

# Finding Health and Hope: Sandra's Journey with the Food FARMacy :

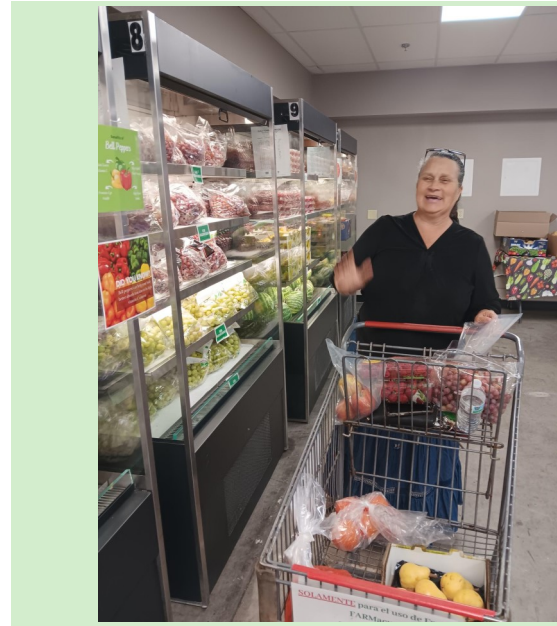


Sandra Smith, originally from San Diego, moved to El Paso about 39 years ago. Despite her own challenges, she has always been passionate about helping others. She volunteers at an addiction rehabilitation center in one of the poorest parts of Juarez across the border in Mexico. "They are very poor. So, for a long time, I've been helping them. But I realized that I needed to care for myself so that I can continue to help." Sandra also looks after her mother.

Sandra struggles with prediabetes and high blood pressure. Her conditions worsened due to her poor eating habits. "Healthy food is not easy to come by. The healthier it is, the more expensive. Sometimes, it's easier and cheaper to just eat any food rather than fresh fruits and vegetables. I use most of my money to pay for bills and things," she explained. These health conditions led her to seek help from the University Medical Center, where her doctor referred her to the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger's Food FARMacy.

She recalls her initial visit to the Food FARMacy. "The staff was very nice. They interviewed me and explained how it works. They made it very easy. For once in a long time, I felt cared for."

"They explained about the types of food that can help my health," Sandra said. She loves the selection available. "It's like going shopping. Except I don't have to pay. I pick what I need." When she thinks about how lucky she is and how others also need help, it makes her sad. "But I know that God wants me to take care of myself so I can keep helping others," she said, getting emotional.



Sandra's journey with the Food FARMacy has included valuable nutrition education. "I was not used to eating fruits and vegetables like this." The nutritional guidance is helping her manage her chronic health conditions. "I feel so much better. I am more active and motivated. I always look forward to coming to the Food FARMacy."

She feels supported by the staff and resources provided. "I feel they care when I come. That is very helpful. They are knowledgeable. I feel happy every time I leave!"

The collaboration between healthcare providers and the Food FARMacy has enhanced her overall health. Sandra believes the program will have a lasting impact on her long-term health and wellness. "I am pre-diabetic and I don't want to get full diabetes. I am working on that and bringing my blood pressure down too."

"Coming to the Food FARMacy, I feel blessed because of the generosity of people that make all this happen. I am treated with dignity and respect. Thank you and may God bless everyone!" ■

The Food FARMacy provides a source of nutritious food for families dealing with diet-related health conditions, coupled with nutrition education and healthy food choice to encourage lasting lifestyle changes. This client-choice pantry empowers referred participants with the knowledge and skills to select foods that can assist in managing their chronic conditions.

# Food FARMacy

## Food and Health



In El Paso, the prevalence of diabetes outpaces the national average of 9.4%, with 15% of El Paso adults living with diabetes.\*

Food insecurity can have serious health consequences when individuals are forced to choose between spending money on food, especially healthy options, or covering necessities like rent, gas, or prescription medications.

El Pasoans Fighting Hunger's Food FARMacy aims to serve as a resource for our neighbors grappling with food insecurity and diet-related chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease.

The Food FARMacy offers nutritious food to individuals managing diet-related health conditions, along with nutrition education and guidance on healthy food choices to support lasting lifestyle changes.

This client-choice pantry empowers referred participants with the knowledge and skills to select foods that can assist in managing their chronic conditions.



### To be eligible for the program, individuals must meet the following criteria:

- Be referred by a participating healthcare provider, who can use our closed-loop referral system to monitor client participation and provide ongoing support
- Be identified as experiencing food insecurity
- Be diagnosed with a chronic, diet-related health condition
- Be a Texas resident

Upon referral, patients are invited to begin their journey with us through a scheduled initial visit. Enrollment in the program unlocks a range of benefits, including tailored nutritional guidance, weekly access to a selection of nutritious foods at the Food FARMacy, and comprehensive learning to assist participants in making informed, health-positive food choices.

Our program bridges the gap between healthcare and nutrition, providing both nutritious food and education. Participants gain knowledge about healthy selections, portion control, and balanced diets. By collaborating with us and accessing resources, individuals can proactively enhance their health, regardless of their financial situation.\*\*



Sources: Source: \*About Us | El Paso Center for Diabetes (epdiabetes.org), \*\*FOOD FARMacy serving community (elpasoansfightinghunger.org)

Discover Naming Opportunities for Your Philanthropic Contributions  
Contact Domingo Betancourt, CFRE, Director of Strategic Development  
915-332-4742 or via email at [dbetancourt@epfhn.org](mailto:dbetancourt@epfhn.org).