

Masthead

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A call answered

The sad news is that requests for help from the Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina are up 30 to 60 percent in that 34-county area. It takes no marketing genius or sociologist to figure out the reason: People are out of work, and worried that eventually their families will go hungry.

Some, many in fact, have never before been in a position of having to ask for help.

But there's heartening news. If need is up, then so is the public response. The Food Bank creates all kinds of opportunities in its region for people to donate money and food.

The effort goes on as well independently. How many banks now have signs up about donations? Private businesses are doing the same. Civic organizations such as the YMCA are participating as well, and from the looks of the places designated in these businesses and in lobbies of civic groups, generosity is abundant.

One Raleigh businessman, Matt Archer of Archer Investment Management, has organized a food drive at his business and has encouraged other business leaders to do likewise. Archer says he recognizes that he is lucky. He wants others to recognize it as well. The city has, thankfully, a multitude of other like-minded folks who want to help the less fortunate.

And of course, groups such as the Salvation Army and American Red Cross are perpetually involved in helping those less fortunate. But it is in times of real crisis, and the current crisis appears very likely to last a while longer, that a community really looks at itself and how strongly it can answer a call.

Many of those who are seen dropping boxes and cans and bags of diapers and baby food into the trunks and other improvised containers set up in lobbies or in set-aside rooms are not wealthy people, or even barely comfortable.

They follow the wisdom of generations past, however, in understanding that even when they are not in as much comfort as they may have been in the past, there is always someone less fortunate than they. So they give.

Few things are harder for a parent than to tell a child that money is short and that Christmas will be lean. Harder still is to explain why the dinner table is not as bountiful. A good inspiration for parents who find themselves more fortunate than most is to imagine how it would feel to have that conversation.

That's a motivation to load up the trunk with supplies and report to the nearest donation point.