

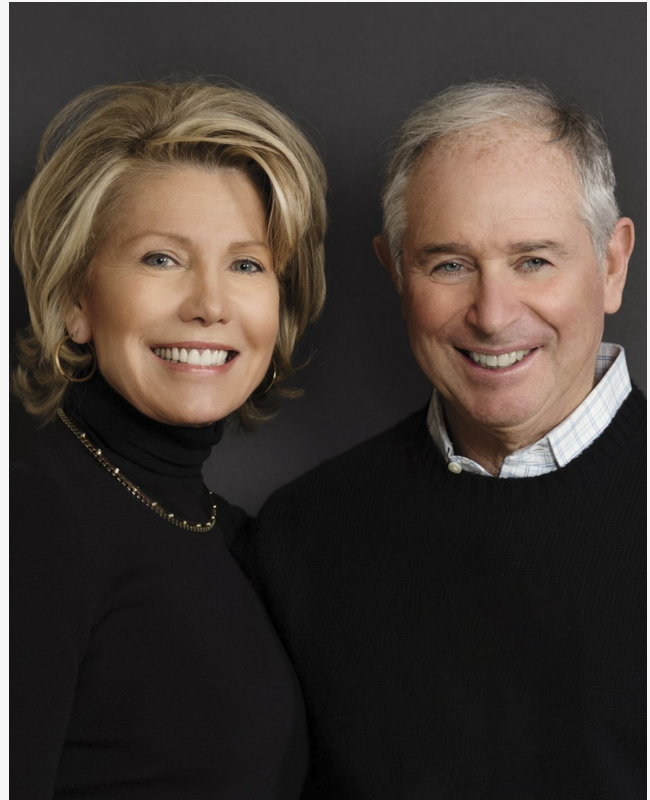
PALM BEACH COUNTY FOOD BANK REACHES MILESTONE IN “GROW WITH US” CAMPAIGN

\$500,000 gift from Stephen and Christine Schwarzman completes \$3 million capital campaign goal; fully funds new facility to double distribution capacity

LANTANA, FL, UNITED STATES, February 5, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Palm Beach County Food Bank will be moving to a new, fully funded facility in March, with the help of a \$500,000 donation from part-time Palm Beach residents Stephen and Christine Schwarzman. The gift closed out the organization's \$3 million “Grow with Us” capital campaign, which supports the Palm Beach County nonprofit's move into the new warehouse and distribution facility, doubling its capacity to serve the community.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Debbie Pucillo and Rev. Dr. Cecily Titcomb, the “Grow with Us” campaign was launched quietly in Spring 2019. Private donations, grantmaking organizations and others came together to reach the target, and the Schwarzmans' \$500,000 – the largest single donation – allowed the organization to reach its goal.

“We are exceedingly grateful for the Schwarzmans' generosity,” said Jim Greco, interim CEO of the Palm Beach County Food Bank. “Their gift underscores the importance of



Christine and Stephen Schwarzman



Jim Greco, interim CEO of the Palm Beach County Food Bank (photo by CAPEHART)

donations from private individuals and organizations. This new warehouse space doubles our capacity for distribution and will make it possible to meet our county's increased need for food distribution due to the pandemic and into the future. Last year, we were offered resources for distribution which we couldn't accept because we were limited by our existing infrastructure. This new warehouse space ensures we will be able to feed many more of our hungry neighbors."



Palm Beach County Food Bank's New Facility (photo by CAPEHART)

"Christine and I are honored to support the Palm Beach County Food Bank and help ensure that this transformational new facility is fully operational as soon as possible. The COVID crisis has put a greater spotlight on the issue of food insecurity across the country and I'm pleased that this gift will help Jim and his team double their capacity to support local families in need," said Stephen Schwarzman, Chairman, CEO and Co-Founder of Blackstone.

The Palm Beach County Food Bank traces its origins to a one-truck operation. Nine years ago, thanks to the support of key funders and the County, the Food Bank moved to its current three-building facility in Lantana. Located at 701 Boutwell Road in Lake Worth, the new facility totals 28,000 square-feet in a single building with 30-foot-high ceilings, allowing more room to stack pallets and thus a more efficient use of space.

"In order to bring strength of scale and efficiency to serve our partners, and to provide access to the nutritious food our county needs, a larger space for our work was critical," continued Greco. "We needed loading docks, a modern, state-of-the-art freezer/cooler, designated space for both incoming and outgoing food, easily accessible pick up for our partner agencies and a more efficient facility for employee and product safety. Steve and Christine's gift allows us to move into our new building fully funded. We can seamlessly continue our very necessary work."

Historically, the Palm Beach County Food Bank provided access to nutritious food for more than 180,000 hungry Palm Beach County residents every month. Since COVID-19 disrupted the county's economy, the demand for the Food Bank's services has tripled. While pre-COVID 19 distributions averaged close to 5 million pounds per year, the current facility is now distributing close to 1.5 million pounds of food per month. Greco says the new location offers the nonprofit the ability to meet the increased demand from Palm Beach County neighbors who find themselves needing access to food for their families.

"It is hard to appreciate that one in six people living in the county do not know where they will get their next meal," Greco said. "The pandemic has exposed just how easy it is for people to become food insecure. Food is such a basic human need and often children are the most impacted. Imagine being just six-years-old and not knowing where your next meal will come from when you leave school on a Friday. Gifts like this restore dignity to families who never expected they would need the help of a food bank."

The Palm Beach County Food Bank procures food from grocery stores, farmers, food distributors, wholesalers and other sources and provides it to almost 200 local community partners, including food pantries, soup kitchens and residential housing programs. Palm Beach County Food Bank programs reach families, school children and seniors, and connect those in need to available benefits and resources. Partner agencies are never charged a fee for any of the products received, including culturally appropriate food and necessities like paper towels and diapers. This process ensures families have access to food when they need it and not just when there is a scheduled distribution with long lines. For more information, visit [pbcfoodbank.org](https://www.pbcfoodbank.org) or call Ellen Vaughan, Director of Development and Philanthropy at 561-670-2518.

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