

# The 3-minute interview: Lynn Brantley

MAY 6, 2008

BY FREEMAN KLOPOTT, THE EXAMINER

Twenty-five years ago, [Lynn Brantley](#) was among the founders of the [Capital Area Food Bank](#), which has now raised \$29 million of the \$36 million it wants for a new warehouse. She is currently the food bank's president and chief executive officer, overseeing distribution of 20 million pounds of food throughout the region.

## **Where are you from?**

I grew up in Pennsylvania [Dutch Country](#) and moved to [Prince George's County](#) with my husband, a minister, when he took a church there. I became involved in the civil rights movement and from there looked into hunger issues after four kids from the [South Side of Chicago](#) stayed in our home while they were marching in the [1968] [Poor People's Campaign](#). They were marching to keep bread on their tables.

## **How did you turn that interest into a food bank?**

I had already started working with the Community Ministries in Prince George's County to open new locations where food stamp applications could be processed. There were long lines at the food stamp offices. ... Then, in the late 1970s, food stamps were cut and there wasn't any food. There were food banks starting throughout the country and with funding from [the [District of Columbia](#)] and ministries, we started one here in a leaky old warehouse.

## **How has the food bank business changed?**

We started out with 1 million pounds of food, serving 50 agencies. Now we deal with 20 million pounds and 700 agencies. Unfortunately we've been very much needed. ... In the beginning, it was a struggle to get the food industry to believe in our viability and credibility. We had to convince them of that. Now we're very credible and very much a part of the food industry, but with the sub prime collapse and biofuels, it's become harder to find food. ... We're trying to respond to the need.