



word

our region's stand against hunger begins here.



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E-NEWS

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Take Action During Hunger Action Month

Hunger affects communities all across our region, from rural to urban. In cities and towns throughout Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties, more than 211,000 people struggle with food insecurity. Sadly, it's not uncommon for this societal challenge to go unnoticed. That's why it's important to join together and raise awareness during national Hunger Action Month this September.

Hunger Action Month is a time when the Feeding America nationwide network of food banks unites and calls upon everyone to take action to fight hunger in their communities. This is your opportunity to join a movement that has a real and lasting impact to feed more people than ever before and eventually end hunger as we know it.

Hunger is a solvable problem, and we need your help to put an end to it. During Hunger Action Month, there are a number of different ways to take action, including raising awareness of hunger issues, advocating for change, donating food and funds, or volunteering your time and skills. As individuals, charities, businesses and government, we all have a role to play in getting food to our neighbors in need.

Inside, you'll find a listing of possible actions you can take during Hunger Action Month.

Tasked with ending hunger



Executive Director
Andrew Morehouse

Dear Friends,

As supporters, hopefully, you know that we have a two-fold mission at The Food Bank that we take very seriously: 1) to feed our neighbors in need, and 2) to lead the community to end

hunger. Everyone is familiar with the first part, since we proactively distribute millions of pounds of healthy food to more than 211,000 people annually. Plain and simple, people need to eat in order to survive.

However, as I've stressed repeatedly, we cannot solve hunger and food insecurity through food banking alone. This epidemic is a societal challenge that is so great that it will take many more of us working together ultimately to end hunger as we know it now. This won't happen overnight.

To lead the community to end hunger, since January we have convened a Task Force to End Hunger. Twenty-six thought leaders from across our region have been meeting monthly to learn about food insecurity and to offer their perspective of its underlying causes and possible solutions to end it over time. They engage in deep, and often soul-searching conversations about the numerous and overlapping obstacles that food-insecure households face daily in their quest to survive, much less get ahead. In addition, we've hosted two community forums in Hampden and Franklin Counties to gain more community input. Both forums generated a lot of energetic and informative ideas and aspirations to advance the goal of ending hunger.

By January 2017, the Task Force's charge is to develop an action plan to end hunger in our region by a specific date with measurable strategies and actions. Already, the Task Force is compiling a list of possible solutions that encompass many levels of change:

- Debunking myths about food insecurity through effective and accurate public education;
- Continuing to build relationships and specific collaborative services across institutions and individuals to prevent food insecurity; and
- Advocating for effective policy change to eliminate gainful employment barriers and to create opportunities for living household incomes so that people can afford to buy their own food.

While such an action plan is a tall order, we are confident the Task Force will achieve its goal. The stakes are simply very high, and as a society, we cannot afford the alternative of sustaining the status quo. We will await with anticipation this action plan which will inform our own work moving forward. We are extremely grateful to the Task Force for taking on this mandate with such vigor. ●

“The Task Force’s charge is to develop an action plan to end hunger in our region by a specific date with measurable strategies and actions.”

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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HUNGER ACTION MONTH™



Hunger Action Day September 8

Go Orange on Hunger Action Day by wearing orange-colored clothing and accessories to raise awareness. Encourage your family, friends, and coworkers to join you. Be sure to share your Go Orange photos on social media using the hashtag #HungerAction.



Volunteers from Ameriprise visited The Food Bank to help sort and pack food for distribution.

Donate

Cement your commitment to this cause by becoming a monthly donor of The Food Bank. For every dollar donated, we're able to provide three meals to a neighbor in need.

Participate in a fundraising event

Whether it's Will Bike 4 Food, our Spring Social, or Monte's March, there are a number of fundraising events happening every month that directly support The Food Bank.

Volunteer

Volunteers are a crucial

part of our work, and we couldn't operate without their dedication and support. We rely on individuals, businesses, religious groups and civic organizations to come together to have fun and build a stronger community.

Social Media

Follow The Food Bank on social media to engage others in the on-going conversation about food insecurity in our community, and explore possible solutions. You can find us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Stay up to date

Sign up to receive The Food Bank's monthly e-newsletter to stay up to date with all the ways that you can take action to raise awareness of food insecurity, and help end hunger in our community.

Advocate

As a hunger advocate, you can communicate with your legislator about local food security issues and urge them to provide the resources needed to help end hunger. By lending your voice, you can bring positive change. ●

To get started on these actions and learn about others, visit our website at foodbankwma.org



Fork it Over For Food

Throughout the month of September, The Food Bank will partner with dozens of local restaurants throughout Western Massachusetts for our Fork It Over For Food campaign. Diners are asked to make a donation at the end of their meal, 100% of which goes directly to The Food Bank to provide food for our neighbors in need. Additionally, restaurants will also have new ways to get involved. For a list of participating restaurants, visit us at www.foodbankwma.org/events/fiof, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

6th Annual

WILL BIKE 4 FOOD

Presented by  Stop&Shop

4 routes. 1 destination. A community without hunger.

Sunday, September 25, 2016

The Lion's Club Pavilion in Hatfield

www.willbike4food.org

A fun day for the entire family to support our neighbors in need

Will Bike 4 Food is returning for its sixth year on Sunday, September 25 at The Lion's Club pavilion in Hatfield. The event provides a rare opportunity for riders of all ages to enjoy a fun-filled day with other like-minded cyclists, while helping to feed our neighbors in need. Choose the 10, 25, 50, or 100-mile route through the Pioneer Valley, designed to accommodate all ages and riding abilities.



Last year, nearly 300 riders joined together to raise \$100,000 to prevent hunger in our region. We're counting on your support to exceed last year's success and help even more children, seniors, veterans and hard-working families.

Ride

When you participate in Will Bike 4 Food, you're raising awareness of hunger and food insecurity in our area. You can choose to ride as an individual or recruit at least four family members, friends or co-workers to form a team. Prizes are awarded to top fundraisers. Registration is already open through our website at willbike4food.org.

After-Party

When you're done riding, you want to make sure you stay for the After-Party. We'll have a delicious cookout with food from Smithsonian Caterers, including BBQ chicken, burgers, hot dogs and salads. Berkshire Brewing Company will be back this year to serve their selection of craft beer. There will also be music, games and more. Non-riders can join the fun, as tickets will be sold separately for the After-Party on our web site (riders do not need to purchase After-Party tickets).

Volunteer

Volunteering is a great way to support Will Bike 4 Food for those who are unable to ride at the event. We have a number of opportunities available, including route patrol, water stop support, registration, food & beverage service, and many more. To learn more about how you can get involved and help, visit our web site at willbike4food.org. ●

Uniting friends to raise awareness

On a beautiful spring afternoon in May, nearly 30 people gathered in a picturesque barn in Heath. They weren't there to harvest crops or tend to farm animals. Instead, they engaged in a spirited conversation about food insecurity in their community.

The special reception was co-hosted by Bob and Del Viarengo — longtime Heath residents and dedicated supporters of The Food Bank.

They invited friends, family and neighbors for food, drinks, and a discussion about the impact of hunger in their community and beyond. For many guests, it was an eye-opening experience that taught them that more than 730 of their neighbors in only six small rural towns of Franklin County rely on SNAP benefits and the emergency food network to put food on their table.

The discussion of the afternoon was punctuated by two special guests: Andrew Morehouse (The Food Bank's Executive Director) and Bob Pura (Greenfield Community College President and Food Bank board member). Morehouse spoke about the work of the recently formed Task Force to End Hunger, while Pura highlighted measures the college is taking to reduce hunger, including their on-campus food pantry.

Guests left the event passionately inspired to take action, as conversations focused on volunteering, donating, participating in events, and engaging others within their personal networks to find out what is being done in their communities. Following the event, attendees sent in donations totaling \$1,975.

Consider hosting an event at your home and invite your friends and family to learn about food insecurity in our midst, and ways they can get involved. We'd be happy to work with you to make the event enjoyable and successful. Your actions can make a difference and lead to positive change. ●



Guests at the Viarengo's reception enjoyed food, refreshments and conversations about hunger in our region.

Community Forum examines causes of hunger

Congressman Jim McGovern took time from his busy schedule to join us at our Task Force to End Hunger's Franklin County Community Forum in June. As he addressed the crowd of nearly 100 people, he pointed to the lack of political will he has seen in Washington as a reason for intractable food insecurity in our country. "In the immediate future, the federal government is not making things better," explained McGovern. "In fact, they're making it worse. So we, at the local level, need to figure out ways to pick up the slack." As the Task Force continues to develop solutions to end hunger in our region, there will be two more community forums held this fall. Be sure to follow The Food Bank on social media for upcoming scheduled dates and times.



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thank you

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Eos Foundation grant brings breakfast to local kids

The Food Bank is excited to partner with the Eos Foundation on the Breakfast in the Classroom Acceleration program, working to get public schools in high-poverty communities to give low-income students access to a healthy school breakfast without stigma. The Eos Foundation's generous \$50,000 grant will enable our staff to work with an additional 14 schools in our region, allowing another 5,000 children to start their day hunger-free and ready to learn.

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