

Brandi Martinez

I chose to perform my community service at the South Plains Food Bank, packing boxes with food to be given to the food-insecure in the community. The SPFB was established in 1983 in Lubbock, Texas. The food bank serves through multiple programs. The Children's Feeding Program, or Kids Café, provide free snacks and meals to low-income children during after-school hours, including during the summer. Their website states that 22 million children in the US receive free or reduced-price meals at school, but during the summer months, only 3.76 million continue to have access to those meals. All meals are prepared in the Kitchen of Hope and delivered daily to 7 site locations across West Texas. The mobile pantry serves 20 counties in West Texas. Boxes are packed and delivered to rural communities. The senior box program gives individuals aged 60 and older, who meet income guidelines, a box of food each month. They also have a garden program that grows fresh fruits and vegetables for the community in need. Most of the funding for the South Plains Food Bank is through donations. They are a 501(c) 3 private nonprofit organization. They also receive donations from fundraisers, community grants, food drives and through HEB. They have full time employees and many volunteers to aid in the preparation of food boxes, delivery and donation collection. I volunteered with many classmates, and it gave me a sense of comradery to be there together, working like an assembly line to pack food boxes. We were there with a common goal and worked together smoothly to achieve that goal. It felt good to know that we were making a difference, although it is a small one. I have always been aware of the South Plains Food Bank and would participate in the can drives during the holidays, but I never really knew exactly how

much they serve the community. It is amazing to see all the donations and how they manage to fit so much food into those boxes. But it is also very humbling to know that the food is not nearly enough to feed all the families in need. It really puts things into perspective. I am blessed beyond measure that I can feed my family. I can go to the grocery store and purchase something to feed my son and not everyone can do that. My problems may seem big to me, but in the grand scheme of things, I am very lucky. I feel the need to do more and will be volunteering again to pack boxes. I hope I can persuade my family to join me.