Summer Leaves
Families Facing Food Insecurity

During the school year, more than 54,000 children receive free and reduced-price lunches every day that they attend class. That means when school is out for the summer or vacations during the year, tens of thousands of families struggle to find other ways to provide food for their children.

All summer long, meals are served in public parks across the state to any child under 18. But there is often a gap between the end of school and the beginning of the Summer Meals program.

To combat food insecurity during that period, known as the Summer Meals Gap, the Food Bank developed the Meals4Kids program, distributing a box containing one week’s worth of snacks and lunches for kids. The non-perishable food items are distributed through food pantries, community health centers and social service organizations along with information on additional resources for families.

The contents of the boxes are purchased by the Food Bank and packed into boxes by volunteers. Last year, more than 10,200 boxes were distributed to kids across the state.

“Many of these kids live below the poverty level. The food boxes really help alleviate hunger for these families.” - Tammy, Providence Community Health Center Olneyville.

The Meals4Kids boxes are funded through the generous donations of Stop & Shop's Our Family Foundation, the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation and PriceRite.

“Meals4Kids Boxes sure made families feel a bit more food secure all summer long.”
- Jennifer, St. Josephs WIC Program

Terry's Story: Rescued from Hunger & Homelessness

“Little by little, my life started to deteriorate. I lost everything – my house, my business, even my car. I ended up homeless, sleeping in a stairwell with my cat.”

Terry's story is true, but she didn’t want to be photographed because many people in her life do not know the extent of her experience with homelessness and hunger.

Through the assistance of a number of Food Bank member agencies, Terry and her boyfriend, Josh, found housing and food and they are now working toward supporting themselves. But her situation could have ended up very differently.

After “a really bad string of really bad luck,” Terry had been bouncing around with no permanent home, often living on the street.

(continued next page)
“Sister Joan from McAuley House heard my story and came to talk to me. She brought me to McAuley to get something to eat.”

Sister Joan got Terry off the street, giving her a meal and her first shower in nine days, and connected her with a permanent place to stay.

Once settled in her new home in Newport, Terry needed to find food and was encouraged to check out the food pantry at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center, a member agency of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

Terry’s boyfriend, Josh, helps out with his earnings from a part-time job at Home Depot but it’s not enough for them to live on. He would love to gain full-time employment but it’s not available at the moment and since he doesn’t have a set schedule like many part-time, low-wage employees, it’s hard for him to find additional work. They both rely on the food pantry.

The pantry helps Terry stay healthy, which is particularly important since she is a cancer survivor. “I have borderline high blood pressure so I have to watch my salt and try to avoid canned and prepared foods,” she explained. “I love when the pantry has fresh produce: asparagus, corn, string beans.”

Knowing that she can depend on the pantry gives her stability and hope because she’s not always wondering where her next meal will come from like she did in the past.

“They have great stuff you can depend on and there are always surprises. Coming here is a really positive experience. They make you feel welcome and respected.”

As she explains, people who come here “are just regular people who ended up in a bad situation. It can happen to anyone.”

“I don’t remember what I did [for food] before that. I’m just glad to have food now. And it’s not just the food. After what I’ve been through it’s the continuity and the consistency that are so important.”

- Terry, MLK Community Center Guest

Truck Stop Drives In $173,000

With 21 food trucks and more than 550 guests, the Food Bank’s Seventh Annual Truck Stop event raised $173,000 to help provide food to Rhode Islanders in need of assistance. Vendors, volunteers and guests came together to enjoy an evening of food, music and fun in our parking lot. Special thanks to Street Eats Festival sponsor Stop & Shop for their generous support again this year!

Letter Carriers Collect 98,000 Pounds of Food

Thank you to everyone who helped Stamp Out Hunger this year! On Saturday, May 11, letter carriers picked up 98,000 pounds in food donations from their generous customers. Food was delivered to the Food Bank and distributed to neighbors in need through our network of member agencies.
**Summer Food Drive Kicks Off**

On Tuesday, June 25, the Food Bank kicked off its annual Summer Food Drive to increase donations during a time of year when giving slows down. While contributions decrease, the need – particularly for children – increases as families struggle to fill the gaps when children are no longer receiving the free and reduced-priced lunches they enjoy during the school year.

Each year, the Summer Food Drive is boosted by the support of our corporate partners and other organizations.

Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island employees are collecting snacks for kids as part of their Summer Snackdown. Ford dealers will be donating $10 from every car purchased during the month of August. The Food for Friends program at Stop & Shop encourages customers to donate funds to support the food bank.

Find out how your business or group can help out this summer at: rifoodbank.org/get-involved.

**Save the Date**

- **Empty Bowls**
  Thursday, October 17 from 5:30pm to 8pm
  Rhodes on the Pawtuxet, Cranston
  Join us for a great night of local food and fun and take home a handmade bowl to remind you of the empty bowls you helped to fill. Once again, Citizens Bank is the Presenting Sponsor of this event.

- **Scouting for Food Drive**
  Saturday, November 2
  At your front door
  The Scouts will be picking up food donations right at your door. Look for a door hanger on Saturday, October 26 and Scout volunteers will be back the following week.

- **Holiday Food Drive & Open House**
  Saturday, December 7 from 9:00am to 12:00pm
  Rhode Island Community Food Bank
  200 Niantic Avenue, Providence
  Take a tour of the Food Bank and enjoy some holiday festivities. And don’t forget to bring a food donation to get the giving season off to a great start.

**New Toolkit Helps Your Company Help Us**

With our new One Company Can toolkit, you can find ways for your business to support the work of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. You’ll get ideas on how to help alleviate hunger through food and fund drives while promoting teamwork with your staff and building your company’s reputation as a community leader. Visit our website to learn more and download a copy at rifoodbank.org/one-company-can.

**One Kid Can Help End Hunger**

Kids want to know how they can make a difference in ending hunger in their community. To help kids take action, we created One Kid Can! – a toolkit with great tips on how to host successful food collection and fundraising activities.

One Kid Can! is a valuable resource for kids, parents and teachers. You can get a copy at rifoodbank.org/one-kid-can.
Green Thumbs Needed

Make a difference by volunteering at a community farm. Across the state, farms grow fresh produce for the Food Bank and local member agencies. Relying entirely on volunteers, they need you to plant, water, weed and harvest thousands of pounds of food each year. No experience is necessary and you can come out once or all summer long. For more information, visit rifoodbank.org/farms.

Healthy Habits Recipe:
Pomegranate Leafy Green Chicken Salad

Healthy Habits is a nutrition education program for people receiving food assistance from member agencies of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. This healthy, low-cost recipe features the type of ingredients encouraged by the program. Take a look and try it out at home.

Ingredients:

Dressing
- 1 lemon, zested and juiced
- 1/3 cup pomegranate juice
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, grated
- 1/2 tsp grated fresh ginger
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Salad
- 6 cups packed baby spinach
- 3 cups packed baby arugula
- 1/2 cup assorted olives, sliced
- 2 cups grilled chicken, sliced or shredded
- Arils (seeds) of 1 pomegranate

Directions:
1. To make the dressing, add all dressing ingredients to a jar. Close tightly and shake well.
2. In a large bowl, combine arugula, spinach and olives. Season with a little salt and pepper. Toss to combine, then top with the chicken and pomegranate seeds.
3. Drizzle the dressing over salad and enjoy!

For information on Healthy Habits, including more great recipes, visit rifoodbank.org/healthy-habits.

Request a Speaker

Invite a speaker from the Food Bank to come to your company or organization. Our experts can share the latest news & information about hunger in Rhode Island and discuss ways for you to get more involved. We’re available for both formal and informal presentations to groups of all sizes. To find out how you can participate, visit rifoodbank.org/speaker.

Drive Away Hunger

Turn your old vehicle into food for families who are struggling to get by. Find out how your old vehicle can become a charitable donation that makes a real difference in the lives of others. Learn more at: rifoodbank.org/donateyourvehicle.