Vulnerable Seniors Need Your Help

Food insecurity is a serious issue for seniors, especially those on a fixed or limited income. Even with SNAP benefits (formerly known as Food Stamps) and other assistance, resources often fall short. At the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, 20 percent of those served are over age 60.

An Angel in Need
Angel visits the PICA Olneyville Food Center in Providence twice each month.

At 61 years old, it is not easy for him to get to the places he needs to go, whether it’s the food pantry, the market, or the doctor’s office. As a diabetic, Angel knows the importance of making healthy food choices.

Angel worked all of his life—on farms, in the fields, and in restaurant kitchens. Since injuring his leg in an accident in 2009, he has been unable to work and walking long distances is difficult and painful.

He receives about $136 per month in SNAP benefits, hardly enough to supply him with the healthy foods he needs to keep his diabetes in check. “The special foods I need are expensive,” he says. “The people here make sure I get good food so that I don’t get sick.”

Special Delivery for Seniors
To combat the challenges facing seniors like Angel, the Food Bank is piloting the Senior Box Program among 60 participants at Parenti Villa, a high-rise apartment building in Providence for low income community members.

Twice each month, seniors receive packages—slightly larger than a shoe box—containing nutritious food like tuna, beans, powdered milk, and rice along with simple recipes.

“I enroll the people who need it most,” said Ramona Rodriguez-Mejia, case manager for the facility. “Usually they have a low fixed income and difficulty traveling to stores or pantries. I always have a waiting list.”
Demand for Food Assistance Remains at Near-Record High

Our 2014 Status Report on Hunger reveals that the number of people served by the Food Bank has increased dramatically to **63,000 people per month**. At the same time, the amount of food donated has decreased, making it challenging for the Food Bank to provide enough healthy, nutritious food to our member agencies throughout the state.

Major findings of the report reveal:

- **One in seven Rhode Island households** cannot afford adequate food.
- The Rhode Island Community Food Bank must purchase **three million pounds of food each year** to meet the persistently high need.
- **Twenty-two percent of those served** at member agencies of the Food Bank have a family member in poor health.

To view the entire Status Report and find out how you can help, visit our website and click on Get Involved.

### People Served by the Food Bank

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of People Served Monthly</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>33,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>63,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The number of people served by the Food Bank has nearly doubled since 2007.

### Save the Date for Truck Stop: A Festival of Street Eats

On Friday, May 1, from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m., the Food Bank and Eat Drink RI take over the Providence Rink at Alex and Ani City Center to host **Truck Stop: A Festival of Street Eats**. Guests will sample from 15 of Rhode Island’s finest food trucks and listen to great local music. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details. Tickets are $75 and will be on sale in April.

### Your Company Can Make a Difference

The One Company Can booklet will help you organize a food or fund drive, building teamwork and boosting your reputation as a good corporate citizen. The booklet contains best practices, tips and case studies highlighting successful drives. Download a copy of **One Company Can** from our website under Get Involved.
Robert Kraft Donates $100,000 to Community Kitchen

The Food Bank was pleased to welcome Robert Kraft, Chairman and CEO of the New England Patriots, for a tour of our Community Kitchen in December. Mr. Kraft offered the Food Bank a $100,000 challenge grant—which we successfully matched—to help fund this culinary job training program for low-income and unemployed adults.

Local dignitaries, including Governor Gina Raimondo and Senate President Teresa Paiva-Weed, had the opportunity to greet Mr. Kraft.

In addition to the Challenge Grant, Mr. Kraft also connected Community Kitchen students with the head of Corporate Dining Services at Gillette Stadium. Three of the program’s graduates are now working there and we hope to grow this relationship to provide more opportunities in the future.

Food Bank Welcomes New Board Members

At the 2014 Annual Meeting last October, the following individuals were elected as members of the Board of Directors:

- **James Bussiere** of Cumberland is senior vice president and superintendent of Sales and Client Services at Amica Mutual Insurance Company. He is a 2008 graduate of Leadership RI and also sits on the board for the Capital Good Fund.

- **Robert Leach** of Swansea, MA is vice president/senior relationship manager with TD Bank. He previously served as senior relationship manager for Webster Bank. He also sits on the Food Bank’s Finance Committee.

- **Eugene Martin** of Narragansett is a senior global capital markets and credit investment executive. He was co-head of Global Leveraged and Acquisition Finance at Morgan Stanley and held similar positions at Donaldson, Lufkin and Jenrette; Credit Suisse First Boston; Bank of America; and Shawmut Bank.

- **Tanisha Simpson** of Warwick serves as senior manager/division director at Westbay Community Action, a member agency of the Food Bank. She oversees a wide range of programs addressing food and economic security for low income families.

Stamp Out Hunger on May 9

Each year, on the second Saturday in May, letter carriers across the country collect food donations for their local food banks as part of Stamp Out Hunger.

Once again, the Food Bank is partnering with the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) in asking you to leave a bag of non-perishable food at your mailbox on Saturday, May 9. Your donation will be collected and delivered to us through the generous efforts of our letter carriers. Stamp Out Hunger is a collaborative effort of the NALC, the United Way of Rhode Island, AFL-CIO Community Services, and the United States Postal Service.

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Filling Our Empty Bowls

On Friday, March 27, the Food Bank will be holding its first ever Empty Bowls event. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the fundraiser, held in numerous cities around the world. Empty Bowls was started by artists engaged in the fight against hunger, who created and donated unique handcrafted bowls to inspire others to get involved.

Guests of the event purchase a ticket to support the Food Bank, choose a handmade bowl and enjoy a sampling of soups, breads, and desserts. At the end of the evening, guests take home their bowls as a symbol of the empty bowls in the community and a reminder that their participation does make a difference.

A huge thanks to Hearty Stew Presenting Sponsor Citizens Bank for making this fantastic event possible.

Join us at Rhodes on the Pawtuxet in Cranston on March 27 from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. General Admission is $35. Patron Admission is $150 per person and includes VIP bowl selection, one free drink and our gratitude for your generosity.

For more information and to purchase tickets, visit the News & Events section of our website.

Community Cooking

Wholesome Eating on a Budget

The Food Bank’s Community Cooking program teaches food pantry clients how to make healthy, practical meals on a tight budget. Classes combine hands-on cooking with nutritional education emphasizing diets incorporating vegetables, lean proteins, and fresh, seasonal produce.

To give you a taste of what clients are learning, we’re including one of their favorite recent recipes.

Lentil and Rice Soup

6 servings. Approximate cost of the recipe: $5.37 or $.90 per serving.

Ingredients

- 3 carrots
- 2 stalks of celery
- 1 medium onion
- 3 cloves chopped garlic
- 4 plum tomatoes (or 1 can of diced tomatoes)
- 1 cup of brown rice
- 1 cup of lentils
- 10 cups of water
- 2 tablespoons of chicken base (bouillon)
- salt and pepper
- 2 bay leaves
- olive oil

Recipe courtesy of firsthomelovelife.com.

Directions

Chop up all of your veggies. Put your pot on the stove, turn on the stove to medium-high, drizzle olive oil in the pot. Put all the veggies in the pot and sweat them for about 5-6 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Toss your bay leaves and lentils in, stir for about a minute. Pour in your water and tablespoons of chicken base. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer and cover for about 45-50 minutes. While the soup is cooking, cook the rice separately according to the package. When both the soup and rice are ready, add the rice to the soup and serve.