



Merilee Baptiste and Crissy Haidos

# 100+ Women Who Care Supports Midwest Food Bank of Arizona’s Disaster Relief Efforts

*Funds That Feed Hope: A targeted donation empowers ongoing emergency aid efforts in Arizona.*

BY KIM TARNOPOLSKI

Tucked inside an unassuming warehouse in Gilbert, Arizona, something remarkable is quietly unfolding. It doesn’t make headlines or seek recognition, but day after day, Midwest Food Bank of Arizona is delivering hope, compassion, and nourishment—one box, one truckload, one family at a time.

When disaster strikes—whether wildfire, flash flood, or extreme heat—Midwest Food Bank is among the first to respond. Within hours, they’re assembling emergency food boxes, loading trucks, and coordinating with partners like The

Salvation Army and the Red Cross to deliver vital supplies: food, water, hygiene kits, and, perhaps most importantly, a message of care and comfort.

Each emergency food box is crafted to support a family of four for up to five days, packed with nutritious, shelf-stable items that require no refrigeration. But this isn’t just about sustenance—it’s about dignity. In moments of crisis, a warm meal and the knowledge that someone cares can be life-changing.

Even when disasters aren’t making headlines, Midwest Food Bank remains hard at work. Every month, they

**“Midwest Food Bank’s commitment to disaster relief means we’re always ready to respond,”**

—MERILEE BAPTISTE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MIDWEST FOOD BANK OF ARIZONA

provide food and supplies to more than 275 nonprofit partners across Arizona—food pantries, shelters, churches, and schools—serving families facing hunger, poverty, and hardship. All of this support is provided free of charge, made possible through generous donations and an army of volunteers.

These volunteers are the heartbeat of the organization. They come from all walks of life—packing boxes, driving trucks, and sharing kindness. Their time is more than service; it’s a tangible expression of love. You can feel it in every pallet they load and every handwritten note tucked inside a food box.

In April, Merilee Baptiste, Executive Director of Midwest Food Bank of Arizona, shared this mission with the women of 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun—East Valley. Inspired by her powerful message, the group selected Midwest Food Bank as their recipient and awarded a collective donation of \$10,837.50—a gift rooted in compassion and a shared belief that no one should face hardship alone. “Midwest Food Bank’s commitment to disaster relief means we’re always ready to respond,” said Baptiste. “Our goal is to ease the burden by delivering essential supplies when they’re needed most.”

Since 2015, 100+ Women Who Care Valley of the Sun has donated over \$1.4 million to local nonprofits. Join the next Giving Circle on August 12, 2025, at Kiln in SanTan Village. Learn more or register at [100wvcvalleyofthesun.org](https://100wvcvalleyofthesun.org).

To donate, volunteer, or learn more about Midwest Food Bank, visit [midwestfoodbank.org](https://midwestfoodbank.org).