Hunger Action Month
September is Hunger Action Month. Help us kick off our month-long effort to raise awareness in support of hunger-relief. Encourage your family, friends, and coworkers to join you and don your best orange attire. Be sure to share these tips with your colleagues and friends on social media. Together, we can raise awareness of the issues facing those in need.

Family Volunteer Day
Saturday, September 12 | 9 – 11:30 a.m.

All ages are welcome to our Family Volunteer Day on Saturday, September 12, where you can learn about the work that we do and support the community. It’s a great way to empower all family members and teach them that their actions will make a difference in the lives of those around them. All guests will have the opportunity to choose between a number of educational and hands-on activities, such as sorting and packaging food donations, baking bread for our Brown Bag program, learning about nutrition, touring the warehouse, and more. Space is limited for this event, so be sure to register by visiting our website at www.foodbankwma.org.

Hunger Action Day
Thursday, September 3, 2015

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Fork It Over For Food
Throughout the month of September at participating restaurants in Western Mass.

Since its launch in 2010, Fork It Over For Food has brought together hundreds of restaurants and patrons to raise funds which have provided meals to our neighbors in need throughout the region. There are many ways for you to get involved this year and support our community. When you dine out at one of the dozens of participating restaurants across the region, you can make a donation at the end of your meal, to support the Food Bank. Some restaurants will also be hosting special events, such as contributing a percent of sales from a specific evening, a menu item, or a signature drink. To learn more about Fork It Over For Food, including a listing of participating restaurants, visit our website at www.foodbankwma.org.

5th Annual Will Bike 4 Food
A ride against hunger to benefit The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

Throughout Western Massachusetts, more than 235,000 people annually turn to the assistance of our member pantries, shelters and meal sites to help put food on the table. That’s 1 in every 4 people. They include seniors, children, the newly unemployed, veterans, and working families that are struggling to make ends meet.

On Sunday, September 27, you can make a difference in the lives of those around you. Will Bike 4 Food (WBF4) is returning for its 5th year, as hundreds of riders, volunteers, and generous donors will join together to pedal towards a hunger-free community. Since the event began in 2011, WBF4 has provided more than 600,000 meals to our neighbors in need.

Choose from 3.6, 10, 25, 50, or 100 mile routes designed to accommodate all ages and riding abilities. Whether you register as an individual, with your family, or as a social or business team, your participation in WBF4 will help improve the lives of people in Western Massachusetts struggling with food insecurity.

What’s new this year
This year we have attracted approximately 1,100 riders in 2015, in a record 114 cities at last year’s event. With even more riders expected to participate this year, we have outgrown our traditional location in our Hatfield parking lot. This year, we will be moving the event to the Hatfield Lions Club Pavilion. The new location will provide us more room for more riders, vendors, entertainment, and food. We’re also adding a 10 mile (approximately 3-4 mile multi surface course. Our Westfield leg will be the biggest yet, complete with live music from Signature Sounds and The Sun Parade. The Westfield start line is at Somerset Mall, across from Stop & Shop, games and other entertainment for the whole family. Berkshire Brewing Company will also be returning, providing social drinks and local beer. For the first time, non-riders can join in the fun this year, as tickets will be sold separately for the After-Party for only $25 (riders will not need to purchase After-Party tickets). For complete event information, and to register, visit our website at www.willbike4food.org. And be sure to follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/WillBike4Food to keep up with all the latest event information.

Register Online: www.WILLBIKE4FOOD.ORG

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Dear Friends,
I was very fortunate to participate in a two-day workshop on “racial healing” hosted by the Healing Racism Institute of Pioneer Valley. One may not immediately draw a connection between racism and food banking. However, the fact is that the emergency food network of local feeding programs — pantries, meal sites and shelters — has evolved over the past three decades in such a way that it cannot meet the needs of food insecure households equitably by county and, therefore, by race. The majority of people of color in our region live in Hampden County where the average food insecure household receives the least amount of emergency food compared to the same average household in any of the other three counties of Western Massachusetts ( Berkshire, Franklin and Hampden Counties).

Although there is a large number of feeding programs in Hampden County (77), there simply isn’t enough local capacity to receive, store and distribute the same level of food for people in need as in other counties. Obviously, no one intentionally set up our region’s emergency food network of local feeding programs with insufficient capacity in Hampden County. Local feeding programs generally operate on very tight budgets and rely on tremendous volunteer support. It’s taken thousands of staff, volunteers and funders decades to build the incredible community networks that we have today. In Hampden County, the resources needed to run a program (such as volunteers, reliable transportation, and financial support) tend to be harder to come by. For many still struggling from the Great Recession, things still haven’t gotten easier — particularly in Hampden County, where the population in poverty continues to climb.

What we believe matters is that we understand this geographic and racial inequity in our region’s emergency food network and that we must do something about it. We are committed to providing what we believe matters is that we understand this geographic and racial inequity in our region’s emergency food network and that we must do something about it. We are committed to providing equal access to healthy food across the region, we have begun to focus our resources on increasing the amount of emergency food compared to the same average household in any of the other three counties of Western Massachusetts ( Berkshire, Franklin and Hampden Counties).

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This year we have attracted approximately 1,100 riders in 2015, in a record 114 cities at last year’s event. With even more riders expected to participate this year, we have outgrown our traditional location in our Hatfield parking lot. This year, we will be moving the event to the Hatfield Lions Club Pavilion. The new location will provide us more room for more riders, vendors, entertainment and food. We’re also adding a 10 mile (approximately 3-4 mile multi surface course. Our Westfield leg will be the biggest yet, complete with live music from Signature Sounds and The Sun Parade. The Westfield start line is at Somerset Mall, across from Stop & Shop, games and other entertainment for the whole family. Berkshire Brewing Company will also be returning, providing social drinks and local beer. For the first time, non-riders can join in the fun this year, as tickets will be sold separately for the After-Party for only $25 (riders will not need to purchase After-Party tickets). For complete event information, and to register, visit our website at www.willbike4food.org. And be sure to follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/WillBike4Food to keep up with all the latest event information.

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Warehouse upgrade doubles capacity for fresh produce

The Food Bank is committed to working with our more than 231 member agencies and local feeding programs to get more healthy food to more people in our region. In June, the Dennis Group (based in Springfield) oversaw the completion of — including generous in-kind support for — a new cooler installation in our warehouse. Additional support was provided by a grant from Feeding America, thanks to the General Mills Foundation. The new cooler will serve as a convenient area for our member agencies to easily pick up food, and will increase our storage capacity for perishable foods (including fresh fruits, vegetables and dairy). It will also significantly reduce waste, as it will prevent wilting and spoilage.

With this additional cooler space, we will be able to obtain more perishable foods from a variety of sources, including local farmers in our region. The fresh produce is distributed to our member agencies, as well as through our Mobile Food Bank and Brown Bag: Food for Elders program.

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The following businesses, organizations, and foundations made a gift of $1,000 or more between Feb. 1 and June 30, 2015:

- Aetna Foundation, Inc.
- Baystate Health, Inc.
- Berkshire Hathaway Community Inc
- Bethel Church
- Boston Financial Management Inc.
- C & S Wholesale Grocers, Inc.
- Charles H. Hall Foundation
- Cheeky Savings Charitable Foundation
- Community Foundation of Western Massachusetts
- Country Bank for Savings
- Deans
- Deerfield Academy
- Easthampton Savings Bank
- Emergency Food Shelf Program
- EDS Foundation
- Finance Savings Bank
- FE Foundation
- Greenfield Co-Operative Bank
- Guardian Life Insurance Company
- Hart & Patterson Financial Services
- Health New England
- Holy Family Parish
- MassMutual Financial Group
- Matching Gift Center
- Manner A. Audible Foundation
- Next Stop Living
- Northampton Loaves Club
- Northfield Mount Hermon School
- Our Family Foundation by Shop & Ship
- People’s United Community Foundation
- Pioneer Valley Federal Credit Union
- Price Chopper’s Gouda Foundation
- RAP Charitable & Educational Fund, Inc.
- Sarah Gillett Services for the Elderly
- Shatz, Schwartz & Fentin, P.C.
- South Congregational Church
- St. John’s Episcopal Church
- St. Paul’s Lutheran Church
- The Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
- The Blevins Family Foundation, Inc
- The Boston Foundation
- The First Church of Christ in Longmeadow
- The Fredrick E. Water Charles, Jr.
- The Hauber Foundation
- The Longhille Charitable Foundation Inc
- United States National Society of the
- Vincenzo’s Partners in Caring
- Walmart Foundation

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