Summer 2014

Changing Lives in Community Kitchen
Your support helps train adults and feed kids

The Food Bank’s Community Kitchen job training program provides free culinary training to low-income and unemployed adults who are ready to make a change in their lives. Over the course of 14 weeks, each class of 13 students prepares 22,000 meals for the Food Bank’s Kids Cafe program, which provides after-school meals to children in high-need areas.

Students learn far more than culinary skills. In addition to becoming certified in food safety, they acquire work and life skills that help them succeed in a competitive marketplace. Approximately 92% of Community Kitchen graduates find employment in the hospitality industry within one year of graduation.

Ten weeks into the program, the current class members spoke out about how they see their futures unfolding. Many have already found new jobs, but just as important, they have gained a new outlook on life.

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Meals for Kids: A Right of Summer

During the school year, 50,500 Rhode Island students receive free or reduced-price school lunches. Last summer, only 13% of these children participated in the Summer Food Service Program, which provides free summer meals to children 18 and under at parks and recreation centers around the state. The program is funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Only 13% of RI children who receive free or reduced-price lunch participated in the Summer Food Service Program last year.

The Food Bank has been working with the City of Providence, the Rhode Island Department of Education, United Way 2-1-1, the USDA and Stop & Shop’s “Our Family Foundation” to boost participation in this important program. Last year, the statewide program served lunches to 6,421 children per day in July, an eight percent increase from the previous year.

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In Providence, 63% of the children are eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch, but only a fraction take advantage of Summer Food Service Program meals provided free at parks and recreation centers. The Food Bank is partnering with the City of Providence to boost participation in this USDA-funded program.
You Make the Difference

You expect to get help from friends and family members. But when you receive help from a stranger, it makes all the difference.

A graduate of the Food Bank’s Community Kitchen program, Mark Alvarez, recently said, “You expect to get help from friends and family members. But when you receive help from a stranger, it makes all the difference.”

As a supporter of the Food Bank, you give so people can eat, but your generosity has a greater impact. The people who visit our member agencies leave with more than a bag of food. They also leave feeling less isolated and alone, knowing that others in their own community care about them. And sometimes, that makes all the difference.

Andrew Schiff, Chief Executive Officer

Help Us Bring Empty Bowls to Providence

On Friday, March 27, 2015, the Food Bank will celebrate the 25th anniversary of Empty Bowls, a grassroots movement to raise money and awareness about the issue of hunger. The Food Bank’s Empty Bowls fundraiser coincides with the annual conference of the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts, which will take place in Providence. The public will be invited to purchase bowls designed by local and national artists and share a simple meal to help Rhode Islanders in need. Stay tuned for more details.

Artists and Sculptors: If you are interested in contributing a hand-crafted bowl to the Empty Bowls event, please contact Kelly Seigh at kseigh@rifoodbank.org.
Join the Summer Food Drive!

The Summer Food Drive kicked off on Friday, June 27, with a delivery of more than 50,000 pounds of food from our friends in the food industry, giving us a jump start on the way toward a goal of 150,000 pounds by August 31.

We need the community’s help to keep up with the demand for food assistance over the summer. The need remains constant through the year, but donations decrease in the summer as people focus on leisure activities. You can make a real difference in a matter of minutes by giving online at www.rifoodbank.org/SummerFoodDrive. Every dollar you give enables us to provide three pounds of nutritious food to hungry Rhode Island families.

Every dollar you give provides three pounds of healthy food for a family in need.

We welcome you to conduct food or fund drives in your neighborhood or at your business, organization, faith community or club. Food drive bins and posters are available at the Food Bank, 200 Niantic Avenue, Providence, between 8 am and 5 pm weekdays. You can also find food drive materials online at www.rifoodbank.org/SummerFoodDrive. A special toolkit for kids and teens is available at www.rifoodbank.org/Kids. For more information, contact Farris Maxwell at 401-230-1690.

Many thanks to our lead sponsor, Ocean State Job Lot, and to the many food businesses which are supporting the Summer Food Drive, including: Bliss Bros. Dairy, Danielle, Little Rhody Foods, Mansfield Paper, Panera Bread (The Howley Group), Pepsi Bottling Group, Reinhart, Roch’s Fresh Foods, Stop & Shop and Top This Pizza.

The need for food assistance remains high during the summer, but donations often drop significantly. You can help by running a food drive or by giving online at www.rifoodbank.org/SummerFoodDrive. Every dollar you donate provides three pounds of healthy food to a family in need.

Cheer on the Paw Sox and be a part of the eighth season of Striking Out Hunger.

Teaming Up to Strike Out Hunger

Striking Out Hunger launched its 8th year at the start of the baseball season. Thanks to a unique partnership between the Citizens Bank Foundation, the PawSox and Cox Communications, every PawSox strike-out will put $75 toward food for hungry families, up to a total contribution of $75,000. Striking Out Hunger has raised a half-million dollars for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank since its opening season.
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Taina Lee
“Taina Lee
“I’m able to go out into the world and see what it’s like in the food industry. Community Kitchen has opened my eyes about how you can prepare food in many different ways. My children like it, too. When I learn new things, I make it for them at home. They’re excited for me. Now, when I get up with them in the morning, I get dressed and go off to school. They see that I’m motivated and I’m doing something and I’m happy. I come home tired, but I’ve put a day’s work in, so they appreciate that.”

Heather Hillier
“Hi’re getting hands-on training, and I’m certified in food safety now, which means I’ll have a pay increase. I actually already got a job at White Glove Catering. I was also asked if I wanted a job at my internship site, Dave’s Marketplace. Before I came to Community Kitchen, I looked for six months and only landed a minimum wage job at a fast food coffee shop. I’m not even done with the program, and I’ve got two jobs. I discovered I could do it. I could get a career and not just a job. I can go to better places and move my way up.”

Charles Manning
“How has my life changed? A 180, a total turnaround. I feel like I’ve got a chance at life now. When I came here, I didn’t have any hope. I felt like I was on a sinking ship and it was going down. Chef Heather is an amazing teacher. They do a great job teaching life skills. These teachers put in the work with you. I just feel like a changed man. If I wore glasses, I would say I have a new lens. I see the world as a different place.”

Meals for Kids  CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The partnership aims to serve an additional 1,200 children this summer. Our Family Foundation awarded the Food Bank a major three-year grant to fund special initiatives aimed at increasing participation in summer meals. For example, the Food Bank distributed 4,000 “Meals4Kids” boxes in June that contain a week’s worth of healthy, kid-friendly foods, along with information about the Summer Food Service Program. Meals4Kids are provided to the families of children in high-need areas to ensure they have enough to eat between the end of the school year and the beginning of the Summer Food Service Program.

This year, the partnership will focus on boosting programs in the City of Providence. A variety of activities are planned at local parks to make it even more fun for children to participate, with help from community partners like the YMCA, Providence Play Corps and other groups.

To find out about Summer Food Service Program sites in your area, call 2-1-1.

Food Bank volunteers assembled 4,000 Meals4Kids boxes, containing healthy, kid-friendly foods to help families feed their children during the gap between the end of school meals and the beginning of the Summer Food Service Program. The project is funded by a grant from Stop & Shop’s Our Family Foundation.
Your gifts support Community Kitchen

When you make a gift to the Food Bank, you also help to support the Community Kitchen culinary job training program. In addition, companies and foundations provide grants to support the program. In the last year, we’ve received major grants for Community Kitchen from Amgen, the Fain Family Foundation and Textron, with generous support from the Emma G. Harris Foundation, Dominion Energy, the TJX Foundation, and the Schocken Family Foundation. To make a contribution to the Food Bank, visit www.rifoodbank.org/donate.

Paul DiPaolo

“My life has changed for the better. I didn’t have a culinary background. I was a soldier. I served in Iraq. I got wounded and had to leave after spending 16 years of my life in the military. I was very introverted. The first couple of weeks they wanted us to present in front of the whole class. I didn’t want to get up in front of people. But I did it. I learned how to communicate with people. I just found out I got a job at the Capitol Grille, where I interned.”

Long Lines Persist at Food Pantries

The Food Bank serves more than 63,000 people every month through its statewide network of food pantries. In 2008, the same number of food pantries were serving 37,000 people monthly.

Wanted: Your Reflections

Your words have the power to influence others. If you would like to share your reflections about why you support the work of the Food Bank, or how you or someone you know has been helped by food assistance, we’re interested.

Visit our new “Tell Us Your Story” page at www.rifoodbank.org/yourstory, or email Cindy Elder at celder@rifoodbank.org to share your thoughts. Thank you for helping us build greater understanding of the issue of hunger in Rhode Island.

WHY I GIVE

A Memory of Pancakes

At a Sunday breakfast at my sister’s house, my daughter, now grown, said, “I hate pancakes. I had to eat them for weeks when I was small.” I sat there stunned, horrified that she remembered...

It was January 1979. There was mustard and ketchup in the refrigerator, a big box of pancake mix in the cupboard and a toddler in the bedroom taking a nap. I remember hoping against hope that she was too young to remember that she had eaten pancakes, made with dry mix and water, for over twelve days. And yet, I was thankful that I had the pancakes to fill her belly. I had not eaten for over two weeks, because what I had left would be for her.

I remember that shame and despair to this day, as I open my cabinets and feel insecure, even though they are stocked full. No mother should have to feel the shame and hopelessness of being unable to feed her children.

— Food Bank donor, January 2014
Rhode Island’s talented food truck chefs took center stage at “Truck Stop: A Festival of Street Eats,” which raised more than $105,000 in April for the Food Bank. For the second year running, the event was held Downcity at the Providence Rink in the Bank of America City Center as one of the signature events of the Eat Drink RI Festival. Thank you to all those who attended or supported this sold out event. Special thanks to our lead sponsors:

**Street Eats Festival Sponsor**

Stop&Shop

**Mobile Catering Truck Sponsor**

GTECH

**Canteen Truck Sponsors**

Delta Dental
Fidelity Investments
Imperial Pearl
Providence Journal Charitable Foundation
The Washington Trust Company

Co-chairs David Dadekian (left) and Genie McPherson Trevor, editor of Edible Rhody Magazine, are joined by Sean Larkin of Revival Brewing, one of the beverage providers at Truck Stop.

Five hundred guests and Food Bank supporters enjoyed a casual night out Downcity with great food truck fare at Truck Stop in April.

To see more photos from Truck Stop and other Food Bank events, visit us at [www.facebook.com/RICFB](http://www.facebook.com/RICFB).
COMMUNITY FARMS

God’s Little Acre Serves Body and Soul

Every spring, a team of devoted volunteers reappear like early crocuses with a single mission in mind: to plant a garden. In a quiet corner of Smithfield, God’s Little Acre community farm comes alive with volunteers ranging in age from 3 to 70. They prepare the field, sow the seeds and eventually harvest the produce from this fertile piece of ground. And then they give it away.

God’s Little Acre is one of eight community farms in Rhode Island that grow fresh produce for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank’s statewide network of food pantries. Since its founding in 2004, God’s Little Acre has produced close to 40,000 pounds of fresh produce for families in need. The farm is a mission project of St. Philip Church in Greenville.

“Working in a garden keeps me grounded,” says Paul Santucci, who has managed the farm for 11 years on top of his full-time job as a financial advisor. “It’s always on my mind that there are people in our own community who go without. The overriding thought in my head almost every night is, ‘How are we going to feed people tomorrow?’”

Like many community farms, the volunteers running God’s Little Acre know it takes a village to accomplish this work. They receive help from the Boy Scouts, the Lion’s Club, United Way and local companies like Adler Bros. Construction, which trucks in compost and installed their waterline at no charge. They use hand-me-down tools, and the Parish pays their water bill.

What emerges come harvest time is a bumper crop of eggplants, peppers, pumpkins, squash, cucumbers and beans that will be greatly appreciated by families struggling with the high cost of food. They also grow sunflowers, which they give to local nursing homes, adding yet another component of joy to their harvest.

Volunteer-operated community farms provided more than 45,000 pounds of fresh produce to the Food Bank’s statewide network of food pantries during the 2013 growing season.

Wanted: Farm Volunteers

The following Community Farms are in need of volunteers during the growing season. Please contact the farm directly to learn about volunteer opportunities. Children under 14 must be supervised by an adult.

- **Charlestown Community Garden**, Charlestown
  Contacts: Susie Fehrmann and Steve Symonds
  845-559-4561 or 401-742-7625

- **Franklin Farm**, Cumberland
  Contact: Denise Mudge, 401-334-0133

- **Frelich’s Food Pantry Farm**, Warren
  Contact: Jan Martin, 401-245-1803

- **God’s Little Acre**, Smithfield
  Contact: Paul Santucci, 401-286-5854

- **G.R.O.W. U.P. Farm**, Woonsocket
  Contact: Wendy Pires, 401-766-0900

- **Magaziner Farm**, Bristol
  Contact: Amanda Rubio, 401-440-0287

- **McCoy Community Farm**, Warren
  Contact: Diane Stacy, 401-949-2917
Monthly Giving Keeps Food on the Table

Hunger knows no season. It’s a year-round struggle for many families to keep the cupboards stocked with healthy food. Your generosity makes it possible for us to keep up with the continuing high need for food assistance.

To make it easier for you to support the work of the Food Bank throughout the year, we developed a monthly giving program called Sustainers Harvest. It offers the convenience of having a specific gift amount charged to a credit card or deducted from a checking account once a month. At the end of the year, we’ll send you a full report detailing your donations. The charge or EFT transfer continues until you notify us to stop. It’s that simple.

The monthly gifts we receive from Sustainers Harvest provide the Food Bank with a consistent source of funding that is crucial to our ability to feed more than 63,000 people every month.

A monthly gift of $10 will provide 30 pounds of healthy food to a family in need.

Even a small monthly amount can help to feed many, many people. For example, a monthly gift of $10 will provide 30 pounds of healthy food. By giving monthly, you can play a bigger role in supporting Rhode Islanders who can’t afford to feed their families.

To join the Sustainers Harvest program, visit our monthly giving page on www.rifoodbank.org or contact Jill Gonsalves at 401-230-1675 or jgonsalves@rifoodbank.org.

Planned Giving

“There but for the grace of God go I”

As I have gotten older, I have come to fully appreciate all that I have been given in my life. When I walk down the supermarket aisles and see the variety of food that is available to me, I can’t help but feel almost embarrassed. I am keenly aware that, “There but for the grace of God go I.” It could very easily be me needing the services of the Food Bank.

I still can’t understand how the wealthiest country in the world has citizens who go to bed hungry.

— Supporter who has chosen to include the Food Bank in her estate plan

Holiday Meal Drive Open House

Saturday, December 6, 9 am–Noon
RI Community Food Bank, 200 Niantic Avenue, Providence

For more information on Food Bank events, visit www.rifoodbank.org/events or follow us on Facebook.