8th annual Will Bike 4 Food raises $157,000

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The following businesses, organizations and foundations made a gift of $1,000 or more between July 1 and September 30, 2018

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<td>Berkshire Brewing Company, Inc.</td>
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The top FOOD DONORS between July 1 and September 30, 2018

1. Big Y*
2. C & S Wholesale Grocers
3. Stop & Shop*
4. BJ’s Wholesale Club*
5. Walmart*
6. Costco
7. Cumberland Farms
8. Coca-Cola Company
9. Szawlowski Potato Farms Inc.
10. Atlas Farm
   *multiple chains combined

The Food Bank is dedicated to creating a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to nutritious food.

Vol 8 — Issue 1 — Winter 2018
Published by The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts
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Your name is safe. We have never rented, sold, or loaned our donor list, and we never will. Without our donors, our work would not be possible. We value your support & privacy.
Dear Friends,

Tricia, an office assistant at a small liberal arts college, was raising five children with her husband, a disabled veteran. Her small salary was the primary source of income, and when they divorced, she took custody of their two youngest daughters and moved to a rural hill town. Child support payments were infrequent and negligible. Tricia sold her heirloom china cabinet to purchase food, which consisted of primarily pre-packaged foods with limited nutritional value. Friends and family soon expressed concern that both she and her children were underweight. Tricia became overwhelmed with stress, questioning her ability as a parent.

Fortunately, The Food Bank was doing outreach at the college one day. Tricia applied for SNAP benefits and attended nutrition workshops which focused on shopping for, and preparing, healthy meals on limited resources. She also learned about a nearby Mobile Food Bank distribution site where she could receive fresh vegetables on a regular basis.

The modest SNAP benefits she received stretched her food budget, allowing her to pack healthier lunches for her children, and also free-up money for “luxuries” like propane for heat during the cold winter months.

Thanks to your support, The Food Bank provided the equivalent of more than 9 million meals through our local feeding partners and our own direct-to-client programs last year, serving more than 223,000 people. Every one of these individuals has a compelling story about their personal struggle to make ends meet.

None of the work that we do would be possible without the generosity of supporters like you, who share our vision of a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry, and everyone has access to healthy food. By visiting our website (foodbankwma.org) and making a donation to The Food Bank, together we can ensure that no one will have to stress about where their next meal is coming from.

From all of us here at The Food Bank, we send our blessings to you and your family this holiday season. ☃️

From the Executive Director

Andrew Morehouse
Executive Director
Coalition to End Hunger launches new campaign

On September 10, more than 100 guests gathered at the Kittredge Center at Holyoke Community College where the Coalition to End Hunger unveiled its new multimedia campaign to raise awareness of hunger in our region and erase the stigma associated with seeking food assistance. Joined by special guests Congressmen Jim McGovern and Richard Neal, members of the Coalition spoke to the fact that at least one in eight residents of western Massachusetts is at risk of hunger on any given day, week or month of the year.

The media awareness campaign, created in partnership with Winstanley Partners of Lenox, MA, focuses on telling the stories of real people in our region who have experienced hunger or have witnessed it in their community. Beginning in Hampden County, the campaign consists of multiple components, including a website (coalitiontoendhunger.org), social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), billboards, and print & digital advertisements. Funding for the campaign was provided through sponsorships from Stop & Shop and Hunger to Health Collaborative, and in partnership with media sponsors The Republican and MassLive.

“We hope that by drawing people’s attention to the fact that 1 in 8 of us is at risk of hunger, people will be more informed so that we can debunk the myths associated with hunger and actually reverse the stigma associated with it,” explains The Food Bank’s executive director, Andrew Morehouse. “We hope that people will come to understand that anyone of us could be the 1 in 8 — all it takes is a loss of a job, an accident or personal crisis.”

The Coalition to End Hunger is a regional initiative facilitated by The Food Bank that is composed of more than 70 members representing dozens of private businesses, healthcare, non-profit, government and faith-based organizations. Working together, they amplify their voices to broaden awareness of food insecurity and develop solutions to the underlying causes of hunger.

You can learn more about the Coalition and all the ways you can get involved by visiting coalitiontoendhunger.org.
Monte’s March hits the streets Nov. 19 & 20

WRSI-The River’s Monte Belmon-te will once again march across the Pioneer Valley to raise awareness about, and funds to prevent, food insecurity in western Massachusetts. On November 19 & 20, the two-day on-air telethon encourages listeners to call in with their donations to benefit The Food Bank, as he leads a dedicated group of community supporters on-foot 43 miles from Springfield to Greenfield. Congressman Jim McGovern and The Food Bank’s Executive Director Andrew Morehouse will join him once again.

There are many ways for you to get involved and support this year’s Monte’s March:

Call & Donate: Make your donation either day of the event by calling 1-888-323-HOPE.

Donate Online Today: Make your secure online donation today by visiting MontesMarch.com. All donations will be counted towards the grand total at the end of The March.

Become a Monte’s Marcher: March with Monte by raising at least $1,000 individually or as a team for the event. Join any portion of Monday and/or Tuesday’s march. (Fundraisers must be at least 18 years old.)

Become a Virtual Marcher: If you’re unable to march with Monte, you can become a Virtual Marcher by creating your own fundraising page. There is no fundraising minimum.

Last year, The March raised more than $258,000. Since 2010, it has raised $883,000 allowing The Food Bank to provide more than 2.6 million meals to our neighbors in need throughout Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties.

To get involved in this year’s event, visit MontesMarch.com.

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On September 30, The Food Bank held our 8th annual Will Bike 4 Food charity cycling event, presented by Stop & Shop, at The Lion’s Club Pavilion in Hatfield. More than 400 cyclists of all ages and experience levels participated in the event, raising more than $157,000 to support our mission.

“We are incredibly thankful for everyone’s support in making this our most successful Will Bike 4 Food event ever,” explains executive director, Andrew Morehouse. “It’s inspiring to see all of our riders, volunteers and sponsors working together to help create a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to healthy food.”

Cyclists chose to ride one of four routes — 10, 25, 50 or 100 miles — through the Pioneer Valley. Additionally, local businesses and organizations formed teams and raised funds. The top three fundraising teams were Heart & Soul - Cardiovascular Associates at Cooley Dickinson Health Care Center ($8,850), Stop & Shop ($7,300), and Tighe & Bond ($6,420).

The 406 registered cyclists were the most in the event’s eight-year history, which continues to grow year-after-year. Since Will Bike 4 Food began in 2011, it has raised more than $701,000 providing the equivalent of more than 2.1 million meals to our neighbors in need throughout western Massachusetts.

“This is my fifth year riding in Will Bike 4 Food, and I’ve been riding every year to promote food security,” says cyclist Michael Sustick of Northampton. “The Food Bank does such great work, and we need to support it anyway we can. This is my effort to do that.”

All of the proceeds from Will Bike 4 Food enable us to distribute healthy food to more than 200 partner agencies, including food pantries, emergency meal sites and shelters. It also supports our direct-to-client feeding programs: Brown Bag: Food for Elders (serving thousands of area seniors monthly) and Mobile Food Bank (bringing fresh, perishable food regularly to under-served communities).
Architect Roy S. Brown
The challenge of building a community

A
rchitect Roy S. Brown is greatly concerned with detail. It’s the nature of his trade. But when his attention turns to the topic of the economy and food insecurity, he becomes serious as well as animated.

Originally from Long Island, Roy earned his Master’s Degree in Architecture. He and his wife, Malita, became teachers, first in New York and then Springfield. It was during that time that he became aware of the damaging impact that hunger has on children.

“If children aren’t getting enough food and nutrition, they’re hungry and cannot concentrate and focus in the classroom as well as some of the other kids do,” says Roy. “It’s not fair.”

Roy eventually settled in Wilbraham where he opened his own architectural firm. It was there that he had an epiphany driving to dinner at a fine restaurant with Malita one evening. They passed a hitchhiker holding a sign.

“I thought of how lucky we were,” recalls Roy. “It almost doesn’t matter what was written on the sign. It seemed clear to me that we ‘had’ and he ‘hadn’t.’ We had just come from a fancy housing complex with a fancy dining room. We were going out to eat at a fancy restaurant and going back to the suburbs to sleep on a big king size bed under a down comforter. Who knows if he was going to eat at all. We live in the richest country in the world, but people among us in this country are going hungry every day.”

The moment inspired Roy to take action and learn how people struggling in his community were meeting their basic needs. A period of intense research led him to realize that hunger was at a scale much larger than he anticipated. He began participating in the annual Will Bike 4 Food cycling fundraiser for The Food Bank. He also became a donor, increasing his gift each year and discussing hunger with groups of people in his sphere of influence.

He went on to consolidate all that he had learned into a talk at his church in Monson, pairing it with the “Roy S. Brown Challenge,” to support The Food Bank. He committed to matching every donation from his congregation up to $1,000, challenging them to an overall goal of 1 to 1.

As he approaches retirement, Roy muses upon the past and its connection to the future, affirming his commitment to ensuring that people will have safe food and clean water to consume.

“My parents used to share their stories of hunger during the Great Depression. My mother told me that when I was very young we once ate oatmeal for two weeks straight. I never forgot those stories.”

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FOOD BANK UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 29 – Nov 16
**Fight Hunger with Fitness**
Active Lifestyle Fitness in Agawam is collecting non-perishable food items and monetary donations to benefit The Food Bank. [activelifestylefitness.com](http://activelifestylefitness.com)

Nov 19 – 20
**Monte’s March**
WRSI-The River’s Monte Belmonte is marching 43 miles to raise awareness and funds for food insecurity. Donate by calling 1-888-323-HOPE or visiting [montesmarch.com](http://montesmarch.com).

For more information, visit [foodbankwma.org/events](http://foodbankwma.org/events)

Nov 26 – Dec 15
**Fill Our Fleet Food & Fund Drive**
AAA Pioneer Valley members are encouraged to donate non-perishable food items at any AAA branch office or during any roadside assistance calls at home, to support The Food Bank. Additionally, monetary donations can be made online at [foodbankwma.org/AAA](http://foodbankwma.org/AAA).

Dec 4
**Food Bank After Hours Anniversary Celebration**
Celebrate a successful year of networking and volunteering with us. Visit [foodbankwma.org/afterhours](http://foodbankwma.org/afterhours) for details and tickets.

A New Look For Word Of Mouth
We’ve made some improvements to the layout of our newsletter to provide you with more information about how your support is helping so many struggling families here in western Mass. As a result, the production and mailing expense is actually less than that of the old newsletter. So we’re able focus your generous contributions to where they are needed most — feeding our neighbors in need.