

word

our region's stand against hunger begins here.



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E-NEWS

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This institution is an equal opportunity
provider and employer.

Choosing between food and medicine

Casey was born and raised in the quiet, rural western Massachusetts community of Huntington, where she continues to live, now raising three young children of her own. She relies on a fixed Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to pay for her bare bones living expenses, transportation needs, and health care requirements. But when her priority shifts to one of her child's medical condition, her ability to put food on the table becomes an overwhelming challenge.

At a very young age, Casey's son (now 6 years old) began suffering from severe asthma. Since the diagnosis five years ago, inhaler treatments are administered at least five times each day, and a consistent regimen of nebulizer treatments are scheduled for every morning, noon and night. Accompanying medicine and the required hospital visits compound her total expenses rather quickly, leaving little money in Casey's budget for groceries.

In the past, she often went without food, so that her children would have enough to eat. Now, Casey goes to the Huntington Food Pantry for food. Without public transportation, she either borrows a family member's car or carpools with others in her town to get herself to the pantry regularly. Once there, she chooses from a variety of healthy

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Pictured above: Casey would often times go without food so that her three children would have enough to eat.



Timely, Targeted and Temporary

Executive Director
Andrew Morehouse

Dear friends,

In May, the U.S. House of Representatives rejected a punitive Farm Bill that would have drastically stripped the federal government's last line of defense against hunger for

millions of Americans, under the guise of work requirements. Our Congressmen Neal and McGovern were among the 183 Democrats and 30 Republicans who voted against it; they all should be thanked for it. We're not out of the woods yet. This bill could come up for a vote again in June.

The 5-year Farm Bill funds most federal food and agriculture programs, including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It expires on September 30 and we, along with thousands of other anti-hunger groups, are advocating against the proposed changes to it.

Strict work requirements already exist for SNAP recipients. The proposed bill would extend additional requirements to such groups as veterans with disabilities and ex-foster children exiting the system. Woefully under-funded job training would be available for the cookie-cutter work requirements and a government bureaucracy would be mandated to monitor it. In short, the changes would punish recipients by taking away their food benefits for not getting a job due to no fault of their own.

SNAP has a tremendous impact in western Mass. where 149,000 individuals rely on these benefits to put food on their table. Most are children, elders and people with disabilities. Others work, earn a minimum-wage income, yet cannot make ends meet.

They hail from our region's largest cities to small rural towns. According to the U.S. Census, Springfield and Holyoke have the highest share of SNAP recipients of all communities in the Commonwealth — 42% and 38% respectively. Springfield has the highest child poverty rate at 44%, compared to the state average of 14%.

SNAP is effective because it is timely (relatively quick application process), targeted (only for income-eligible individuals), and temporary (only when recipients need it). It successfully lifted millions of people out of poverty during the Great Recession and improved people's health by giving them access to healthy food.

We encourage you to educate your friends and family, especially in other states, about the threat of the proposed changes to the Farm Bill and urge them to contact their congressional representatives. Thank you for all your support! ●

“SNAP has a tremendous impact in western Mass. where 149,000 individuals rely on these benefits to put food on their table.”



Your Valley Gives Day contributions raised \$25,000

Thank you for supporting The Food Bank during this year's Valley Gives Day. The annual day of giving, organized by the Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts, invites people throughout the Pioneer Valley and beyond to come together on a single day and make donations to local non-profit organizations.

This year, The Food Bank finished first among all 408 participating non-profits, raising just over \$25,000. Over the course of Valley Gives' six years of events, nearly \$250,000 was donated to The Food Bank, allowing us to provide approximately 750,000 meals to our neighbors in need. ●

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food options, including fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy products and non-perishable staples.

In addition to her weekly visits to the food pantry, Casey also receives benefits from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), allowing her to purchase healthy food for her family at local retailers and farmer's markets. SNAP offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income households nationally, making it the largest domestic hunger program.

"We eat a ton of fresh fruits and vegetables," says Casey. "Without SNAP, I would be forced to decide between paying for bills and paying for food. And you can't really choose between medicine and food."

The Food Bank works with the Huntington Food Pantry, and hundreds of other pantries and meal sites across the region, to ensure that everyone has access to healthy food. Additionally, our SNAP outreach team helps people determine their eligibility and apply for SNAP benefits. We are committed to lending a hand up to thousands of families like Casey's, across all four counties.

"I greatly appreciate everything The Food Bank and their supporters do," explains Casey. "It helps me get food on the table for my kids, and that's the most important thing." ●

Preventing Summer Hunger

For children, summer is a time to relax and enjoy fun outdoor activities. However, for more than 73,750 students in our region, it is one long summer away from the free breakfast and lunches at school that they count on. When that final bell rings in June, The Food Bank steps into action with local food pantries and meal sites to help feed these children.

New proposed restrictions pose a threat to many of the federal nutrition programs that result in successful outcomes for children and families all year long. Children with access to healthy food engage in positive behaviors, are more energetic and able to focus, develop good eating habits, and achieve higher test scores.

You can fill the summer meal gap, and ensure the health and well-being of children in our community. A \$75 donation can feed one child for the entire summer. \$750 provides the equivalent of three meals a day for 10 children. For hungry children, your investment in them means nourishment of their health, their growth, and their outlook on life.

Mountain View Farm's partnership ensures access to fresh fruits and vegetables

At The Food Bank, we're committed to creating a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to healthy food. Each year, we distribute more than 10.5 million pounds of healthy food to our neighbors in need throughout the four counties of our region. Additionally, we collaborate with 25 local farms in The Pioneer Valley to get fresh local fruits and vegetables to households struggling to make ends meet.

Since 2009, we have enjoyed a very unique and important relationship with Mountain View Farm, a community supported agriculture farm in Easthampton. They lease our Food Bank Farm — a protected 60-acre parcel of land on the Connecticut River in Hadley — in exchange for at least 100,000 pounds of fresh, organic produce for distribution. Last year, Mountain View Farm provided the equivalent of 91,129 meals.



One way that we provide fresh produce quickly is through our Mobile Food Bank, which delivers a truck full of fresh and non-perishable groceries from our warehouse directly to high-need communities for immediate distribution. When our Mobile Food Bank truck arrives at a distribution site, hundreds of local residents are already waiting to receive free, fresh fruits and vegetables that otherwise might not be available to them.

“The Mobile Food Bank is wonderful,” says Rebecca Roman, site coordinator at the Revival Time Evangelistic Center site in Springfield. “Being able to serve the community in such a great capacity, with healthy nutritious food, is just phenomenal. There are so many people that benefit from The Mobile Food Bank at The Revival Time Evangelistic Center.”

The Mobile Food Bank is designed to reach underserved populations in the region that don't have access to healthy foods, including seniors, children and hard-working families. Currently, 21 sites are located across all four counties in western Massachusetts. In our last fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2016 – Sept. 30, 2017), The Mobile Food Bank provided the equivalent of 1,277,995 meals. ●

Celebrating our Farm of the Year

Thank you to **Szawlowski Potato Farm** in Hatfield, for donating 97,500 pounds of food, earning our 2017 Farm of the Year award. We are truly grateful for the strong partnership we share with all the farmers in our region who support our cause. In the 2017 harvest season, local farms donated more than 445,700 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables to us. We distributed all this healthy food to our fellow neighbors through local feeding programs, and directly through our Mobile Food Bank and Brown Bag: Food for Elders program.





Farm ~ to ~ Table Dinner

Presented by PeoplesBank

Sunday, July 29, 2018 | E. Cecchi Farms, Feeding Hills, MA

Tickets on sale at foodbankwma.org/farmtotable

You're invited to join us for an elegant dining experience at E. Cecchi Farms and discuss the important role local farms play in feeding our neighbors in need.

Creative chefs at Wheelhouse Farm Truck & Catering will prepare the meal, using ingredients sourced directly from the farm.

E. Cecchi Farms in Feeding Hills has been family-owned and -operated for more than fifty years. Their motto, "everything you'd grow if you had forty acres," encapsulates their commitment to growing a diverse variety of fruits and vegetables, including asparagus, kale, melons, carrots, strawberries, squash, beets and much more.

Tickets for this 21+ event are \$80 per person and includes food, beer, cider and non-alcoholic beverages. Tickets are available at foodbankwma.org/farmtotable.

All proceeds from the event will benefit The Food Bank. Together, with your support, we can continue to cultivate these partnerships and put more fresh food on dinner tables across our region. ●



Four routes. One destination. A community without hunger.

Sunday, September 30, 2018 | Lion's Club Pavilion in Hatfield, MA

Register now at willbike4food.org

Will Bike 4 Food is returning for its eighth year on Sunday, September 30. This exciting event provides a special opportunity for riders of all ages to enjoy a fun-filled day with other 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, more than 325 riders raised more than \$130,000 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. When you ride 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. Registration is already open through our website at willbike4food.org.

When you're done riding, you'll want to make sure you stay for the After-Party. We'll have a cookout and craft beer, along with music, games and more. Non-riders can join the fun, as tickets will be sold separately for the After-Party on our website (riders do not need to purchase After-Party tickets). ●

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit Number 786
Springfield, MA 01152



The Food Bank
of Western Massachusetts

P.O. Box 160
Hatfield, MA 01038

to our supporters thank you

The following businesses, organizations,
and foundations made a gift of \$1,000
or more between January 1, and
March 31, 2018

Arbella Charitable Foundation, Inc.
Berkshire Brewing Company Inc
C & S Wholesale Grocers, Inc.
Caroline Blanton Thayer Charitable
Trust
Chicopee Savings Charitable
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Wakefern Food Corporation
Wal-Mart
Women's Benevolent Society

Food Donations

The top food donors
between January 1 and
March 31, 2018 were:

- 1) Big Y*
- 2) Stop & Shop*
- 3) Szawlowski Potato Farms
Inc.
- 4) Coca-Cola/Minute-Maid Co.
- 5) Walmart
- 6) C&S Wholesale
- 7) BJ's Wholesale Club*
- 8) Costco
- 9) Target
- 10) Maple Row Farm

*multiple stores combined