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**The Food Bank of Western Massachusetts and Stop & Shop Team Up
for the 14th Annual Will Bike 4 Food Event
Early Registration Begins May 1, 2024**

May 1, 2024 [Chicopee, MA] -- The Food Bank's Will Bike 4 Food early registration begins May 1st and continues through May 31st. We are excited to welcome Stop & Shop back for their 9th consecutive year as the presenting sponsor. Through this partnership, Will Bike 4 Food brings cyclists from across the region together on Sunday, September 22nd to pedal toward a hunger-free Western Massachusetts.

Behind the scenes, Stop & Shop's dedication to end hunger is robust and innovative. While Stop & Shop prioritizes serving its customers, the reality of any retail market is the risk of perfectly good surplus food going to waste. According to Feeding America, the equivalent of 145 billion meals goes into landfills each year – with much of that food still safe to eat. Often, the only reason for its disposal is cosmetic defects or an approaching sell-by date.

Stop & Shop has created an innovative way to reduce waste through its retail recovery program. High-quality food at risk of going to waste is donated to the Food Bank and our region's food assistance network. Over the years, Stop and Shop has donated dairy products, frozen meats, produce, bread, baked goods, and more - the equivalent of 770,000 meals last year!

Stephanie Cunha, Manager of External Communications at Stop & Shop, says that the company is proud to be involved in the work of expanding food access, explaining, "Feeding people is part of our DNA, and it's what drives our commitment to addressing hunger in the communities we serve."

"Stop & Shop's partnership is invaluable," said Andrew Morehouse, Executive Director of the Food Bank. "Their contributions through the food recovery program and unwavering support for Will Bike 4 Food are essential in helping us end hunger in Western Massachusetts."

The 14th annual Will Bike 4 Food will take place at the Lions Club Pavilion in Hatfield on Sunday, September 22, 2024. **Early registration begins May 1st.**and continues through May 31st. **This year's goal of**

\$250,000 would provide the equivalent of 750,000 meals to the community!

For more information and to register for the event, visit willbike4food.org.

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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. This network is comprised of independent pantries, meal sites and shelters that 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.