

word

of mouth our region's fight against hunger begins here.



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E-NEWS

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**FEEDING
AMERICA**
A Member of

Nutrition offers full menu of healthy programs

When kids are out of school, they no longer receive the reduced (or free) meals they enjoyed during the school year, leaving them at risk for hunger. Hunger is not just about lack of food — it's also about lack of nutritious food, which has been proven to have long term consequences for children, including increased rates of impaired cognitive and brain development, lowered immune response, short stature and obesity.

Part of our commitment to strengthening the emergency food network is ensuring that the families that rely on us get access to nutritious food. A challenge many families face is putting together a healthy meal on limited resources. To address this concern, our nutrition program provides resources and education for families in our community to help them with healthier cooking, eating and shopping habits.

Building a foundation for a healthier life

Our nutrition program partners with youth programs to provide basic nutrition education to children. It helps to build the foundation for a healthy lifestyle, even when facing adversity. In June, The Food Bank conducted a nutrition workshop for children between ages 5-15 at The Family Place (a Holyoke shelter for families in transition). Our nutritionist Diane Alpern, RD, along with our nutrition intern Allison Callan and other volunteers, used the *USDA MyPlate* model, teaching children how to make nutritious choices, how to read food nutrition labels, and

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**More food, to more people,
more equitably**



Executive Director
Andrew Morehouse

Dear Friends,

People always ask me: “How are things going at The Food Bank?” My reply is invariably the same... “Things are hopping... we’re moving more and healthier food to more people... and that’s not a good sign for hundreds of thousands of people in our region.” In

“We’re moving more and healthier food to more people... and that’s not a good sign for hundreds of thousands of people in our region.”

response to this challenge, this year we’ve launched our new five-year strategic plan. Our broad strategies to guide us are:

To **FEED** our neighbors in need by providing more meals to more people more equitably
To **LEAD** and engage the community to end hunger
To **STRENGTHEN** the operations of The Food Bank and the Emergency Food Network
We have established some ambitious goals associated with these strategies. We’ll update you on progress to achieve them in the coming months and years. I urge you to read more about our new plan in our Fiscal Year 2013 Annual Report, available on our website at www.foodbankwma.org/about/financials.

Below are a few highlights that we’ve already begun working on with our community and business partners:

- We’re continuing to expand our Mobile Food Bank and distribute fresh perishable food items like dairy and produce directly to households with children. The majority of our locations are in Hampden County; with one also in Hampshire County (Ware) and one in Berkshire County (Great Barrington).
- We’re distributing even more quantities of protein-rich frozen meats through our partnerships with Big Y World Class Market and Stop & Shop Supermarket. By the end of this year, we expect to distribute annually three-quarters of a million pounds of assorted meats to households who cannot afford it.

Needless to say, we can only accomplish it with your continued support. Thank you, as always, for investing in our mission, that we’ve also updated: “To feed our neighbors in need and lead the community to end hunger.” ●

The mission of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts is to feed our neighbors in need and lead the community to end hunger.

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Nutrition offers full menu of healthy programs continued from page 1

Our nutrition staff conducted a cooking demonstration for families at the Econo Lodge in Chicopee. A number of nutrition resources were made available, including our new microwave cookbook featuring dozens of simple and healthy meals specifically created to be prepared in a microwave oven using inexpensive ingredients.



the importance of eating whole grains, fruits and vegetables. The training ended on a sweet note — each child prepared healthy parfaits with yogurt, strawberries, blueberries and granola.

Cooking Matters at the Store

Another program coordinated by our nutrition program is Cooking Matters at the Store. Partnering with Share Our Strength, Cooking Matters is an effective program where participants learn about cooking, budgeting and strategic shopping so they can get the most out of federal food and nutrition programs. This summer, our nutrition department hosted four 90-minute tours at various supermarkets. During each tour, families learned to make the healthiest and most affordable food decisions when shopping, including how to read and compare food labels & unit prices, and how to buy fresh fruits & vegetables on a tight budget. At the end of the tour, all participants received a reusable grocery bag, a booklet of tasty new recipes and nutrition tips, and a \$10 gift card for the store.

Cooking Healthy in a Microwave

With access to only a microwave oven and a small refrigerator, homeless families that are temporarily housed in local motels can prepare healthy meals. Our nutrition staff has collaborated with Baystate Medical Center HealthNet staff to provide a microwave cooking class for these displaced families. On June 5th, our nutrition staff conducted a cooking demonstration for families at the Econo Lodge in Chicopee. A number of nutrition resources were made available, including our new microwave cookbook featuring dozens of simple and healthy meals specifically created to be prepared in a microwave oven using inexpensive ingredients.

Our nutrition programs play a vital role in our efforts to lead the community to end hunger. As we develop new programs to reach more people, we will strive to help families already struggling with so many challenges learn that they have options to provide healthy food. ●

Closing the Summer Hunger Gap

In Massachusetts, more than 247,000 children will face a decrease in meals each day during the summer, as they no longer receive the lunch assistance they were given during the school year. Families face new challenges when school is not in session. Budgets begin to tighten, transportation becomes an issue, and availability of feeding programs in their area can limit the food for that child.

As these challenges continue to grow, The Food Bank relies on your support to continue to meet the needs of our community. Through special programs, such as our Mobile Food Bank, we are working to ensure summer months don't turn into hungry months for thousands of kids in our area.

Local businesses help fuel our efforts

Through a partnership with New England Public Radio (NEPR) and the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, spring 2014 marked the 4th *Feed Your Radio, Feed a Family* campaign. Each pledge made to NEPR provided food for a day for a family of four through contributions from a group of donors at the Community Foundation.

Each day, The Food Bank's fleet of trucks hit the road in all directions throughout Western Massachusetts to deliver food to pantries, meal-sites, shelters and other feeding programs that make up the emergency food network. Additionally, emergency food is distributed directly to our community's most vulnerable populations: elders and children. Our trucks bring food to 61 distribution sites for our Brown Bag: Food for Elders program, providing more than 7,000 elders with free groceries each month. Our newest program, the Mobile Food Bank, delivers healthy food directly to families at ten locations throughout our region.

In addition to providing approximately 46,000 meals, this year's Feed Your Radio campaign helped fuel our trucks to help us get the food delivered. Thanks to our partnership with NEPR, Dean's Beans Organic Coffee and O'Connell's Convenience Plus joined us to provide an added bonus to the annual event. Each company donated 1,000 gallons of gasoline to fuel our fleet of trucks. As the need for food assistance continues to grow throughout our region, more and more community organizations and businesses are joining forces to raise awareness of hunger and support The Food Bank in our efforts to feed our neighbors in need. ●



Dean Cycon (far right), CEO & Founder of Dean's Beans Organic Coffee Company and James Sobon (second from right), VP of Operations at O'Connell Oil Associates, Inc, fueled our efforts with 1,000 gallons each of gas for our delivery trucks.



Gala raises more than \$65,000

On Friday, April 25, we held our fifth biennial Food Bank Gala event at the Log Cabin in Holyoke. Hundreds of people came out to help us prohibit hunger at the 1920's themed Speakeasy Soiree. We're happy to announce that through your support, this signature fund raising event raised just over \$65,000 for The Food Bank! Since 2006, the Gala event has raised approximately \$365,000.



We would like to thank everyone that came out to the event and supported our mission to feed our neighbors in need. With the funds raised from this event, we will be able to provide an additional 195,000 meals to individuals in the community that are struggling with food insecurity.

Visit www.foodbankgala2014.shutterfly.com to view the online photo album from the Gala.



FOUR ROUTES. ONE DESTINATION. **A COMMUNITY WITHOUT HUNGER.**

This September, we will be holding our 4th annual **Will Bike 4 Food** (WB4F) charity cycling event at our facility in Hatfield. Since 2011, it has brought together hundreds of dedicated individuals, businesses and families who have raised more than \$135,000 for The Food Bank, allowing us to provide more food to more people.

Get involved

Starting a team with your friends and family is an easy and fun way to help feed our neighbors in need. All that's required is a minimum of four people. With multiple courses to choose from—a 10, 25, 50 or 100 mile loop through the scenic Pioneer Valley—it offers an opportunity for riders of any level to become involved. It also provides a rare chance for families to participate in an activity together that is not only fun, but supports our community as well. It will teach kids the value of helping others, while also raising awareness of the issue of hunger in our own backyard. Visit our website for quick and easy registration, and you'll be able to begin your fund raising immediately.

WB4F couldn't happen without the support of our volunteers. So, if riding isn't your thing, you can participate in the event by volunteering at any one of a number of available opportunities and shifts throughout the day.

Celebrate with us

Once you finish your ride, there will be a post-race celebration with food provided by Stop & Shop and beverages from Berkshire Brewing Company, as well as face-painting and other fun activities for the kids. Our staff will be on-hand so you can learn more about The Food Bank, other events and volunteer opportunities that are available.

Sponsors

We'd like to welcome back Baystate Health as a gold-level sponsor. Their on-going support has allowed WB4F to continue to grow each year. We would also like to thank new sponsors, The Great American Milk Drive and C&S Wholesale Grocers, for their commitment to our mission. Visit our web site for more information on how your organization can help sponsor this event.

New This Year

We have a number of new and exciting additions to this year's event :

- 1) Riders of the 100-mile course will receive a special commemorative gift.
- 2) The fundraising minimum amount for kids 18 and under is only \$100.
- 3) No fundraising required for kids that ride on the back of a bike or pulled behind.

to our supporters
thank you

**The following businesses, organizations,
and foundations made a gift of \$1,000
or more between February 1, 2014
and June 20, 2014**

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The Food Bank
of Western Massachusetts

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