nourish up
Lifting our community through food.

Fall/Winter 2026

The Neighbor Among Us



It was a Friday in the Volunteer Center, and the room was humming.

A corporate volunteer group was packing a pantry order for one of more than 40 Nourish Up pantries across Mecklenburg County. Uniformly branded, energetic, and in a great rhythm, they were doing what volunteers do so well: getting food where it needs to go.

It's a pretty remarkable system:

1 Your food donations to Nourish Up are sorted by volunteers into categories.

2 Pantries place orders based on what their shelves need.

3 Volunteers pull and pack those items, and the next day...

4 ...our warehouse team delivers them, along with fresh and frozen foods, to the pantries.

And on this particular Friday, the group was in lockstep.

Then Ally got a message that had nothing to do with packing food.

A member of the volunteer group pulled her aside in the breakroom. In every outward way, he looked much like the people working beside him. Let's call him Sam.

Sam told her that he, his wife, and two children did not have enough food to get through the weekend.

It was a first for Ally: a volunteer, quietly admitting his fear. She gently introduced him to Ana on our Social Services team, whom she knew could connect Sam with a referral to Nourish Up's grocery program so he could make an appointment at a pantry. And before he left for the day, he discreetly pulled his car around and we loaded it with enough food to cover his family through the weekend.

Dinner. Breakfast. Lunch. Hope.

Hunger doesn't always look the way we expect.

We sometimes imagine someone without a job or a home. But food insecurity touches working families every day. An unexpected expense, a change in circumstances, or simply the rising cost of living (gas, food, utilities, rent) can leave a family struggling to keep food on the table.

Sometimes, the person who needs help is the person standing next to us.

Sometimes, it's Sam. And asking for help doesn't mean you've failed.

Sometimes it means you're doing exactly what Sam was doing:

Taking care of his family.

More than groceries

Nourish Up's grocery program is designed to help neighbors through difficult stretches—providing food while families work toward greater stability.

For Sam, the first step was simply having the courage to tell Ally what was happening.

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BY THE NUMBERS

About the meals from our culinary team in our **Home Court Kitchen**, presented by the Charlotte Hornets:

"Excellent! Far beyond anything I expected. I was never fond of meatloaf, but it is now one of my favorites! Today was sliced pork, peas, and mashed potatoes and it was excellent! Even the bread is exceptional! I really enjoy the daily fruit cups!"

— A MEALS ON WHEELS RECIPIENT

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And Ally listened.

That's what Nourish Up is built to do: connect food, people, and compassion so that when a neighbor needs help, there is somewhere to turn.

Sam trusted someone enough to ask for help.

And maybe that's the part of his story that stays with us most. He came to Nourish Up that Friday to help put food on someone else's table.

He left knowing there would be enough food on his own.

He reminds us all that sometimes ... the neighbor who needs us is right here amongst us.



107,531

neighbors received nutritious groceries, 23,294 of them through Grocery Home Delivery, ***January – August 2026***

77,476

Meals on Wheels balanced meals delivered to the doors of meal recipients, ***January – August 2026***

25,000+

meals prepared in the new Meals on Wheels Home Court Kitchen presented by the Charlotte Hornets, ***June - August 2026***.

SNAP CUTS ARE REACHING OUR NEIGHBORS' KITCHEN TABLES.

"I need assistance...my benefits have been cut down to $24 a month, and it has been hard to pay my bills and buy food."

This is just one of the many calls we're receiving. Our Social Services team is hearing from neighbors losing benefits entirely or seeing them cut to $20 or $30 a month.

Imagine turning 19 and aging out of foster care with no family to call and no one to help you navigate new SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) paperwork. Young adults in that situation, along with neighbors who have fluctuating schedules or not stable housing, often struggle to prove they qualify, even when they do.

At the same time, SNAP funding is shrinking, and North Carolina counties could absorb up to **$52 million** in shifted costs this fiscal year.

The funding picture is also changing.

At the federal level, the House Version of the FY 2027 appropriations bill sets SNAP funding at $101.2 billion, a $5.8% decrease from FY 2025 levels. At the state level, Senate Bill 257 (the 2026 Appropriations Act) shifts SNAP-related costs stemming from the One Big Beautiful Act (H.R.1) to counties starting October 2026. This could be a cumulative $52 million in increased costs this coming year.

These layered changes are already arriving at Nourish Up's doorstep. This summer, our staff and volunteers answered more than 14,000 calls in five weeks. One in five went to voicemail (all were returned). That number shows how stretched our team is and how great the need has become. Thanks to you, a neighbor who reaches out finds a caring voice on the end of the line and food ready through our pantries, Grocery Home Delivery, and Meals on Wheels. **You are the reason we can say yes.**

RECENT EVENTS

Luncheon of Hope

For the first time ever, our Luncheon of Hope took place inside the Nourish Up Hunger Hub — our busy, working warehouse transformed for one unforgettable afternoon.

On May 20, a sold-out crowd of more than 500 gathered to share a meal, hear stories of hope and compassion, and learn more about our work to nourish our neighbors. The afternoon featured a special fireside chat between University of South Carolina Coach **Dawn Staley** and local icon **Ohavia Phillips-Reed**, filled with candid conversation, inspiration, and wisdom from one of the most respected coaches in the country.

The luncheon also marked a milestone for Nourish Up, with record proceeds supporting our mission to ensure our neighbors have access to the food they need.

We are deeply grateful to our presenting sponsors, **Snider Fleet Solutions** and **The David and Nicole Tepper Foundation**, and to **Compass Group** for providing an incredible lunch and helping bring our Radical Compassion video to life.

Most of all, thank you to everyone who filled our warehouse with energy, generosity, and hope. What began as a working warehouse became a gathering place for our community — and a powerful reminder of what can happen when we come together around a shared purpose.







Tour de Turns

We had an awesome day on Saturday, August 22, for the 15th annual Tour de Turns! Thank you to Presenting Sponsor **Harris Teeter**, our Board, sponsors, participants, and volunteers who made it happen. There were plenty of nuances this year, but we feel comfortable to say, it might have been one of the best years yet! And the after-party at **Open Tap** was a huge hit.

Mark your calendar for August 14, 2027!



Young Professionals After Hours

We recently welcomed a group of young professionals to the After-Hours Mission Tour of the Hunger Hub— an evening of good conversation, new connections, and a closer look at Nourish Up's work in our community.

Guests toured our 90,000-square-foot Hunger Hub, learned more about our mission and the many ways they can get involved, and enjoyed time together over food and drinks. We're grateful to **The Josh Neuman Foundation** for sponsoring the event and helping us build a community of young professionals inspired to connect, serve, and make a difference.

And this is just the beginning! We're already looking forward to the next gathering.

When Every Dollar Matters

Many of our neighbors continue to feel the impact of higher food and fuel costs as they balance already stretched household budgets. **Have you ever picked up an item at the grocery store only to place it back on the shelf after seeing the price? Or felt surprised by how much more it costs to fill your gas tank than it did just a few days earlier?** While rising prices affect us all, they can be especially difficult for families and older adults living on limited incomes.

When **grocery and fuel costs** rise, a paycheck simply doesn't stretch as far. For many of our neighbors, higher prices can mean making difficult choices between food, transportation, medications, utilities, and other necessities.

At Nourish Up, we see the effects every day. Neighbors seek support not only because of a temporary emergency, but also because the cost of daily life has outpaced their income. They are working hard, caring for their families, and stretching every dollar.

Fortunately, dedicated volunteer drivers help deliver groceries through Grocery Home Delivery and through Meals on Wheels directly to neighbors facing transportation barriers. (We always need more drivers!)

Because of your support, Nourish Up is able to respond to these growing challenges. Your generosity provides nutritious groceries and home-delivered meals that ease pressure on household budgets and allow neighbors to direct limited resources toward other essential needs.

Your impact extends far beyond food. You help create stability, preserve dignity, and remind our neighbors that they are part of a caring community. Thank you for making that impact possible.



SAVE THE DATE

Thanksgiving Food Drive
November 16-25, 2026

Street Turkeys
Tuesday, November 24, 2026

Scouting for Food
February 6, 2027

April/May 2027
Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast
Luncheon of Hope

2026-27 Nourish Up Board of Directors

Jose Ruiz, President
Aimee Baldwin, Vice President
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Don Jonas
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*New Board members 2026-27

Thank you to our retiring Board members for their years of service:
Michael Elliot
Kimberly Johnson
Meredith Jeffries
Keith Pehl
Cathy Morrison

Foundation Board

Brooks Jaffa, President
Rajan Merchant, Secretary
Darius Chase, Treasurer
Tina Postel, CEO
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Questions about supporting Nourish Up through your Donor-Advised Fund?

Contact Lucy Mitchell: lmitchell@nourishup.org or 704-594-5832.

Thank you!