If you’re anything like me, you might be weary of hearing the word “unprecedented” to describe the past year. COVID-19 disrupted every resolution, goal, and wish for what 2020 might have been; this reality makes it difficult to find a more accurate adjective, even if we’re tired of hearing it.

When I launched Wyoming Hunger Initiative last October, I had a very specific goal in mind: to do whatever I could to support anti-hunger nonprofit organizations working tirelessly throughout the state. While this goal hasn’t changed, the scope of Wyoming Hunger Initiative has grown in ways no one could have imagined in October 2019. I’ve often joked with my team in the past year that it feels like we’ve been building a car as it drives down the road (and some days, the Autobahn!!) but we know that together, we are making tremendous strides in the fight against food insecurity in Wyoming. You might even call those strides... unprecedented. It’s all about perspective.

Wyoming Hunger Initiative has no plans to slow down in its second year. We will continue to show up and meet the challenges of unsettled times with creativity, innovation, and dignity. We take our partnerships very seriously, and we look forward to brainstorming more Wyoming solutions to the challenges that face so many of our neighbors. Taking care of our neighbors is who we are in Wyoming, and we encourage everyone to learn more about the efforts to combat food insecurity happening in every community across the state.

Thank you for all you have done to support Wyoming Hunger Initiative in its first year. Your generous contributions and innovative thinking make all the difference.

Wyoming Hunger Initiative is the official Initiative of First Lady Jennie Gordon and is governed by the Board of Directors of the Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
ADDING MORE HANDS ON DECK

Wyoming Hunger Initiative built a new structure for communication across Wyoming this year in its Regional Directors program. Wyoming Hunger Initiative Regional Directors are chosen by the First Lady to represent a region based on their awareness of food insecurity or role within their community directly related to food insecurity. Regional Directors have been assigned multiple surrounding counties to bring a network together to share ideas and voice concerns that may be solved on a regional level or be elevated to the Wyoming Hunger Initiative for statewide coordination. They work to create a platform for communication where food insecurity can be solved as a state, together.

Left to right: Ali Milburn, Sierra Mitchell, Ashley Bright, Caitlin Youngquist, Lori Dickinson, Tim Sheppard

We are also grateful to Beth Chapell and Heather Mortensen for their service as Regional Directors in 2020 before other commitments pulled them away! All Regional Directors have made great strides in bringing a variety of stakeholders to the table for discussion and brainstorming.

- Piloted framework for regional distribution of *Food from the Field* donations to local food pantries
- Developed networks to identify community needs and best practices
- Partnered with Cent$ible Nutrition to distribute *Food from the Field* cookbooks with easy-to-make recipes for game
WE BUILT FOR THE FUTURE.

What do you get when you ask Wyoming hunters to donate game? 2,747 pounds of it, is what. That's high-quality protein that will benefit families in need in Wyoming communities, and a true Wyoming solution to a Wyoming challenge. We’re so proud of the spirit of stewardship and the spirit to serve that defined so many generous hunters this year.

UTILIZING WYOMING’S RESOURCES

Wyoming Hunger Initiative partnered with the Wyoming Game & Fish Department, Wyoming Department of Agriculture, Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies, and processors from around the state to launch Food From the Field. This program enables hunters to donate their meat to local processors who in turn will prepare it for local organizations, where it may then be distributed to people in need. The generous response from hunters wishing to participate in the first season of the program has been overwhelming, and a clear indicator that the program will continue to grow in future years.
54 total animals were donated to Food from the Farm + Ranch in 2020 by Wyoming ranchers and those who donated their county fair purchases. That translates into high-quality protein raised right here in Wyoming—and less dependence on lesser-quality meat sourced from external markets for use in the food bank system. Even in a year when the backlog in meat processing dates presented challenges statewide, innovative thinking and flexibility saved the day.
WE'RE IN IT TO SOLVE IT.

WE BELIEVE NO CHILD SHOULD BEAR THE BURDEN OF DEBT

Wyoming Hunger Initiative launched a pilot program in Converse County to address the issue of growing lunch debt. We’re committed to working with school districts and corporate partners to determine payment plans for families prior to receiving matching funds. We seek to reduce lunch debt once and for all and are fully committed to finding just and equitable outcomes for struggling families. We’ll continue to develop this approach in school districts across Wyoming in the coming year. When dignity replaces shame in the conversation, the outcome changes.

HUNGER HEROES IN OUR MIDST

Despite being unable to fully execute our goals with the newly launched Hunger Champions Circle due to the pandemic, we welcomed many people to the fold as “Champions” and ambassadors of Wyoming Hunger Initiative’s mission. The generosity of our Champions is helping fund our Wyoming Hunger Initiative Grants program, which made measurable strides in combatting food insecurity this year. We salute them all!

2020 HUNGER CHAMPIONS

BEN BRANDES & MEREDITH ASAY
CHUCK & KATIE BROWN
PAUL & BETH HOWARD
RAY & LISA MCELWEE
MR. & MRS. JOHN MCKINLEY
RITA MEYER & STEVE MILLER
ROBERT & EMILY MILLER
ANNE PENDERGAST
JOHN & KITTY RESOR
TRAVIS & DANIELLE MCNIVEN
BILL & TONI THOMSON
LAURA LEWIS
JENNIFER THOMSON
JAY & LINDA BUTLER
FRED & SUSIE VON AHRENS
SUPPORTING INNOVATIVE THINKERS AND DO-ERS

Wyoming is full of innovative thinkers. When you give to Wyoming Hunger Initiative, you enable Wyoming solutions to Wyoming challenges. Grants allow organizations to implement new ideas, partnerships, and programs that make a real and measurable impact on local communities. We know that there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all solution to food insecurity, and Wyoming Hunger Initiative is committed to supporting the inspiring anti-hunger warriors who fight every day to find the best answer for their community and for generations to come. The return on investment is priceless.

Wyoming Hunger Initiative offered two competitive grant cycles in 2020, for a total award of $114,000. While we were unable to fulfill every request, we are committed to broadening opportunities for additional grants in future years. Our grants provide funding for infrastructure and program start-up or improvement costs; this type of funding allows organizations to work more efficiently, brainstorm innovative solutions, and achieve long-term, sustainable results. Visit bit.ly/whigrants to witness the value of infrastructure grants for yourself.
Let’s be honest: we were planning on spending a bulk of our time and energy in 2020 on raising awareness for the importance of school “Breakfast After the Bell” programs and helping school districts implement them across Wyoming. Breakfast is still important, of course, but 2020 had other plans. On March 13, the Wyoming Hunger Initiative team sat down and took stock of how we could pivot, adapt, and help to meet the tremendous need we could see looming on the horizon due to the pandemic. We fully expect that need will continue into 2021 and beyond, and we’re ready to help for as long as it takes.

First Lady Jennie Gordon immediately jumped on the phone in March to invite key stakeholders to join her COVID-19 Task Force. Regular, meaningful communication allowed scores of connections to be made that were able to ease logistical, financial, and emotional effects related to food insecurity and the pandemic. You can read the Task Force’s progress report published in November 2020 by visiting bit.ly/firstladytaskforce.
A RARE SIGHTING OF THE TEAM WHO MAKES IT HAPPEN

In September 2020, First Lady Jennie Gordon brought the First Lady’s COVID-19 Task Force, the Wyoming Governor’s Residence Foundation Board of Directors, and the Wyoming Hunger Initiative team together for its only in-person meeting of the year. The group discussed ongoing challenges and celebrated the many successes achieved while fighting the devastating effects of the pandemic.

Celebration has not been the prevailing mood this year, but this team’s genuine respect for each other and for the mission cheered everyone’s spirits and bolstered their reserves to continue the work for as long as it takes.

FIRST LADY’S COVID-19 TASK FORCE
First Lady Jennie Gordon
Ashley Bright
Elizabeth Dillow
Sharon Fain
Heather Fleming
Tamra Jackson
Tom Lacock
Rita Meyer
Trista Ostrom
Annemarie Picard
Jamie Purcell
Tim Sheppard
Arin Waddell
Tony Woodell

WYOMING GOVERNOR’S RESIDENCE FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS
First Lady Jennie Gordon
Annemarie Picard
Laurie Box
Lynn Kirkbride
Diane Asay
Kathryn Boswell
Paty Gierau
Alfrieda Gonzales
Ashlee Lundvall
Susan Samuelson
JoAnn Skeim-True
Deb Wendtland

WYOMING HUNGER INITIATIVE TEAM
First Lady Jennie Gordon, Trista Ostrom, Elizabeth Dillow, Willie Fowler
WE (SAFELY) TRAVELED.

The Wyoming Hunger Initiative team logged **13,515 miles** of statewide travel to locations in **15 counties** this year! The pandemic created new layers of complexity for traveling but with masks in hand and distance in between us, we still made meaningful and important connections with anti-hunger warriors. We listened, learned, distributed emergency relief, brainstormed, filmed, photographed, and best of all—we strengthened our resolve to meet immediate needs and create long-term solutions to food insecurity in Wyoming.

**SHINING A LIGHT AND SUPPORTING THE WORK**

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**2020 WYOMING HUNGER INITIATIVE VISITS**

Afton Food Pantry • Food Bank of Sweetwater County • Farson K-12 School • University of Wyoming • Feeding Laramie Valley • Albany County School District #1 • St. Joseph’s Food Pantry • Johnson Junior High School • Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies Mobile Food Pantries • Hole Food Rescue • Vertical Harvest • Central Wyoming College • Riverton Farmers Market • Riverton Food Hub • First Stop Help Center • Wyoming Food for Thought Project • Wyoming Food Bank of the Rockies • Book & a Bite • Edible Prairie Project • Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Wyoming • Sublette County School District #9 • Douglas Boys & Girls Club • 307 Meat Company • Dan’s Meat Processing • Campbell County Boys & Girls Club
We’re ending hunger. Together.
WE WERE BLESSED BY GENEROSITY.

#heartsforhunger

Wyoming Hunger Initiative welcomes all levels of giving because every dollar counts. We were blessed by the generosity of friends, family, neighbors, and strangers who joined forces to do their part to end hunger in Wyoming, together. Whether they bought a raffle ticket for the chance to win a Commissioner Tag to benefit Food from the Field, a t-shirt commemorating the resilience of Wyoming rodeo, a chance to share awareness for the too-often invisible problem of hunger, or a holiday pie, side, or full meal—the money raised by Wyoming Hunger Initiative campaigns was nothing short of inspirational.

“Nobody made a greater mistake than he who did nothing because he could only do a little.” —EDMUND BURKE
WE SPENT WHAT YOU GAVE.

Wyoming Hunger Initiative is committed to turning around donations from corporations and individuals as quickly as possible. Why? Because food insecurity doesn’t wait politely. Your generous funds supported infrastructure grants, emergency COVID-19 relief mobile food pantries, holiday meals, and the needs of countless organizations working tirelessly to reach a future where no one faces the day on an empty stomach.

Thank you.
WE SENT LOVE TO WYOMING.

Serving Wyoming’s Seniors During the Pandemic

Wyoming Hunger Initiative is the primary mission of the First Lady’s Office, but the pandemic created multiple crossover challenges this year. Because seniors in assisted living and other care facilities have experienced tremendous isolation throughout the COVID-19 outbreak, we put a call out to community groups and individuals to create handmade cards to brighten the days of thousands of elderly Wyoming residents. **5,134 handmade cards** were distributed to 40 centers between April—June 2020. We can’t thank our card artists enough for their efforts.
IT’S FULL SPEED AHEAD FOR 2021
Wyoming Hunger Initiative intends to:

• feature the work of anti-hunger nonprofit organizations across the state to bring awareness and encourage involvement in the fight to end hunger
• research the potential of grocery rescue hubs in Wyoming
• conduct a statewide audit and “asset map” to develop a more robust resource guide and directory for anyone in need of food assistance
• support anti-hunger organizations by offering Wyoming Hunger Initiative grants aimed at encouraging long-term solutions
• establish partnerships to ensure the long-term success of Food from the Farm + Ranch
• further develop the Regional Directors program
• identify Food from the Field challenges, needs, and best practices to ensure continued growth into additional communities
• develop additional unique fundraising efforts based on the principle of “innovative thinking”
• identify additional challenges and barriers Wyoming children face related to food insecurity and encourage volunteers to get involved
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

visit www.nohungerwyo.org to learn more and sign up for updates about ways to get involved in the fight against food insecurity in Wyoming.