



This Past Year and for Decades to Come

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THANK YOU

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The top food donors between July 1 - Sept. 30, 2021

- | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Big Y* | 5. Target | 9. C&S Wholesale |
| 2. Stop and Shop | 6. Cumberland Farms* | 10. Red Fire Farm |
| 3. Walmart* | 7. Coca-Cola/Minute-Maid Co.* | |
| 4. BJs* | 8. Atlas Farm | |

*multiple stores combined



For regular updates on Food Bank activities, sign up for our newsletter at info@foodbankwma.org



The Food Bank's vision is a Western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to nutritious food.

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From the Executive Director

This Past Year and for Decades to Come

Autumn greetings! Here at The Food Bank, we are all very grateful for your support of our mission during our last fiscal year that ended on September 30th. Together, we distributed the equivalent of almost 12 million meals to an average of 105,000 individuals monthly. Exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the numbers of individuals seeking food assistance is now trending downward compared to the peak in November of last year. Nonetheless, far too many individuals still struggle to make ends meet and put healthy food on the table.

We also had other positive impact. We provided SNAP applications assistance to 857 individuals with an 80% approval rate. In addition, more than 700 patients who screened positive for food insecurity at local health providers received food vouchers, produce boxes, medically tailored meals, and/or nutrition education services, including referrals to other social service agencies for other wrap-around services. Elders with chronic diseases received these services through our *Western Massachusetts Food Partnership* with the Greater Springfield Senior Services, WestMass Eldercare, Highland Valley Elder Services, and LifePath.

By now, you should have received our fall appeal to support our mission for another year. It's a special year because we hope to complete our capital campaign to build our future, larger, and greener food distribution center and headquarters in Chicopee. Our new home will enable us to carry out our mission for decades to come. We've outgrown our current facility and even have rejected large food donations for lack of space.

Over the holiday season, please consider making a five-year pledge to our campaign in 2022 to help us realize our goal. Campaign and building details are available on our website: www.foodbankwma.org/capital-campaign/. Naturally, we'd be delighted to meet with you early next year to discuss this exciting project and your partnership in it.

Donors often ask us whether they should support our operations, our capital campaign, or their local food pantry. My answer is always the same... all three! Why? Because:

1. We rely on your annual support to sustain and expand our mission to provide more healthy food, other food assistance, and long-term solutions to food insecurity.
2. Your investment in our capital campaign will ensure we have the capacity to provide more healthy food to more people for decades to come, especially during future economic downturns.
3. Your support of your local food pantry is essential for "last mile" food distribution to neighbors in need of food assistance.

We encourage everyone to be as generous as possible to feed our neighbors in need of food assistance and lead the community to end hunger. Thank you for your support of our mission and faith in us to carry it out. ♦

Andrew Morehouse, *Executive Director*

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Community in Every Sense of the Word

One mission inspires a family to service with The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

Stories of service abound at The Food Bank where community members consistently lend their time and expertise to address food insecurity in the area. For Suzanne Beck, Al Driscoll, and Sharon Morgan service is a family affair. Their parallel involvement at The Food Bank was not unintentional – and it wasn't until a family cookout last summer that they realized their extra-familial connection. “My husband Bob is one of seven,” Suzanne said, laughing as she recalled that afternoon, “so it's easy not to know what everyone is doing.”

Beck became involved with The Food Bank's capital campaign in 2019 when she retired from her position as the executive director of the Northampton Chamber of Commerce and was looking for a way to engage in community investment.

“I've been impressed by how creatively The Food Bank has interpreted its mission not only to get food directly to those who are food insecure, but also really to reflect the values of Western Massachusetts by purchasing farms to support the local economy. It's really innovative.”



*Top to bottom:
Suzanne Beck, Al Driscoll,
and Sharon Morgan.*

In May of 2020, Al Driscoll, Suzanne's step-son, graduated from the Stockbridge School at UMass hoping to turn his love of working outside with his hands into a career. Already familiar with The Food Bank and its mission through his work as the donations coordinator for the UMass Student Farm, Al's experiences in this position instilled a second passion for building a permanent sustainable and accessible food system in the region. When deciding between The Food Bank's Community Farm Coordinator position and more traditional farm labor jobs, the choice was clear. This year, Al helped us pilot our new no-till community farm on a small parcel of our second 142-acre Food Bank Farm in Hadley. “It's a really unique opportunity to engage with the community in a different way,” he said, “it's food sovereignty – having the community learn how to sustain itself.” Al and community volunteers will expand the community farm next year to grow more organic vegetables to distribute to local food pantries as well as engage youth and other volunteers to learn about no-till farming, food security, nutrition, and the local farm economy.

Sharon Morgan began her work with The Food Bank after fulfilling her lifelong dream of moving to Western Massachusetts. She, too, is familiar with hunger-relief advocacy, after years of work at non-profit organizations in eastern Massachusetts. During the pandemic, The Food Bank was searching for ways to deliver food to remote member food pantries in the Berkshires.

It is this drive that Sharon now completes every Monday, which she describes as a highlight of her week. She is driven by the philosophy, “I like to eat—I want to make sure other people can.”

Dedicated volunteers are critical to the work of The Food Bank whether they support initiatives like our capital campaign and new farm or routine operations. When asked about the family's values that encourage this kind of engagement, Suzanne instead pointed to the community. “There is something about this region that people absorb.”

Morgan concurred, “People care about each other. It's a sense of community, in every sense of the word.” ♦



The 12th Annual Will Bike 4 Food Provides More than 800,000 Meals!

The Food Bank would like to thank everyone who supported and participated in this year's Will Bike 4 Food (WB4F) on September 26. Collectively, you raised an astounding \$203,363.00 which will provide more than 813,000 healthy meals to neighbors at risk of hunger!

We were thrilled to hold this annual event in person once again with pandemic safety measures in place. Cyclists included a mix of die-hard WB4F teams and individuals along with new supporters who wanted to take part in the fun.

We are appreciative of the many individuals who were unable to attend WB4F but took part in *Ride and Seek* activities during the summer. They, too, cycled and raised funds for Western Massachusetts communities. It was amazing to see so many families and individuals stepping up during challenging times.

Community businesses also supported WB4F with monetary and in-kind donations, including Stop & Shop, the official sponsor for the event. Without the support of cyclists and volunteers, WB4F would not have been a success. Your concern for your neighbors has made a big impact in the region, and we're looking forward to seeing you at next year's Will Bike 4 Food!

Please join us in acknowledging and applauding our leading fundraising teams and individuals:

Top WB4F Fundraising Teams

River Valley Co-op
C.E. Floyd Company
Heart and Soul
The Bay State Morning Riders
CICS Touring Machines
Topspinners
Team UMassFive
Kids Bike 4 Ice Cream
KC and the Sunshine Track Stand
Tighe & Bond

Top WB4F Individual Fundraisers

Lionel Romain
Sean Kinlin
Brant Cheikes
Jamieson Colburn
Caliandra Knox
Matthew Granger
Felicia Bianchi
Larry Picard
Orion Phelps



Leaving a Legacy of Care

Fifth-generation Pittsfield siblings Fay and Rodman Henry, and their lifelong mission to provide for their neighbors in need.

Fay Henry held a deep love for her community that guided her life's journey. Upon her passing in 2019, Fay left a significant contribution from her estate, and by extension her late brother's, to The Food Bank to help ensure their neighbors would have critical support for generations to come.

"Both Rod and Fay had a strong allegiance to Pittsfield and particularly the young and the needy," said friend and executor of Fay's estate, Deborah Francis. "Without any other family members, they decided to do all that they could for their community in their Wills."

Fay Henry was a lifelong resident of Pittsfield, deeply connected to the area and its people. After attending college at Bay Path Institute, now Bay Path University in Longmeadow, she returned home to care for her family, taking a job with The Berkshire Medical Group in its records department where she would remain for 43 years. Outside of her work, Fay was an artist, historian, and a lover of classical music and opera. Her friends remember her as an exceptionally positive and kind woman, describing "... her beautiful blue eyes, her inviting smile and her bubbly personality." She was deeply committed to her family and by extension to her community.

Doctor Rodman Henry was a WWII veteran of the 88th Mountain Division, receiving an Infantry Combat Medal, a Purple Heart, and a Bronze Star in 1945 for defending his unit under heavy machine gun fire in Italy. Before being drafted into military service, Dr. Henry was a musician and promising cellist, but his injuries from the war left him both unable to pursue his musical talents and benefit from the GI Bill. Instead, he funneled his passion for the world into education, earning his PhD from Boston University and moving on to become a beloved professor of art history at many institutions, including Pine Manor College where he taught for over 40 years. He eventually retired to his birthplace in Pittsfield before his passing in 2011.

"We're thankful to the Henrys for their lifelong dedication to service and for leaving a portion of their legacy and memory in the care of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts," reflects Andrew Morehouse, Food Bank Executive Director. ♦

MONTE'S MARCH 12

2021

#ENDHUNGERNOW



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meals to supplement
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