

Script for NFOA Bridge Harvesters Haley Matherly

Bumper music lead in...

KB: Welcome to this 10-minute episode of the NFOA Bridge mini bodcast. N-F-O-A is the acronym for Not for Ourselves Alone, Washburn's motto. And the virtual bridge is located right here on Teaching Tuesdays, connecting Washburn with the Topeka community and beyond through community-engaged learning, also known as CEL.

I'm Karen Barron, Community-Engaged Learning Coordinator for the Center for Teaching Excellence and Learning and host of this series. Today, our featured guest is Haley Matherly, community engagement supervisor at Harvesters, the community food network. Welcome Haley.

H.M.: Thanks for having me today, Karen

KB: We're pleased you're here. First, would you please give us a brief overview of what services Harvesters provides for the Topeka and surrounding community, your overall goals and mission?

HM: Yeah, sure. So, our mission is to feed hungry people today and fight to end hunger tomorrow, and Harvesters is a regional food bank, and we serve a 26-county service area over northwest Missouri and northeast Kansas. So, we provide food and house related items, household products, to more than 760 nonprofit agencies and including food pantries, kitchens, shelters and then other emergency food assistance programs. Agencies in our network provide food assistance to as many as 141,500 different individuals every single month. We were founded in 1979, and we're a certified member of Feeding America, which is a nationwide network of more than 200 food banks across the U.S. and serves all 50 states.

KB: Well, you are a huge organization that that impacts many, many individuals and communities and yeah, I appreciate that, and I know that... I think everyone is aware of Harvesters, but maybe now you have clarified that you, your function is mainly to to gather the food, to gather the products and then to distribute them to different communities and then they, they can get them to the people who need.

HM: Yes that's correct. So, as the foodbank we're kind of behind the scenes of everything, so our job is to acquire, store, and distribute food into the community, and we do that through those 760 agency partners.

KB: Right, right, yes, and I know that Bods Feeding Bods is on our campus and that is part of a collaboration with you.

HM: That's right, yeah. Yes, so Bods Feeding Bods is our agency partner on Washburn's campus, so that is a really exciting partnership we have already with Washburn.

KB: That's great. Yes. And I also know that Harvesters has partnered with Washburn faculty members over the years, and, in fact, I think that Dr. Allan Ala Ayella is working on a project

with his food chemistry course, and I know that he talked about collaborating with Harvesters, and I think in the coming spring. Does that sound?

HM: That's awesome.

KB: Go ahead.

HM: Yes. So, we have a nutrition department whose main focus is to do healthy food drives and work with schools and other organizations to talk about getting healthy foods into the community.

KB: That sounds perfect. That sounds exactly what he is aiming for in that class. I'm wondering if, you know we've been in this pandemic situation for a while, and now we seem to be emerging from it, and I wonder if you have a particular vision for future partnerships with Washburn faculty and staff after we've moved out of this? I mean do you have any vision of what our future partnerships will look like?

HM: That's a great question. So, I think one of the really wonderful things that has come out of the past couple of years is that we've had to be really creative about how we collaborate and really intentional about how, you know, relationships can look in this new world, and you're right, things are starting to look different as we emerge, so we would love to have Washburn faculty and students volunteering together in the KDC, which is the Kansas Distribution Center. That's our Topeka facility and that would look like helping sort and repackage food for folks who are facing food insecurity. We're also able to connect volunteers with our agency partners throughout our service area for volunteer opportunities. One of those as you mentioned, is Bods Feeding Bods, and there are so many ways to take action in the fight against hunger. Giving food is really important. Washburn faculty and students can plan food drives that would support our agency partners and Harvesters through Washburn or through other community groups that they may be a part of. Giving time is also great thing. For us, volunteering at the facility or through agency partners; giving money is super helpful as well. You can make a one-time donation or join Harvesters 365, which is our reoccurring monthly donor program to stretch that gift over 12 months, and then giving voice, becoming a hunger advocate is so important to us. If you visit [harvesters.org/givevoice](https://harvesters.org/givevoice), you can sign up for advocacy emails and then get updates on any hunger-related legislation that may be impacting our community.

KB: Well, that is broad and wide-reaching and it, it suggests to me that if a faculty member has some ideas about and goals about food insecurity and teaching students about that, that they could get in contact with you and, and you could get together and, you know, you say this is what we do, and, and the faculty member says these are the goals we would like to accomplish with our students, and then you get together and figure out how you can mutually do something that will benefit both the students' education and the community, and I think that is the exciting part about community-engaged learning. Would, is that, is that a fairly accurate description of something that you think Harvesters would be interested in?

HM: Oh, absolutely. So, as part of the community engagement department, our job is to get hunger education into the hands of educators of all ages, and one of the really neat opportunities

about partnering with Harvesters is that we're able to take you through all the facets of a food bank--I like to call it following the food-- so from the second we take food into the door, we can show students how that funnels through our organization and into the community and then of course how we raise money in and food as well.

**KB:** Ok, well that sounds interesting, and it sounds to me like it could be, it could cut across so many different departments at Washburn and schools at Washburn you know besides sociology or even you know business would be involved in that. So, so it just seems every open to community engagement projects. So, I think it's really been a pleasure talking with you today, Haley, and I appreciate your being here, and we look forward to partnering with you in the future.

**HM:** We do too. Thank you so much for having me today, Karen.

**KB:** Ok, thanks Haley, take care. For more information on this bodcast, or how you can get involved with Community-Engaged Learning at Washburn, please see the CEL Pillar on the Center for Teaching Excellence webpage, and contact me, Karen Barron, Coordinator of CEL for CTEL. To Tom Morgan for composing our bumper music and the Washburn jazz band for recording it, featuring Craig Treinen on sax. Thanks! See you next week on the NFOA bridge.

Bumper music fade out