

# PRESS RELEASE



## For Immediate Release

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## The 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Monte's March Raises Over \$492,000 to Support The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts

HATFIELD, MA- For the 13th consecutive year, Monte Belmonte, radio personality at WRSI 93.9-The River, led a 43-mile two-day march on November 21 and 22, 2022, to benefit the mission of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts to feed our neighbors in need and lead the community to end hunger. **This year's event has raised \$494,742 so far and will help provide nearly 2 million meals to neighbors in need across Western Massachusetts.**

**Belmonte pushed an empty shopping cart, as a metaphor for hunger, from Springfield to Greenfield** while broadcasting live on WRSI, to raise awareness about food insecurity and invited listeners to donate funds to provide emergency food assistance across Western Massachusetts. The march kicked-off at Martin Luther King, Jr. Family Services in Springfield, a member of the region's emergency food network, providing healthy groceries through its food pantry and hosting a bi-weekly Mobile Food Bank site. Andrew Moorehouse, Executive Director of The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts presented MLK's Vice President of Finance and Operations, Patricia Bernard, with a plaque honoring the late Ronn Johnson for his passion and work to end food insecurity in Springfield.

"Folks are really struggling, so the role of the Food Bank is to provide healthy food to 164 food pantries and meal sites across all four counties," said Morehouse.

"This is the richest country in the world. There are nearly 40 million Americans that don't know where their next meal is going to come," said Congressman Jim McGovern. "We all can do something to end hunger. And Monte and this crew are doing something today."

PeoplesBank presented The Food Bank with a \$5,000 contribution. Congressman Richard Neal and State Senator, Jo Comerford, offered their encouragement for Monte's Marchers as they began their 17-mile trek to Northampton for Day One of the event. Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia welcomed the marchers at Gateway City Arts and Mayor Vieau welcomed the marchers to Chicopee – where The Food Bank will build its future food distribution center and headquarters.

Along the way, the group, including Representative Pat Duffy, also stopped at Lorraine's Soup Kitchen in Chicopee and Kate's Kitchen in Holyoke, both partners with The Food Bank. Easthampton Mayor, Nicole LaChapelle, spoke with Monte as the march entered her city.

Day Two of Monte's March began in front of Congressman McGovern's Northampton District Office. Northampton Mayor, Gina-Louise Sciarra joined the march in Northampton, and State Representatives Lindsay Sabadosa and Paul Mark joined dozens of marchers for 26 miles through Hampshire and Franklin Counties. Stops included the Amherst Survival Center and later, the Berkshire Brewing Company, which has been a generous supporter of The Food Bank for decades. Monte thanked Atlas Farm, the largest donor of fresh produce to The Food Bank, before concluding in Greenfield. Hawks & Reed hosted the marchers for a pay-what-you-can Finish Line Feast for the community.

Gateway City Arts hosted and provided lunch on Monday and Berkshire Brewing Company hosted Tuesday's lunch, provided by Holyoke Hummus, for almost 200 marchers.

Key sponsors, including Alekman DiTusa, LLC., Boston Mutual Life Insurance Company, CoBank, Dean's Beans Organic Coffee, Fallon Health, Greenfield Savings Bank, Instacart, PeoplesBank, and Talcott Resolution Life Insurance, help make it possible for Monte's March to reach its fundraising goals.

"People rose to the challenge to make nearly 2 million meals happen by raising over \$492,000 for The Food Bank of Western Mass.," said Monte Belmonte. "I'm extremely grateful and humbled by the generosity of this community."

**There is still time for people to donate to help The Food Bank reach its \$500,000 goal this year. Donations can be made online at [montesmarch.com](http://montesmarch.com).**

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*The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts believes that everyone has a right to healthy food regardless of their circumstances. Serving Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden and Hampshire counties, The Food Bank leads the region's emergency food network, distributing nutritious food to households with lower incomes. Since 1982, they have been providing individuals facing hunger with the food they need to survive and leading communities towards long-term solutions to food insecurity by addressing its underlying causes. They are committed to creating a Western Massachusetts where no one goes hungry, and everyone has access to nutritious food. For more information, visit [foodbankwma.org](http://foodbankwma.org).*



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