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## **14<sup>th</sup> Annual March for the Food Bank Close to Reaching Goal of \$500,000 Donations Will Continue Through December 31st**

**November 22, 2023 [Chicopee, MA]** - The 14<sup>th</sup> Annual March for the Food Bank took place this past Monday and Tuesday and is very close to reaching its targeted fundraising goal of \$500,000. As of Wednesday morning, the march had raised \$466,069.

The 43-mile, two-day trek from Springfield to Greenfield was led once again by NEPM's Monte Belmonte. Joining him was Congressman Jim McGovern, the Food Bank's Executive Director, Andrew Morehouse and Development Director, Jillian Morgan, along with several state and local legislators, including Governor Maura Healy. In her comments to reporters, Healy stressed that hunger is a real issue in Massachusetts for young and old alike and credited the Food Bank and its partners and supporters for all the work being done to end hunger in Western Massachusetts.

"We are deeply touched by the outpouring of support for the march, which has brought us incredibly close to our \$500,000 goal," said Jillian Morgan, Director of Development at the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts. "The power of community, reflected in the kindness of those who marched as fundraisers, the individuals and businesses that generously contributed to the campaign, along with the support of so many state and local government officials, fills our hearts with gratitude."

As the campaign approaches its goal, Morgan is hoping the the community will join in the final push to make an even greater impact. Reaching its goal of raising \$500,000 will provide the equivalent of 1,500,000 meals across the region.

**Donations for the march will be accepted through the end of December.** Supporters are encouraged to make an online contribution anytime at [marchforthefoodbank.org](http://marchforthefoodbank.org).



Governor Maura Healy and Food Bank of Western Massachusetts Executive Director, Andrew Morehouse.



Monte Belmonte and marchers along the 43-mile route.

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***About the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts:*** Since 1982, the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts has been a community partner to end hunger. We provide healthy and culturally responsive food directly through our own programs (Mobile Food Banks and Brown Bag: Food for Elders), and through the food assistance network in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. These independent pantries, meal sites and shelters are on the front lines providing food and resources to individuals, families, seniors, children, veterans, and people with disabilities, so they may lead healthy and meaningful lives. The Food Bank partners on public education and advocacy to address systemic issues that lead to hunger, operating with the belief that everyone has a right to healthy food.

