brings us produce in pallets. The produce can come from farm surplus, retail distribution hubs, wholesale distributors and from store rescue. The vast majority of that can be sent straight out to distribution since it is very good quality.

We pick up pallets of produce from Southeastern Food Bank (SEFB) near Orlando. Sometimes we get pallets that can go straight out for distribution, but mostly it has to be inspected and sorted because it comes in mixed up. By mixed up it can be several types of produce in a case with some packaged and some loose and the good produce mixed with the bad. The volunteers get their gloves on and dig in to rescue as much as they can and send the rest to farms to feed animals.

We pick up pallets of produce from Farm Share in Jacksonville. Their produce is like that of Feeding Northeast Florida in sources and quality. The vast majority can be sent straight out to distributions.

USDA produce is government purchased under The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). We put orders in based on the number of families we expect to serve each week in Putnam and St. Johns Counties. The produce is different every week and goes straight out for distribution. In March, we received a lot of oranges and grapefruits.

Retail store pickups are when volunteers use their own vehicles to pick up at stores like Publix, Winn Dixie, Big Lots, Dollar General and Costco. This is where we encounter the most "farm food" because there is a lot of good and bad produce mixed together. Same with SEFB, our volunteers put the gloves on and dig in to rescue all they can to help feed families. The rest gets picked up by farms each day.

The Feeding America safety guidelines for produce are that it is evaluated based on look and feel. Produce should not be rotten, bruised, moldy, or have any signs of decomposition.

This is worth a read (leaving this is from last month and until we make the connection): [Article: Liability Law Loosened Surplus Food Distribution](#)

Speaking of produce, our Palatka team started a garden. How cool is that? They have big plans for expansion in the unused acreage we have on the property and will use the produce they grow to add to our distributions. When we said we did not have the money to buy the irrigation pipes, one of our volunteers said they thought they had all we needed in surplus. They did and donated it to us!!! The volunteers plan to do all the irrigation work as well.



We are starting conversations to see how we can connect in the events space. If anyone knows Shad Khan please give him a call and tell him about us. Hey, you never know until you ask.

Gleaning: Our volunteers gleaned 1,160 pounds of broccoli from the farm fields in Hastings on 4/5. Broccoli is a nutritious vegetable, high in dietary fiber and several vitamins and minerals, including potassium, folic acid, and vitamins A, C, and K. Thanks to these wonderful volunteers, we were able to add that to the selection of produce that week in Putnam County. There is still one more gleaning scheduled for 4/12. If you are interested in volunteering for that, please visit endhunger.org/Florida.

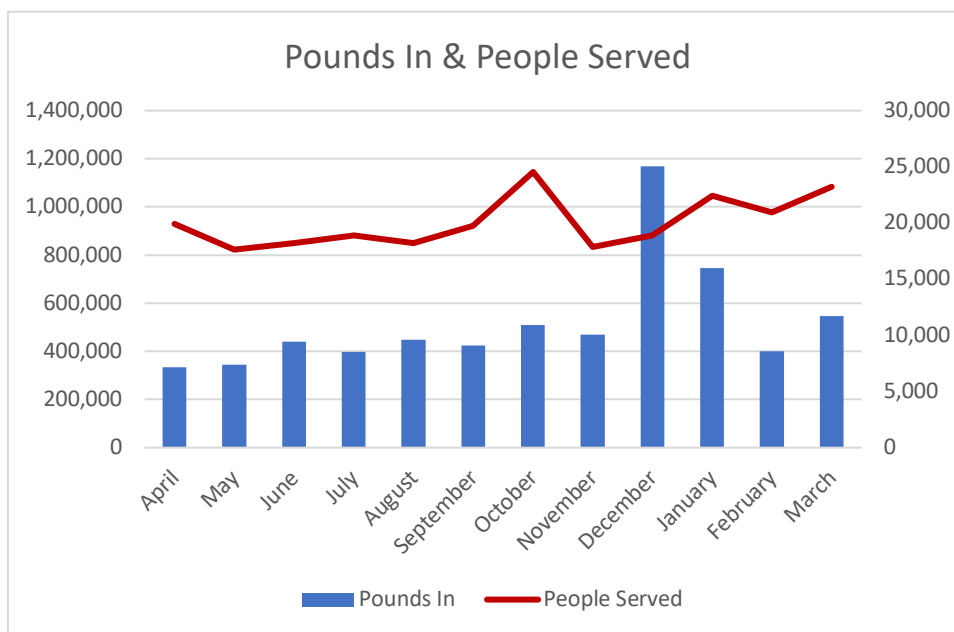




Correction to the March newsletter:

In the first few weeks of getting plastic bags donated to us, a group of MBA students from UNF collected over 10,000 plastic bags and dropped them off on 3/3. These were new bags, not reused. We are very thankful for the donation. Every dollar we save on supplies gives us more to fund our food rescue and distribution operations.

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



Notes on the graph:

FEMA December 605,728

FEMA January 302,390

FEMA February 21,000

FEMA March 36,190

The rumors were true. FEMA had more for us this month. We are always thrilled to get the surplus they have and share it with other non-profits and distribute it to our patrons.

While February was a very difficult month in the food rescue world, we were right back up to our “normal” volume in March at 546,003 pounds. That brings us up to 1.7 million pounds of food rescued and distributed this year at a wholesale value of \$3.7 million dollars.

As always, we work non-stop to connect to new sources. More sources = more distributions/greater reach.

<u>Month</u>	<u># of Distributions</u>
January	86 – up from 55 in 2022
February	81 – up from 62 in 2022
March	84 – up from 73 in 2022
2023 Total	251 – up from 190 in 2022



Sustain U.

The Spring Break Tour of Restaurants & [First Coast Technical College](#) was a big hit with our students. They got a chance to tour the kitchens at [AsadoLife](#) and [St. Augustine Fish Camp](#) and taste some delicious food. They even got a chance to work the “hot line,” preparing meals for lunch diners. And, they learned about dual enrollment opportunities for the Culinary Arts Program at First Coast Technical College. Their first stop was to [AsadoLife](#):



Their next stop was to [St. Augustine Fish Camp](#):





St. Augustine Fish Camp continued:



The final stop for their grand tour was at [First Coast Technical College](#):



It is hard to overstate the value of the **Sustain U.**[®] cooking classes. With the encouragement of the manager of St. Augustine Fish Camp, one of our students has completed an online application for a part time job. Our fingers are crossed. We at **Epic-Cure**[®] believe strongly that these classes do much more than teach basic life skills – knife skills, meal planning and execution, home economics, and nutrition. Rather, they instill a strong sense of self-reliance and an understanding that each student – Title-1 school children or veterans/active military – can come to know real achievement, achievement of their own doing. In this context, they can learn the tangible lesson that they can overcome challenges by themselves. The power of the self-assurance so instilled is in its proof of their ability and worth.

So much more to do, but this milestone is a really, *really* good start. Stay tuned: we have so much more in store on this front.

This IS the **Epic-Cure**[®] ethos. Let's keep going together.



Volunteer Spotlight

By Janet McNabb

J. B. Coomes – The Pig Farmer



Maybe you've driven by that place on Kings Estate Road where you've seen...wait! Was that a buffalo? Ostrich? Yes, that would be J.B.'s place.

He was sitting in a rocking chair on the porch of their lovely home when I visited him. He said that, yes, he does get people pulling into his driveway with a loaf of bread to feed the animals. He just asks that they don't ring the doorbell!

J.B. and Theresa purchased 11 acres in 1979 when it was still on a dirt road surrounded by country. One of his customers to whom he was delivering oil had an ostrich farm, and was tired of it, so he traded a pair of ostriches for J.B.'s service. That was the beginning of his acquisitions. He took me on a tour.

I cannot begin to name all the animals he has, but here is a short list:

Buffalo, cracker cows, beefalo, horse, emus, ostriches, assorted rabbits, ducks, geese, exotic chickens, a very shaggy Scottish Highlander bull, many colorful pheasants, pigeons and turkeys, and last but not least, the 50 pigs!

Having been retired for a year, J.B. is happy feeding all the animals which takes 45 minutes per day but much longer to visit with them all. In any spare time he improves enclosures for them.

He has a great gobble so convincing that all the turkeys gobble with him. Quite a cacophony! As he throws out bread or feed to the others, they come running to him.

He had been taking in the excess rejected food from St. Francis House and Pie in the Sky when he heard that Sunny had that need also. He is so appreciative of the quality of food that is now available for his animals. They are happy to get it rather than the standard grain feed, and because of the variety they receive, the quality of their meat is much tastier. It's a win/win situation. It takes a while to remove all the bread wrappers and plastic containers, but it's well worthwhile.

His theory is that it's much better to keep busy doing something he loves than sitting in a rocking chair in retirement. He figures he'll live longer.

He has the highest respect for Sunny and the wonderful work Epic-Cure is doing.

J.B., we are delighted that you are helping to save good food from going in the trash. Keep up the good work and thank you!

Some pictures follow ... right after Ken's silliness ...



Let's go, let's go, let's go, let's go /

Down to J.B.'s farm /

Where I want to lay low /

(Ode/Owed to Mr. P. McCartney and Wings)





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 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