Afterschool Program Provides Healthy Meals for Kids

On an average day, the Kids Cafe program at the Pawtucket YMCA serves meals provided by the Rhode Island Community Food Bank to 145 kids who are coming straight from school to an afterschool program where they learn and play. To make sure they have the energy to focus and participate, they need a nutritious meal.

For some, the food from Kids Cafe is their most substantial meal of the day. When asked what she had for dinner at home, Clare said “I don’t know. Sometimes pasta. Sometimes I don’t have anything after this.”

Ruby really likes the food, especially when they serve breakfast for dinner – like pancakes or waffles. The reason, she explained: “We don’t have breakfast at home. I don’t have anything until I get to school.”

Thirty-five percent of the households that visit food pantries include a child. These families struggle to put food on the table for their young ones.

And, at the same time, 69% of the households with children have at least one adult who is working. Families are trying to make a living, but they are struggling to make ends meet.

The children at the YMCA afterschool program are from families who are working hard but still need some assistance.

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Caleb and Tyrell seemed to like everything about Kids Cafe. Together, they listed all of their favorites: “Tacos.” “Waffles and pancakes.” “The pizza!” “All of it.”

Tyrell added with excitement, “They give us healthy food all the time!”

The YMCA is committed to feeding kids nutritious meals.

According to Courtenay Good, Childcare and Youth Program Director at the Pawtucket Family Y, “We want to feed as many kids as we can.”

Working together, the Food Bank and the Pawtucket Y will find ways to ensure that no child goes hungry.
Seniors Struggle with Tough Choices

Many seniors struggle with fixed incomes, limited mobility and finding a balance between paying medical expenses and having access to nutritious food to keep them healthy.

Marilyn, 66 years old and a former nurse, lives in senior housing, paying $504 each month for rent which includes heat and electricity. Her income comes from her pension and Social Security.

With her limited budget, the cost of maintaining a car, and medical expenses, it can be difficult for her to pay her bills each month. “I’ve missed a few bills, been in collection a few times,” she says. “They get paid eventually.”

Sometimes, she has to make the choice between paying for the medication she needs and paying for groceries. “My inhalers can run into the hundreds,” she says.

She visits the East Greenwich Interfaith Food Cupboard about once a month, maybe a little more when she needs it.

The Latest Reports on Hunger in Rhode Island

Recently, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank released two reports highlighting the prevalence of hunger in the area.

2019 Hunger Survey
In collaboration with the Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute at Brown University, this statewide survey provided valuable information on the demographics of households impacted by hunger in Rhode Island.

At food pantries:
- 66% of households include a child (0-17 yrs old) or senior (65+ yrs old).
- 69% of households with children have an employed adult yet 89% live below the poverty line.
- Hunger is linked to serious and costly health problems. A recent CDC study estimates healthcare expenses associated with hunger cost the state $160 million per year.

You can view the full report online at: rifoodbank.org/hunger_survey

2019 Status Report on Hunger
Each year, the Food Bank releases its Status Report on Hunger, calling attention to the issues around food insecurity in the state of Rhode Island.

- Low-income Rhode Islanders miss over 11 million meals each year because they can’t afford adequate food.

View the Status Report on Hunger online here: rifoodbank.org/2019-status-report-on-hunger

“I always thought there was somebody else who needed it more than me,” Marilyn says to explain why it took her so long to seek assistance.

She laments the high cost of food. “Everything in the store is so expensive.”

If she didn’t have the Food Cupboard, she says, “I’d just go without.”
Empty Bowls Raises $131,000

Our fifth annual Empty Bowls fundraiser in October 2019 was a huge success, raising $131,000 for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. This fantastic event would not have been possible without our Presenting Sponsor, Citizens Bank, and the generous support of 42 local restaurants and many talented local artists.

Giving to the Food Bank

“The Food Bank provides us with an opportunity to have a direct positive impact in the lives of fellow Rhode Islanders who are in need of food. When we give to the Food Bank we have no doubt that lives are better because of our support. Our realization that the work of the Food Bank is vital to the well-being of us all and our ongoing involvement keeps that mission alive.”

Dr. Maryanne Noris

News from the Board of Directors

At the 2019 Annual Meeting of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, six people were elected to the Board of Directors.

Letter Carriers Food Drive
Saturday, May 9, 2020
8 AM - At your mailbox
Leave a bag of non-perishable food for your letter carrier to pick up and deliver to the Food Bank.

Truck Stop
Friday, May 29, 2020
5:30-8 PM - Food Bank Parking Lot
Enjoy tastes from 25+ local food trucks.

Empty Bowls
Thursday, October 22, 2020
5:30-8 PM - Rhodes on the Pawtuxet
40+ local restaurants serve delicious samples.
Charitable Giving and Your IRA

New Law Brings Changes
Whether you are already retired, or have your eye on retirement, the enactment of the SECURE Act in December 2019 may have left you wondering how you’ll be impacted. This new law brought sweeping changes to retirement plans, the biggest since 2006.

The intent of the SECURE Act is to extend the time for Americans to save for retirement, but could also impact your charitable giving.

Previously, most retirees were required to take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) from their retirement accounts at age 70½. The new beginning date for RMDs is age 72.

However, the SECURE Act does NOT change the age at which you CAN make a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) from your IRA to organizations like the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, which remains at age 70½.

No matter your age or how close you are to retirement, you can always designate the Food Bank as the beneficiary of your IRA or other retirement plan assets, or remember us in your will or living trust. This ensures that the Food Bank will always have the resources it needs to put food on the tables of your hungry neighbors.

We are happy to work with you and your advisor to determine the best giving strategy for you. Please visit rifoodbank.myfuturegift.org or contact Karen Fuller at (401) 230-1676 or kfuller@rifoodbank.org to learn more.

Healthy Habits Recipe: Mediterranean Vegetable Stew

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 types of ingredients encouraged by the program. Take a look and try it out at home.

Ingredients:
- 2 tbsps olive oil
- 1 medium eggplant, cubed
- 2 bell peppers, any color, chopped
- 1 medium red onion, chopped
- 2 sweet potatoes, cubed
- 1 zucchini, sliced
- 3 cloves of garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp oregano
- 2 tbsps fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 1 can of diced tomatoes
- 1 can of chickpeas, drained
- Sea salt and black pepper to taste
- ¾ cup chicken stock

Directions:
1. Preheat the oven to 400°F. Toss your prepped veggies and garlic in a large roasting pan with the olive oil and season with oregano, salt, pepper.
2. Roast the vegetables for 20 minutes or until they are soft and fragrant – but not mushy or overcooked.
3. In a large pot mix the tomatoes, chicken stock, roasted vegetables, and chickpeas on medium heat. Bring to a simmer and cook for about 5 minutes. Add the parsley and mix.
4. Enjoy as is, serve with whole grain bread or over brown rice!

Year in Review
Thanks to you, we distributed 11.6 million pounds of food last year. Learn more about all that we accomplished in our 2019 Annual Report available online.
Visit rifoodbank.org/publications

In the Know
If you want to stay in the loop on everything happening at the Food Bank, be sure to visit our website and subscribe to our eNews. You can also follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.