



MAC Interviews Brian Riendeau, Dare to Care Executive Director

Brian Riendeau, Dare to Care Executive Director, joined the organization in 2009 after spending 14 years with Yum Brands as Vice President of Government & Community Affairs. While at Yum, Mr. Riendeau developed and expanded the YUMeals program, the largest prepared-food recovery program in the country, and helped launch

World Hunger Relief Week, a global partnership between Yum Brands and the United Nations World Food Programme.

Mr. Riendeau received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland and his Masters of Business Administration from George Mason University. He and his wife Judy have a daughter, Jesse Rose, and have lived in Louisville since 1994. We're excited to share this interview with Mr. Riendeau and share the good work done by his team at Dare to Care.

Mr. Riendeau, thank you for speaking with us. For those unfamiliar, could you provide a quick summary of Dare to Care's work in the community?

Our vision at Dare to Care is a hunger free Kentuckiana. So we work every day to build a community that can insure everyone has enough to eat every day to lead an active and healthy life.

We're a member of the Feeding America food bank system. Our service area consists of 13 counties, eight in Kentucky and five in Indiana. All of the food we distribute goes to those 13 counties.

Dare to Care works with a network of 270 nonprofit partner agencies who collaborate with us and deliver our food to the people who need it. These include organizations diverse as The Healing Place, Feed the Children, churches and countless other locations in our region.

We also directly distribute food to clients through our programs such as The Kids Café program. We have a food kitchen distributing 1500 meals to children each year.

That actually leads to our next question. Could you talk about some of your targeted initiatives to reach underserved children, families and elderly, such as Kids Café and Cooking Matters?

Cooking Matters is our nutritional education program. Our Backpack Buddy program provides nutritious food to school kids on Fridays throughout the year so they have something to eat over the weekend when they can't receive school lunches.

You may have heard of the Prescriptive Pantry program. We're partnering with Norton Pediatrics, UofL and family health centers to put food pantries in primary care facilities. This means that when low income individuals come in to the doctor's office sick, they can get a box of food designed to meet their health needs.

The neat thing about that program is these folks are getting a box of food from a doctor.

That's a different interaction than getting food from a food pantry at a church. The doctor can say something like, "We're going to recommend you start using low sodium vegetables." They can talk about healthy food choices and why that's important.

What does the Thanksgiving to Christmas season look like at D2C? In what ways, if any, does it differ from the rest of the year?

In terms of the need in the community, the holiday season is no different. Hunger is a year round issue for many people.

The need doesn't go up, but what does is the community awareness of that need. The community tends to be moved to action this time of year. There are more food drives at schools and various places of work. It's a very busy time for community engagement, but we're always happy to have that recognition. We like to remind our volunteers and contributors that hungry families will need our help well after the holiday season. Let's keep up those relationships whenever we can.

What are the pathways for volunteers or contributors to get more involved?

The place to get everything you need is our website, www.daretocare.org. On there, you'll see all the opportunities to get engaged. We have over 3,000 individuals who come volunteer to sort and pack food. There's tremendous opportunity to engage as an individual or group. Enjoy an office offsite meeting at our warehouse, or bring your family in to volunteer.

We're a nonprofit, and we receive no revenue for operations. So, we rely on charitable giving to fund our operations. If people have the capacity to give, we're open to receiving those gifts.

We also need advocates to go out and spread the message that hunger is a real issue in our community. We need to get active and lobby for public policy that insures food is available to people that need it.

It's a great feeling to help feed these families and make a difference. Even on your very worst day at Dare to Care, you still go home with a sense of satisfaction because you feel that maybe in some small way, you're able to help those in need.



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