

It's Spooky To Be Hungry:

Our History

It's Spooky To Be Hungry®, an annual grassroots food and monetary drive, has taken place on and around the fourth Saturday in October annually since its inception in 1992. Although it has grown extensively over the years, Spooky's mission and model remain true to its initial goals: bringing people of all ages together in fun, brief, significant, community-building volunteer work, working together to fight hunger. Spooky is primarily a neighbor-to-neighbor effort, but now also includes organized drives in many schools, businesses, faith communities, and civic organizations.

Spooky began with only a handful of volunteers -- adults and children -- first in one neighborhood in Rochester, Minnesota, and then in three suburban neighborhoods in Columbia County, just outside Augusta, Georgia. By 2006 It's Spooky To Be Hungry® had become the single largest grassroots service project in CSRA regional history including over 2700 volunteers, half of them children, across a ten county area of Georgia and South Carolina. The Augusta-area food and monetary drive collected over \$56,000 and more than 106,000 pounds of food in just the 2006 collection. These totals translate into over 300,000 meals provided to area needy through just this one year local effort. [Click here](#) to see more details about the amazing growth the CSRA chapter has enjoyed since its inception. The many volunteers who participate in Spooky collections are supported and organized by an extensive volunteer staff. These core volunteers work together to make sure Spooky continues fun, easy, and satisfying for all, even as it has grown.

In 2002, Spooky began to reorganize to better accommodate its rapid growth. Spooky incorporated as a tax-exempt non-profit charitable corporation, under the name "Big Changes Start Small, Inc." BCSS has all the privileges and responsibilities of a charitable corporation, such as functioning with a Board of Directors, filing tax information, and eligibility to receive tax deductible contributions. In 2004, we received trademarks on our corporate name (Big Changes Start Small), the Spooky name (It's Spooky To Be Hungry) and our logo (a ghost holding a grocery bag.)

By 2004, Spooky also established several additional chapters far distant from the Augusta core. These new Spooky chapters were founded by Augusta-area Spooky volunteers who so enjoyed their experience that when they moved to new communities, they took the Spooky project with them. Also in 2004, It's Spooky To Be Hungry® won national recognition through USA WEEKEND magazine, as one of the ten best Make A Difference Day projects from among thousands of volunteer community service efforts throughout the United States. We were featured in an article in Southern Living magazine. This publicity resulted in a significant increase in our visibility beyond the Augusta, Georgia region, with inquiries from throughout the Southeast about establishing Spooky chapters. In 2006, we had a total of 12 Spooky chapters, in cities and towns from North Carolina to Mississippi. But our flagship chapter, by far the largest one, remains in the greater CSRA of Georgia and South Carolina. From just a few hundred pounds of food collected and donated to Golden Harvest Food Bank in 1992, by 2006 the CSRA chapter had become the single largest food and monetary drive in support of Golden Harvest.

In fact, in 2006 the Spooky CSRA Chapter redesigned its organizational structure in order to accommodate its remarkable growth, partnering with Golden Harvest Food Bank, the recipient of the Augusta area Spooky collection. Having access to the resources of a much larger organization is allowing the CSRA Chapter to grow without investing in expensive professional services. The two organizations remain independent entities, pursuing independent but complementary missions, but work together in mutual support. And all proceeds of the Spooky drive continue to be spent solely on the purchase of food, with no deductions for administrative overhead.

What makes Spooky different from “just another food drive?”

It’s Spooky To Be Hungry® has a two-part mission: to strengthen community while working to fight hunger. We believe it is our emphasis on community-building which has given our project its vitality and success. We build community in a variety of direct and indirect ways, among them promoting volunteerism, providing leadership development opportunities, giving children and adults meaningful volunteer experience together, and building bridges between diverse parts of our larger community.

In addition to following our simple mission, the Big Changes Start Small® Board of Directors has written a set of core values for It’s Spooky To Be Hungry®. These statements encapsulate the central guiding principles of It’s Spooky To Be Hungry®, and we try to refer back to them in every decision we make. If you would like to know more about what inspires and guides us, we encourage you to take a few moments and read through these core values. We hope you will feel comfortable with and inspired by these guidelines, as we are.