



## Driving a Brighter Future

Ford presents new Transit Connect van to Matthew's Crossing Food Bank in Chandler

By Jennifer Johnson / Photos: Randall Bohl

**M**atthew's Crossing Food Bank in Chandler recently received a useful present to close out 2015—a brand-new, custom-wrapped Transit Connect van courtesy of Ford Motor Company.

This vehicle supports Ford's ongoing efforts to

address food insecurity, which includes a nationwide network of more than 50 mobile food pantries equipped with Transit Connect vans. This vehicle will help Matthew's Crossing Food Bank serve the community in even more ways in the fight against hunger.

"The first step in creating a better world is helping to fulfill the most basic needs of our neighbors," said Christie Mildner with Ford Motor Company's Phoenix Region. "More than 48 million Americans live in fear of going hungry each day, and these vehicles will deliver meals—not just during this season of giving but throughout the year."

Nationally, Ford has deployed dozens of Transit Connects as part of its Mobile Food Pantry program. A handful of them are located right here in Phoenix, and they are responsible for distributing more than 6 million meals over the past 5 years.

Mildner added, "With its nimble handling and fully adaptable cargo space, the Transit Connect makes an ideal option for food transportation. This unit can be used for the collection of nonperishable goods received from local food drive efforts as well as for picking up fresh produce, meat and dairy items from local grocers with the goal of getting food to those who need it most."

Each Transit Connect van offers 104 cubic feet of cargo space and is capable of carrying 1,470 pounds, which equals more than 1,100 meals per vehicle per trip. Last year, Matthew's Crossing Food Bank served 48,000 individuals and provided 17,000 emergency food boxes. Store pickups increased from 14,121 pounds of food in 2013 to 249,222 pounds in 2014.

"The new Transit Connect will enable us to pick up even more food in 2016 and beyond," said Matthew's Crossing Food Bank Executive Director Jan Terhune. "Currently, Arizona is one of the worst states in the nation for childhood hunger with more than one in four children not knowing where their next meal will come from. Thank you, Ford!" ■

From left: Chandler Vice Mayor Kevin Hartke, Matthew's Crossing Food Bank's Jan Terhune and Ford Motor Company's Christie Mildner check out the new Transit Connect that will aid the Chandler-based food bank in getting food to those in need in 2016 and beyond.

