Feeding Kids All Summer Long

During the school year, Sandra’s children receive free lunches at school through the federal lunch program. Once school vacation hits, however, she struggles to find the resources to feed them a healthy, nutritious lunch every day.

“The food bill gets bigger in the summer. Providing lunches and snacks—sometimes the cost is triple.”

Sandra has legal custody of her three grandchildren ages 6, 7, and 8 and is their full-time caretaker so she doesn’t work. She receives assistance from the state—about $500 per month to help with food and other necessities for all three children.

Some of her food is purchased at the market and she picks up the rest through the pantry at the Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale, a member agency of the Food Bank.

The kids can also participate in the school vacation meals program at the Jonnycake Center. She and the other enrolled families receive a box of food for each child containing breakfast and lunch for all school vacation days during summer, winter, and spring breaks.

Like most low-income families, Sandra struggles to make ends meet, especially at the end of the month when money is running out.

“The food bill gets bigger in the summer. Providing lunches and snacks—sometimes the cost is triple.”

Last year the family went without electricity for three weeks because they couldn’t afford it. “It was just too expensive. We couldn’t do it. They shut off the water and the heat. We took showers at the Y.”

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CHILD HUNGER IN RHODE ISLAND

50,870 children receive free and reduced price lunches during the school year

10,700 children participate in the federal summer meals program

35% of Rhode Islanders enrolled in SNAP benefits are children

41,000 (or 1 in 5) Rhode Island children live in poverty according to the U.S. Census Bureau

33% of clients served by the Food Bank are children under 18
Feeding Kids CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The family was able to find housing based on their income and now they are in a much better situation. Sandra thanks Jonnycake for all that the staff have done to help her. “The services are very good here. They work hard and they help you without a lot of hassle and paperwork.” Raising three children on a limited income is expensive but providing them with healthy meals at such a young age is critical to their growth and development.

With help from the Rhode Island Community Food Bank and the Jonnycake Center, Sandra’s grandchildren will have access to the food they need to stay healthy and active all summer long.

Summer Food Drive Addresses Critical Need
Help Us Keep Food on the Table All Summer Long!

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank kicked off its annual Summer Food Drive on Tuesday, June 21. Food and fund donations to the Food Bank decrease over the summer months so the Summer Food Drive helps keep our shelves stocked.

Donors can raise food or funds to help make a difference. Organizations, businesses, and clubs are invited to participate.

Food drive bins and posters are available at the Food Bank between 8 am and 5 pm weekdays. You can also find materials and resources by visiting rifoodbank.org/fooddrives.

FROM ANDREW SCHIFF, CEO

Hunger Doesn’t Take a Vacation

Summer is here and many of us take some much-needed time off from work to recharge our batteries.

Unfortunately, at the Food Bank, we also see many people take time off from giving during the summer months as food and fund donations drop significantly.

It’s important to remember that food insecurity is a year-round problem. Through our network of member agencies, we serve 60,000 people each month all year long.

As highlighted in our cover story, children are the most vulnerable population during the summer as many of them are missing out on the free and reduced price breakfasts and lunches they receive throughout the school year.

This summer, consider making a donation of food or funds to ensure that our shelves stay stocked. You can even volunteer at one of our community farms where we grow fresh produce for our neighbors in need.

Thank you for helping to ensure that no one in Rhode Island goes hungry.
Truck Stop Raises $134,000 for Food Bank

Fifteen food trucks drove into the skating rink in downtown Providence on April 29 for Truck Stop: A Festival of Street Eats. They provided delicious bites to 600 guests that joined us under the stars for this sold out event. Thanks to festival sponsor Stop & Shop, and our friends at Eat Drink RI, we raised $134,000 to provide healthy food to our neighbors in need. Visit our Facebook page to view a photo gallery from the event.

SAVE THE DATES

Here are some upcoming events that you won’t want to miss. For more information on Food Bank events, visit rifoodbank.org/events.

EMPTY BOWLS
Friday, September 23 from 5:30 to 8:30 pm
Enjoy local pottery and food at the Rhodes on the Pawtuxet. Choose a handmade artisanal bowl. Taste samples of soup, bread and dessert from local restaurants. Keep your bowl as a reminder that you’re helping fill the empty bowls in our community. Tickets on sale in August!

BOY SCOUTS SCOUTING FOR FOOD DRIVE
Saturday, November 5 at 8 am

HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE & OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, December 3 from 9 am to noon at the Food Bank

SING AWAY HUNGER CONCERT — NEW LOCATION!
Saturday, February 4 at 11 am and 2 pm
Bring the whole family to Ocean State Theater to enjoy award-winning children’s entertainers Bill Harley and Keith Munslow who will once again take the stage for a fun family-friendly concert.

Teaching Kids Good Nutrition

“F”or breakfast I had yogurt with fruit.”

The kids in the afterschool program at the Progreso Latino community center in Central Falls are ready to make healthy food choices.

For six weeks, they participated in the Mission: Nutrition program focused on healthy eating and exercise for elementary school children.

Taught by the Food Bank’s Community Cooking nutrition education team, lessons guided young people to make better choices in what they eat and how they spend their free time.

Children learn about healthy snacks and the importance of drinking water and avoiding other sugar-sweetened beverages. They receive prizes like water bottles and soccer balls for their participation.

And the kids really enjoy participating. Here are a few of their comments: “My favorite part was learning junk foods vs. healthy snacks.” “Loved the prizes. I use my water bottle to take to school every day.”

With Mission: Nutrition, the Food Bank prepares young people to make healthy choices that, hopefully, they will carry throughout their lifetime.

Learn more about the Community Cooking program at rifoodbank.org/communitycooking.

Volunteer at a Community Farm

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank is fortunate to partner with five community farms which grow fresh produce to deliver through our network of member agencies. Each site is run entirely by volunteers. And help is always needed. Consider spending a day getting your hands dirty and contributing to the distribution of nearly 60,000 pounds of fresh, healthy food to neighbors in need. Visit rifoodbank.org/volunteer to learn more.
As part of the Food Bank’s 14-week culinary job training program, Community Kitchen students participate in internships at local restaurants and cafeterias. One of the most successful on-the-job training sites is the cafeteria at Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island under the supervision of Chef Mike Mooney.

A recent trainee, Deron Smith, appreciated the opportunity to learn from such a seasoned professional in a supportive environment. He said, “I've learned all of this great stuff that fits in with what I'm expecting and what I'm looking for to build my career.”

Like many Rhode Islanders, Deron struggled to find a full-time, well-paying job that could support his family. He joined the Community Kitchen program to learn skills that will help him pursue a career that he hopes will ultimately lead to managing a restaurant.

Chef Mooney likes the Community Kitchen program so much that he has hired students to work at the cafeteria once they complete their training. He explains, “They are organized and well prepared, professional, and they come with a set of basic skills and a willingness to learn more.”

The partnership works for Blue Cross. Carolyn Belisle, Managing Director of Community Relations, explains, “The internship program fits who we are as an organization. It met a need for us and for the Food Bank and that’s an important part of what we bring to the community.”

Learn more about Community Kitchen and becoming an internship site at rifoodbank.org/communitykitchen.

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EVERY GIFT MATTERS

Every gift to the Food Bank makes a difference! Whether you give $10 or $10,000, you can help provide food to neighbors in need. Here are a few ways that your small gift can make a big impact.

Sustainers Harvest Monthly Giving Program—A small, manageable gift every month can add up to a sizeable contribution at the end of the year. Sign up online to make an automatic monthly credit donation at rifoodbank.org/sustainer.

Mr. Potato Head License Plate—For the cost of $41.50 you can purchase a Mr. Potato Head license plate. Half of the cost is a donation to the Food Bank and you can proudly display your commitment to ending hunger in Rhode Island. Visit rifoodbank.org/plate to order your plate.

Tribute Gifts—Is someone having a special celebration that you want to acknowledge? Honor that person with a gift to the Food Bank. We’ll inform them of your kind donation (amount undisclosed). Visit rifoodbank.org/donate to make a gift.

Thank you for being part of our wonderful community of supporters!