

word

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



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E-NEWS

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The Food Bank
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www.foodbankwma.org



This institution is an equal opportunity
provider, and employer.

Providing hope for families in need

As a young mother, Mary struggled to make ends meet. Every day she worried about finding a way to feed her family, particularly her growing son. She was forced to choose between groceries and heat, as she couldn't afford both. This would often result in she and her son going to bed on empty stomachs. She needed help. Fortunately for Mary, she found it at a local survival center, in partnership with The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts.

"It was a tough time for us," said Mary. "I just needed a hand to help me get back on my feet. And The Food Bank was there for me."

Through The Food Bank, Mary had access to nutritious food that bridged the gap between what her family needed and what they could afford. Now, 20 years later, her son is grown, working full-time with a family of his own. Mary also works full-time, and is able to sustain her household without assistance. She credits The Food Bank for helping her through a very difficult time, allowing her to focus on her family instead of empty cupboards.

None of the work that we do would be possible without the generosity of our supporters who believe in our mission and the importance of providing food for those who truly need it. By visiting our website (foodbankwma.org) and making a donation to support The Food Bank, together, we can make sure that no will go to bed on an empty stomach.

From all of us here at The Food Bank, we send our best wishes for blessings this holiday season. ●

Banking on Local Farms



Executive Director
 Andrew Morehouse

Dear Friends,

Our guiding value at The Food Bank is that everyone has a right to healthy food regardless of their circumstances. I reflected on this during National Food Day on October 24. The Center for Science in the Public Interest founded National Food Day in 2011 to celebrate healthy, affordable and sustainably-produced food and a grass roots campaign for better food policies. At The Food Bank, we’re working at many levels to advance our guiding value and honor the goals of National Food Day. We have robust SNAP outreach and enrollment, and nutrition education services, assisting food insecure households to afford more food and to stretch their food budget with an eye toward healthier food. We also advocate for stronger state and federal nutrition programs.

On top of this, we live in a bountiful agricultural region in which we make sure that food insecure households can benefit from the harvest. In the 12 months of our fiscal year that ended on September 30, 2016, The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts distributed more than 2 million pounds of vegetables. This represents one-fifth of *all* the food we distributed in that time (10 million lbs.). We are proud of the fact that more than half (1 million lbs.) of all of the vegetables we distributed were grown right here in the Pioneer Valley. 28 farms donated 544,048 pounds.

Our top five farm donors this year were (in decending order): Atlas Farm (South Deerfield), Plainville Farm (Hadley), Szawlowski Potato Farms, Inc. (Hatfield), Cheney Orchard (Brimfield) and Red Fire Farm (Montague).

In turn, The Food Bank did its part to support Pioneer Valley farmers by purchasing \$139,964 worth of vegetables:

<i>Pounds</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>\$ Source</i>
314,656	\$107,176	Mass Grown Initiative/Mass. Emergency Food Assistance Program
232,500	\$32,788	The Food Bank’s unrestricted funds
547,156	\$139,964	Total

In other words, our purchase of more than a half million pounds of vegetables was equal to the amount that local farmers donated to us. A vibrant local food economy is one in which both farmers and *all* local residents may participate. We are very grateful to all of our local farmers for their donations so that, together, we may feed those who are less fortunate and who deserve to eat healthy local food just like others. ●

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

Published by The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, www.foodbankwma.org, info@foodbankwma.org, 413-247-9738

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The Food Bank is committed to promoting cultural diversity through its board, staff, volunteers, and member agencies. This Institution is an equal opportunity provider. To file a complaint of discrimination write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Washington, DC 20250-9410.

Stop & Shop leads the way for Mobile Food Bank expansion

The Food Bank is very excited to announce that we will be expanding our Mobile Food Bank program thanks to a \$125,000 grant from Our Family Foundation by Stop & Shop. The grant award comes as part of the grocery chain's new, three-year Fighting Child Hunger initiative to increase access to nutritious food for children in need of healthier diets.

"We are proud to provide this critical support to The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts so they can

increase access to nutritious food for families and children in need throughout the region," said Mark McGowan, Stop & Shop New England Division President.

In 2015, the Mobile Food Bank program fed more than 8,000 youth at 14 distribution sites, providing more than 62,000 meals. In the past 12 months, it has distributed more than one million pounds of food. The program will expand to 26 distribution sites over the next three years. The \$125,000 grant award will support the first year of this initiative.

The Food Bank is dedicated to creating a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to healthy food. One of the most effective ways we're able to do that is through our Mobile Food Bank program, which brings free, fresh and healthy food directly to underserved communities in our region.

Additional funding for the program's expansion was provided by C&S Wholesale Grocers, the Red Nose Day Fund and The Charles H. Farnsworth Charitable Trust. ●



Representatives from Stop & Shop presented The Food Bank with a \$125,000 grant award at a recent Mobile Food Bank distribution in Springfield.

Community Partnerships

The Food Bank relies on corporate and institutional partnerships to continue to distribute the equivalent of 8.2 million meals annually. Through their support, we are able to get fresh healthy food to more than 200,000 people in western Massachusetts.

Citizens Bank demonstrated its commitment to strengthening our community by awarding The Food Bank a \$25,000 grant to support our food delivery service. More than 89,000 people would have limited access to fresh fruits and vegetables without this service.

Additionally, the Walmart Foundation recently awarded multiple grants to The Food Bank totaling \$75,000. The funds will support our SNAP Outreach & Enrollment and Nutrition Education programs. This will provide families the opportunity to learn basic nutrition principles to prepare healthy meals at home while shopping on a limited budget.

By working together with our community partners, we can create a western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry and everyone has access to healthy food.

New freezer bins help Mobile Food Bank ‘meet the need’

Feed, lead, and strengthen. These are the three strategies of The Food Bank that guide our course of action. From these strategies come numerous innovative ideas and practices.

It should come as no surprise that the first of these three strategies is “feed.” With more than 200,000 people in our region relying on us, we work tirelessly to distribute more meals than ever before. One way we have been able to do this is through our Mobile Food Bank program. Since its launch three years ago, we have continued to seek new and innovative ways to distribute more perishable foods through this channel.

In September, The Food Bank purchased 8 freezer bins in order to distribute more frozen meat at all of our Mobile Food Bank distribution sites. These large bins are stored in our freezer before being filled with frozen packages of beef, poultry and pork. Each of the 8 bins holds

approximately 600 pounds of frozen meat, and maintains the temperature of its contents through year-round weather conditions, ensuring that the cold-chain is not broken and guaranteeing the safety of the food product for consumers.

The meat comes to us from a number of our community partners — the largest of which are Stop & Shop Supermarket and Big Y World Class Markets, each making weekly donations of meat. Through their support, we are able to provide a wide variety of choices.

As we look ahead to the upcoming new year, The Food Bank will continue to develop innovative solutions to address food insecurity in our region. Through these creative solutions, we are able to feed our neighbors in need, lead the community to end hunger, and strengthen the emergency food network. ●



Volunteers hand out frozen meat from the new freezer bins at a recent Mobile Food Bank distribution in Springfield.

Monte Marches On

Nov. 21:

Springfield to Northampton

Nov. 22:

Northampton to Greenfield

Every year since 2010, WRSI-The River's Monte Belmonte has been leading his annual march against hunger as he pushes a shopping cart across the Pioneer Valley.

This year, he will once again be joined by Congressman Jim McGovern and The Food Bank's Executive Director Andrew Morehouse, as they walk 43 miles to end hunger. On Monday, November 21, the march will begin at Friends of the Homeless in Springfield, travel north through Holyoke, and finish in downtown Northampton. The following day, November

22, the group will leave downtown Northampton en route to Bank Row in Greenfield.

Last year, the event raised a record \$150,000 for The Food Bank. Over the past six years, Monte's March has raised a total of \$393,000, providing the equivalent of more than 1.1 million meals to individuals in our region experiencing food insecurity.

Your support can help this year's march be the most successful one to date. Throughout the two days, you can make a donation to The Food Bank by calling 888-323-HOPE, or securely online by visiting The Food Bank's website at www.foodbankwma.org. ●



Last year, Monte added a second day to his annual march, which began in the Mason Square neighborhood in Springfield.

Fundraising Beer Social at Northampton Brewery 11 Brewster Ct.

Mon., Nov. 21 at 6 p.m.

The Northampton Brewery is hosting a social event featuring beer and food stations, and passed appetizers. Come mingle with Monte and support our community. All proceeds will benefit Monte's March. Tickets are \$50 per person and can be purchased at the brewery.

Will Bike 4 Food raises more than \$114,000

On Sunday, September 25, Will Bike 4 Food rolled into its sixth year at The Lion's Club Pavilion in Hatfield. More than 350 cyclists of all ages and experience levels participated in the event, which raised more than \$114,000 to benefit The Food Bank.

Since WB4F began in 2011, it has raised more than \$414,000, providing the equivalent of more than 1.2 million meals.

All proceeds from WB4F will help us sort and distribute more healthy food to over 200 partner agencies, including food pantries, emergency meal sites and shelters. It will also help support our direct-to-client feeding programs, including Brown Bag: Food for Elders (serving thousands of area seniors) and the Mobile Food Bank program (bringing fresh, perishable food directly to under-served communities).

Whether you rode, donated to a rider, volunteered, or sponsored the event, your contribution made this year's WB4F our most successful one ever. Thanks to your support, The Food Bank will be able to provide 342,000 meals to our neighbors in need throughout the region. ●



to our supporters
thank you

**The following businesses, organizations,
and foundations made a gift of \$1,000
or more between July 1, 2016 and
September 30, 2016**

Berkshire Bank Foundation, Inc
Berkshire Brewing Company, Inc
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Longmeadow
Town of Greenfield
United Way of Pioneer Valley
ShopRite Partners In Caring
Walmart Foundation
Walmart State Giving Program
Whole Foods Market
Xeric Foundation

Save The Date

MAY 4, 2017

Farm to Cocktail Competition

Quonquot Farm (Whately, MA)

5:30 – 8:30 p.m.

**Area bars will shake up farm-inspired beverages using locally-sourced ingredients
for this cocktail competition. They'll compete for the People's Choice Award,
decided by you. All proceeds from the event will benefit The Food Bank.**

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