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Chattanooga Area Food Bank Appoints Melissa Blevins President and Chief Executive Officer

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. – The Chattanooga Area Food Bank (“Food Bank”) Board of Directors has appointed Melissa Blevins president and chief executive officer effective September 21. Blevins has served as chief executive officer of Girls Inc. of Chattanooga for more than three years. Previously, she was director of programs and operations with the Food Bank from 2011 to 2017.

“The Food Bank is here to lead a network of partners in solving hunger, and that’s only possible with the generous support of our community, the hard work of staff members and the dedication of volunteers,” Blevins said. “While it is bittersweet to leave a wonderful team at Girls Inc., I am thrilled to rejoin the Food Bank and accelerate our efforts to solve hunger.”

Blevins’ leadership will continue the Food Bank’s strategy to address critically underserved areas that have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and position the organization to provide long-term food assistance. Last fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed the equivalent of approximately 13 million meals, or more than 17 million pounds, across its 20-county, 7,000-square-mile service area in Southeast Tennessee and Northwest Georgia. Here, one in five people – including one in four children – are projected to be food insecure due to the pandemic.

“As Director of Programs and Operations, Melissa worked on the front lines to fight hunger and serve people in their greatest time of need,” said Food Bank Board of Directors Chair Jim Catanzaro. “Coupled with her experience at the helm of Girls Inc. of Chattanooga, she will lead the Food Bank through the pandemic and position it to grow strategically in its service to our area.”

During Blevins’ first tenure at the Food Bank, the organization experienced significant growth, more than doubling annual hunger relief efforts, and was also recognized for its innovative approach to distributing fresh milk by Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization. Blevins’ prior roles include private sector leadership positions at Beaulieu of America and McCain Foods.

Blevins is an active member of the Chattanooga community. For several years, she has actively volunteered with Susan G. Komen, the Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce and the Kiwanis Club of Chattanooga. Blevins has a bachelor’s degree in Organizational Management from Covenant College.

About the Chattanooga Area Food Bank

Founded in 1972, the Chattanooga Area Food Bank’s mission is to lead a network of partners in eliminating hunger and promoting better nutrition in our region. In its 20-county service area of Southeast Tennessee and Northwest Georgia, up to 1 in 5 people overall and more than 1 in 4 children could face hunger due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Annually, the Food Bank distributes more than 15 million pounds of food through its network of partner agencies to serve children,

families, seniors, veterans and others who are facing hunger. The Food Bank is a proud member of Feeding America, the largest hunger relief umbrella nonprofit organization in the U.S. For more information about the Food Bank or to how to get involved, visit chattfoodbank.org, follow us on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn.

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