

South Plains Food Bank Community Opportunity

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At the South Plains Food Bank in Lubbock, there are many ways to serve the community. The day that I went, several other people my age were also volunteering to help. The South Plains Food Bank has many different areas of operation, and they serve many counties in the South Plains aside from Lubbock County. This facility is named after JT and Margaret Talkington, who were a great couple in the Lubbock community. I noticed the Lubbock Christian Nursing building that Covenant School of Nursing is in is also named after Margaret Talkington, so I started to ask how they were connected to SPFB and the community.

South Plains Food Bank started in 1983, when a few Lubbock citizens noticed people in the community struggling with food insecurity and decided to partner with United Way to start the food bank. Currently they serve 20 counties in the South Plains. They pack boxes of non-perishable food items efficiently and then distribute those to the community by use of vouchers for which community members can apply. They get their funding primarily through donations from what Kris, the volunteer manager, told me. They are a 501 (c) (3) non-profit, which means most of their profits must come from endowments or donations from the community. Some may also gain government assistance.

Getting to witness the process of fulfilling these food insecurity needs was a very rewarding experience. The food is handled with care by the workers, and volunteers I was able to work with had great origin stories themselves. I was the only nursing student among the volunteers that day, and I approached the work with apprehension because in my previous experience, many people only volunteer for obligations related to speeding tickets or drug

charges. Although the ones I worked with did volunteer based on these types of obligations, I decided to get to know them by listening to them converse with each other while working. I noticed that they had experiences like my own upbringing, and one young man, 21 years old, stood out to me. He was participating in a program at SPFB where one can volunteer to work in exchange for food vouchers. He told me he was married to a young lady and has 4 children. With inflation causing the cost of everything to rise, he takes a couple of his days off during the month and works for vouchers. I thought this was a very noble thing to do, and I told him as such. He restored my faith in humanity and helped me have hope that my generation still has good hearts and is willing to work for noble reasons. Overall, the experience was great. We packed many boxes of canned goods, rice, peanut butter, etc. in an organized, systematic way. At the end of the volunteering time, we were shown that South Plains Food Bank even has its own frozen storage and orchard. I started my work hours with apprehension about the people I may be working with, and I left understanding that I am one of them, and the experience was very humbling. I think in the future I will spend more time volunteering there and meeting more people who have similar experiences and values as myself.