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FOOD BANK

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SUMMER
2007

Is Summer a Forgotten Time?

For most of us, summer is a time of relaxation and rejuvenation. Folks take vacations, spend long, lazy days at the beach and laugh and unwind at outdoor barbecues.

For families struggling to make ends meet, however, the summertime can be a brutal time of year. The federal school breakfast and lunch programs that provide school-age children with two of their meals each day are on vacation along with the school children. This places an extra burden on the already-strained budgets of thousands of families as they struggle to make up for these lost meals.

That's where we come in. The Food Bank and its network of nearly 400 member agencies have to be the safety net that works to catch those families and help them keep food on the table.

It seems like a simple formula. Greater need in the summer should equal increased food supplies to meet the need. But sadly, it is just not that easy. The reality is that, during the summer months, the Food Bank experiences a *decline* in donations of food products.

Staple foods - items like cereals, pastas and rice, as well as canned soups, meats and beans - just don't come through our doors the way they do during the fall and winter months. Those holiday season donations are critical to getting us through the long winter months...but are gone by the time schools let out. And when the Food Bank's shelves are lacking these staple items, the cupboards of struggling families are likely to be lacking them as well.

To try and help offset the impact of this summer shortage of essential, shelf-stable items, the Food Bank has become more adept at acquiring fresh produce items. Working with our generous partners from throughout the community, the Food Bank has greatly increased its access to locally-grown fruits and vegetables. And through such innovative programs as *Neighborhood Pantry Express*, we're able to quickly distribute these perishable products to individuals seeking food assistance in our high-need areas.

This is a huge accomplishment, but it doesn't solve the problem. The bottom line is, you can't stock a pantry with fresh produce. Fruits and vegetables have a short shelf life...and when they are gone, the cupboards are bare once again.

As a Food Bank reliant on product donations, we continuously struggle with being able to offer a healthy balance of fresh produce and staple food items. This presents a complex problem. How do we manage to access the needed volumes of both produce and non-perishable items at the same time?

The Summer Food Drive seeks to solve this unfortunate dilemma. By working with the community to acquire staple provisions, and complementing such items with our increased flow of fresh produce, we can offer our hungry neighbors the makings of balanced meals...everyday.



Now through August 17th, the Food Bank is working with Fidelity Investments, the Governor's Office and the Chambers of Commerce throughout the state, to spread the word and collect much needed food to stock the shelves of the Food Bank and our network of food pantries and meal sites.

You can participate in the Summer Food Drive by dropping off a food donation or by organizing a food drive in your workplace or neighborhood. By doing so, you'll help ensure that families in need have a kitchen cupboard stocked with basic food items - items that will get them through the toughest times, when their only other option is hunger.

Please don't let summer be a forgotten time for our hungry neighbors. Make a donation or start your food drive today! For more information about starting a drive, please contact Farris Maxwell at (401) 942-6325 ext. 224 or by email at fmaxwell@rifoodbank.org.

**Donations may be dropped off at the Food Bank:
200 Niantic Avenue - Providence
Monday - Friday: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM**

What's Inside.....

- Meet the Food Bank's New Executive Director**
- Cheer on "Striking Out Hunger"**
- More Produce for More People**
- Food Bank is "Raising the Bar on Nutrition"**
- A Special Treat from Al Forno Restaurant**

RI COMMUNITY FOOD BANK - 200 NIANTIC AVENUE, PROVIDENCE, RI 02907 - (401) 942-MEAL

Executive Director Message

25 Years



**Working with You To
End Hunger**

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MISSION STATEMENT

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank provides quality food to people facing hunger through our network of certified member agencies. It also provides leadership and information to promote citizen action, advance government nutrition assistance, and promote private efforts aimed at developing effective solutions toward the elimination of hunger in Rhode Island.



Andrew Schiff

I can't imagine a mission more basic than that of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.....providing quality food to individuals and families facing hunger. I walked into my new role as Executive Director at the Food Bank with full understanding of the awesome responsibility before me, and in full recognition of the great privilege that I have been granted.

Every day, the Food Bank ensures that nutritious meals reach those most in need, and the people that make those meals possible - our staff, our member agencies, our board members, hundreds of volunteers and thousands of supporters - are absolutely dedicated to this mission. It is my honor to work with them and you.....and to bring my own energy and excitement to support our critical cause.

Early in my career, working with low-income families at a community health center, I was struck by how many patients could not afford to meet their basic needs. I soon realized that this had severe consequences for their health and well-being. Too often, I witnessed the enormous stress endured by parents unable to feed their children.

These experiences, nearly twenty years ago, motivated me to become involved in anti-hunger work. I was also deeply affected by volunteering

at a food pantry. I remember one time in particular that I volunteered with my daughter Hannah, who was 8 years old at the time. Our task was to bag donated food for a family that would come later to pick it up. The food pantry gave us a card that described the family and their food preferences. At the top of the card, it stated simply, "Two parents and two children, ages 8 and 12." Hannah looked at me and said, "Dad, that's just like us."

With that comment, she knocked down any wall that stood between the two of us and the family that we were there to help. And she taught me an important lesson that has been confirmed for me again and again. The more you learn about the needs of hungry people and who they are, the more you realize that they are "just like us."

As I continue to immerse myself in the life and operations of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, I'd love to hear ideas that can help us in our work. If you have ideas or suggestions, I hope that you will write to me at the Food Bank. Together with the Food Bank, you have already made great strides toward the ultimate goal of ending hunger. There is still much more to do.....and I look forward to joining you in this vital and important work.

Welcome New Board Members!

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank is pleased to announce the appointment of seven new members to our Board of Directors.

Rev. Jean Barry joins the Board as the Executive Director of WARM Shelter in Westerly, a Food Bank member agency.

Patricia Cerilli is a CPA specializing in non-profit audit work with MullenScorpioCerilli. A former Treasurer of the Kids Count Board of Directors, Patricia has valuable experience working with the community.

Melissa Dick is the Director of Marketing & Special Events for the Boys and Girls Club of Providence. Her expertise in the areas of marketing and development will be an asset to the Food Bank.

Rev. Gerald Finnegan was nominated by Bryan's Food Pantry in Woonsocket. He is a retired priest extremely involved in his community.

Michael Gamboli is a lawyer and partner at the Providence firm of Partridge, Snow and Hahn with expertise in the arena of employment law and has considerable experience serving on boards of directors.

Jewel Lee Gregson has supported the Food Bank through numerous special events through her position as Marketing Team Leader for Whole Foods Market.

Richard Tremblay is the Manager of Community and Ethnic Marketing with Shaw's Supermarket. He has worked with various America's Second Harvest programs throughout New England.

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Citizens Bank Foundation, PawSox and Cox Communications Team up for "Striking Out Hunger"

This summer, the Citizens Bank Foundation, the Pawtucket Red Sox and Cox Communications have teamed up to help the Food Bank feed our neighbors in need.

Throughout the 2007 PawSox baseball season, the Citizens Bank Foundation is donating \$50 to the Food Bank for each strikeout recorded by a PawSox pitcher.

To help promote this initiative, Cox Communications generously donated the production and air-time for a public service announcement that helped educate the community about the problems of hunger and how to help.

Visit McCoy this summer and cheer on the PawSox as they work with the Citizens Bank Foundation and Cox Communications on "Striking Out Hunger" with the Rhode Island Community Food Bank.

Representatives of Cox Communications, the PawSox, Citizens Bank and the Rhode Island Community Food Bank pose for a photo at the press conference announcing this summer's program.



Volunteers Needed for Community Farms

This summer, as the Rhode Island Community Food Bank continues to focus on acquiring and providing more fresh produce, we are in need of volunteers to help our *Community Farms*.

A program of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, the *Community Farms* utilize donated land to grow and provide fresh produce for our hungry neighbors.

The *Community Farms* offer fantastic volunteer opportunities for people of all ages. Volunteers are needed to help weed, water, harvest crops and assist with preparing the farms for fall shut-down. With locations throughout Rhode Island, there's a good chance that one is close to you.

For more information about volunteering, or to sign-up, please contact Farris Maxwell at (401) 942-6325 ext. 224 or via email at fmaxwell@rifoodbank.org.



Volunteer at a Community Farm today!

Garden Locations:

- **Bristol** - Magaziner Farm: 192 Poppasquash Road
- **Bristol** - Mt. Hope Farm: 250 Metacom Avenue
- **Cumberland** - St. John Vianney Church: 3655 Diamond Hill Road
- **Cumberland** - Franklin Farm: 142 Abbot Run Valley Road
- **Foster** - Border's Farm: 31 North Road
- **Smithfield** - St. Philip's Church: 622 Putnam Pike

Hampden Meadows Students Plant Vegetable Seedlings for Rhode Island's Hungry

While planting vegetables and beans at Mt. Hope Farm in Bristol, 4th and 5th graders learned about the importance of helping others.

"It feels so good to know that I am helping people in need by just planting a seed."

"I never knew a few beans could make a difference."



Students planted green beans, cucumbers, beets, tomatoes, eggplant, green peppers and squash.

Pantry Express Expands to Serve More

Last year, the Food Bank successfully launched the *Neighborhood Pantry Express* in Newport and Woonsocket as a means to deliver fresh produce to areas of the state with the highest unmet need.

A generous Strategy Grant from the Rhode Island Foundation will allow for the

expansion of this invaluable mobile food pantry. This summer, deliveries will be added to the high-need areas of Pawtucket, Central Falls and Warwick.

In most of the communities served by *Neighborhood Pantry Express*, more than 15% of the children are living in poverty.

Letter Carriers Continue to Make a Difference 15 Years Later

Continuing with their tireless commitment to the community, Rhode Island Letter

Carriers answered the call to help the hungry of our state during this year's 15th Annual National Association of Letter Carriers Food Drive.

During their daily routes, Letter Carriers collected over 175,000 pounds of food for their neighbors in need. The high-quality, nutritious food brought to the Food



The NALC Food Drive is the largest single-day food collection effort in the country.

Bank will be vital in meeting the increased need this summer.

The Food Bank is thankful to the National Association of Letter Carriers, the United States Postal Service, the United Way of Rhode Island and the local AFL-CIO for their hard work and efforts, without which there would be much more hunger this summer.



Raising the Bar on Nutrition



This Spring, the Food Bank launched *Raising the Bar on Nutrition*, an innovative program which helps our member agency partners attain the most nutritional value from the foods available through the Food Bank.

There are currently eight member agencies taking part in the program. Each participating agency works with their client base to familiarize them with the food items which have a higher nutritional value than the products that they may be using on a regular basis. For example, in place of such items as white rice and pasta, *Raising the Bar on Nutrition* encourages the use of brown rice and whole wheat pastas. The program also promotes cooking with extra virgin olive oil, which contains a number of components that will help decrease the risk of chronic

diseases, such as heart disease and cancer.

As part of the program, cooking demonstrations are held so that agency representatives and their clients have a first-hand opportunity to learn new recipes and techniques for preparing meals with highly-nutritious ingredients. Taste testing is the most popular part of the demonstration!

All of the recipes and nutritional information for *Raising the Bar on Nutrition* is provided by Food Bank Board Member Mary Flynn. Mary, who holds her Ph.D. in nutrition and is a published author in the field, also does all of the cooking demos.

Looking ahead, the Food Bank hopes to expand *Raising the Bar on Nutrition* to more agency partners.

Hunger Awareness Day Brings Attention to Problem of Hunger

The Chad A. Verdi Family Trust, Searle's Olde Tyme Ice Cream & Whole Foods Help Raise Funds and Awareness

On June 5th, the Rhode Island Community Food Bank recognized Hunger Awareness Day with a brown bag lunch at the Bank of America City Center in Providence.

For a \$10 contribution, guests received a lunch donated by Whole Foods. Additionally, each lunch purchased was generously matched by the Chad A. Verdi Family Trust and Searle's Olde Tyme Ice Cream.

More than 300 people attended, helping to raise awareness about the serious, but solvable problem of hunger. The funds raised directly benefit Food Bank member agencies.

Save These Important Dates

Ocean State Harley-Davidson Owners Group Charity Ride Sunday, September 23rd

Don't miss the new and improved 4th Annual Ocean State HOG Chapter's Charity Ride to benefit the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. The registration cost to ride is \$25. Sign-up between 9am and 11am at Ocean State Harley-Davidson, 5 Albany Road in Warwick.

The ride will conclude at Lincoln Woods State Park where participants can enjoy food, soft drinks, music, games and prizes.

"Miles for Hunger" Dinner Saturday, October 20th

In recognition of the 20th Anniversary of the "Coast-to-Coast: Miles for Hunger" walk, the group is holding a dinner celebration at the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Tickets to the event will be \$25 per person. For more information, please call Sara Clarke at (401) 447-6419 or visit www.milesforhunger.net.

20th Annual Scouting for Food Drive Bag-Drop: Saturday, October 27th Bag Pick-Up: Saturday, November 3rd

For the 20th consecutive year, thousands of Boy Scouts will be coming to doors throughout Rhode Island as they begin their annual good turn of helping area residents at risk of hunger.

Scouts will leave a collection bag for non-perishable food donations at homes on the last Saturday in October and return the following Saturday to pick them up. Please leave your donation outside by 9am.

Please continue to check our website for more details.

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