

## A Mother Struggles to Feed Her Sons

### LANA'S STORY

*Lana is a recently divorced mother who depends on the Pembroke Soup Connection to feed her young sons. She and her family are like so many in eastern Massachusetts who are struggling to make ends meet. More and more are turning to The Greater Boston Food Bank's (GBFB) member agencies for the food they need to stay active and healthy.*

*This is Lana's story.*

"Both of my sons have special needs – the younger is severely autistic, non-verbal and in a wheelchair – and there's no one else who can give them the care they need. I had a career in IT, but there's just no way I can be there for my children and hold down full-time employment. Last summer, I lost my part-time job because I had to put my boys first. When my ex-husband got laid off a few months later, he was unable to pay child support. All of a sudden, we were in serious trouble.

"You never think you could be someone who can't afford to feed their kids.

*Continued on p. 3*



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# Together, We Can End Hunger Here

Dear Friends,

The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) has come a long way since 1974, when our founder, Kip Tiernan, started loading up her station wagon with food and distributing it to families facing hunger. She'd learned that compassion from her grandmother, who marked an "X" on her front sidewalk during the Great Depression as a signal to those in need: "Here, you can get a meal."

Kip's operation started small, but her passion to End Hunger in her community was boundless. Today, GBFB operates out of our 117,000 square foot warehouse in South Boston from which we distributed 54 million pounds of nutritious food last year, and we're on track to distribute 57 million pounds this year. That's enough for 47.5 million healthy meals. Still today, it is a simple vision – a hunger-free eastern Massachusetts – that drives everything we do.

The lingering effects of the Great Recession, combined with rising costs for everything – especially food – are hurting our most vulnerable neighbors: parents who are working, but still can't afford to feed themselves and their kids; seniors getting by on fixed incomes, and forced to choose between filling a prescription or buying food; and children, for whom getting enough nutritious food to eat is critical to healthy growth.

One in nine members of our community is unsure where his or her next meal is coming from. They are hungry and hurting. Helping them through tough times and back to better health and self-sufficiency helps us all.

Over the years, we have grown dramatically, and that growth is due to how many of our neighbors in eastern Massachusetts need help. We are always working as efficiently and effectively as possible to ensure those in need have access to nutritious food so they can be healthy and active members of our community.

Join us. With your support, together we can achieve a compassionate and sustainable solution to hunger in eastern Massachusetts. Together, we can End Hunger Here.

Sincerely,



Catherine D'Amato  
President and CEO

## UMASS FOOD PANTRY HELPS STUDENTS IN NEED



It's difficult to learn on an empty stomach. The issue of child hunger and initiatives to help alleviate this epidemic, such as school meal programs and our own School-based Pantries, are well known. However, many do not realize that college and graduate students are also at risk of hunger. Regardless of age, it's difficult to learn on an empty stomach.

"There's a misconception that students in higher education don't have a problem accessing the food they need to stay healthy," explains Shirley Fan-Chan, Director of the University of Massachusetts (UMass) Boston's U-ACCESS program, which

supports students to achieve academic success without being derailed by non-academic issues. "But many of our students are struggling to pay their tuition as well as living expenses, and their degree requirements make it very hard for them to hold down a job while completing their coursework. Too many are forced to choose between paying their tuition and buying essentials like food. To feed their families, some are forced to drop out, abandoning their dreams of a better life."

To help address these challenges, in 2013 Fan-Chan launched a program that provided a bag of donated food items to eligible students once a week. By 2015, the growth of the program necessitated a more sustainable approach, and she turned to GBFB for help. By becoming one of GBFB's 550 member agencies, the U-ACCESS Food Pantry at UMass Boston has doubled the number of students it serves. They are also able to provide a greater variety of healthy food options, like fresh fruits and vegetables. Their market-style distribution allows students to choose items that are best for themselves and their families.

"With GBFB as our partner, UMass students can now access high quality, nutritious food twice per week. The grocery money they save can be put toward other expenses, like rent and tuition," concludes Fan-Chan, who regularly fields requests from other schools for advice on how they can help struggling students. "Now, we're able to plan further expansion to five days a week. Together, we're helping to ensure that students successfully complete their degree and improve their life choices and opportunities."

In addition to the food pantry at UMass Boston, The Greater Boston Food Bank also serves this student population through Mobile Market distributions at Bunker Hill Community College, Bristol County Community College and 8 K-12 schools. Last year, GBFB provided 362,795 pounds of nutritious food, enough for over 302,000 meals to students across eastern Massachusetts.

*Photo courtesy of University of Massachusetts Boston.*



## LANA'S STORY (Continued from p. 1)

"It was just before Thanksgiving last year and I'd decided that, no matter what, we were going to have a traditional holiday meal. So, when we drove past the Pembroke Soup Connection and saw a sign offering 'free' turkey and other holiday foods, my older son – who has autism – got excited and urged me to stop. I'd never been to a food pantry, and was worried about the stigma that comes with needing that kind of help. I almost didn't pull over, but I'm so grateful that we did.

"First of all, the people were so friendly and welcoming. They took an immediate interest in my sons, and were incredibly patient and caring. They made sure my son had foods that considered his peanut allergy! I was feeling down on myself, because I couldn't afford turkey for Thanksgiving, but their warmth and support changed that.

"Now, we visit the Pembroke Soup Connection twice a month. And because food is so expensive, the fresh fruits and vegetables and meats we get there, not to mention healthy snacks and juices, frees up money for other essential needs, like paying bills and providing a good life for my boys.

"I tell my friends, 'don't feel sorry for me, because what's happened to my family could happen to anyone.' Some of them need help, too, and I encourage them to reach out for it. With my sons back in school this fall, I can go back to part-time work. We'll be ok. I know things will continue to get better, and we're not alone. The Pembroke Soup Connection serves more than 1,200 other clients a month and receives about 90% of all their food from GBFB."



# A DAY IN THE LIFE:

## GBFB Truck Drivers Play a Critical Role in Ending Hunger Here in Our Community

For many of our member agencies, food partners and direct distribution sites, our truck drivers are the welcome and friendly faces who pick up and deliver critical, healthy food throughout the 190 cities and towns of eastern Massachusetts.

It's a big operation: Our fleet of 13 vehicles covers over 135,000 miles annually. Every mile is monitored and managed for maximum efficiency using tracking technology. We are constantly increasing operational efficiencies and optimizing routes to save time and resources that can be focused on distributing more healthy food.

On any given day, our drivers are traveling to the Cape, to a member agency in the Boston area, dropping off food at a School-based Pantry or picking up a retail food donation on the North Shore. Their tireless efforts are crucial to our mission to End Hunger Here. Check out a Day-in-the-Life of a GBFB Driver:



John, a GBFB Driver, and Jack, Warehouse Manager, open our doors for the day. Drivers pick up their daily loading schedule, and arrange trucks at the loading bays. Food orders were staged the day before and are ready in front of the bays (perishable product added as loading begins).



GBFB drivers report for their daily safety meeting where top weekly priorities and daily schedules are shared.

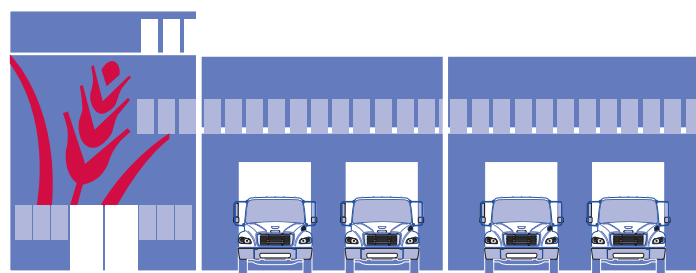


Drivers conduct truck pre-inspections by checking tires, engine oil and other safety components. Results are entered into a digital reporting system. After inspection, our drivers begin their journey, leaving with up to 125,000 pounds of healthy food!



Tyrone arrives at the Lawrence Senior Center to deliver 700 Brown Bags, one of two monthly deliveries. One in three seniors in eastern MA is food insecure. Our Brown Bag Program helps to sustain this vulnerable population with nutritious food. Each month, 1,400 Lawrence seniors receive a grocery bag filled with healthy staples.

GBFB also delivers to 14 other Brown Bag sites.



Drivers return to GBFB to unload, inspect and clean their trucks. Tomorrow, it all begins again, bright and early at 4:00 AM!



Back at GBFB, Matt, our Transportation Coordinator, monitors each driver's route while coordinating with our food acquisition and distribution teams. Matt learns about a new donation from Garelick Farms in Lynn.



"Jimmy is a welcomed sight in our parking lot. Not only does he bring us nutritious food for our clients, he always is punctual, informative and has a smile on his face."

- Mike Cote, Coyle and Cassidy Food Pantry (Taunton, MA)



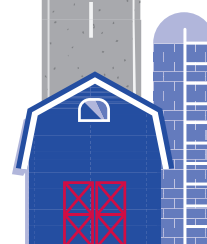
Jimmy arrives at Brockton's Full Gospel pantry, who rely on Jimmy to deliver 3,500 pounds of fresh, healthy and critical food each week. They also genuinely consider him a friend and surprise Jimmy with a birthday celebration. Jimmy was overwhelmed and grateful!



Sarath just finished deliveries to pantries and cross dock sites, and is on his way back to GBFB with fresh bread from Gold Medal Bakery. Our fleet of drivers travels about 550 miles each day.



Tim is in Everett and Matt notifies him to stop by Garelick Farms on his way back to GBFB to pick up the donation. This is a great example of how we maximize time by utilizing our geographic area to our advantage, creating efficiencies where we can.



Guido turns into the Marshall Middle School parking lot in Billerica, one of GBFB's 8 School-based Pantry sites. Billerica is the perfect host site as the town lacks in hunger relief resources. Guido is greeted with smiles and by volunteers who help unload the truck-full of healthy food. Each student receives 40-50 pounds of healthy food, and 300 families are served every month.



Juan, our veteran driver of 25 years, arrives at The Family Pantry of Cape Cod with a weekly delivery for the 30 agencies of the Cape Cod hunger network. Every month, Juan delivers an average of 116,000 pounds of healthy food, enough for 97,000 healthy meals. Clients are grateful for this regular supply of meat, seafood, dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables, cereal and pasta.





# Corporate Partners Impact Hunger

We are fortunate that more than 1,000 corporations join GBFB every year to support our mission to End Hunger Here in eastern Massachusetts. And, 140 of these organizations play a significant role as Partners for Impact, partnering closely with us in a variety of ways that aren't just making a strong impact on hunger; they're also making a positive difference in their organization's culture and for their employees. We're working together to build healthier, stronger communities!

Corporations partner with GBFB through programs and initiatives that align with their priorities, including:

- Program & event support,
- Employee giving and matching gifts,
- Cause marketing campaigns,
- Volunteerism
- In-kind support

There are three corporations, among many, that embody the ideal partnership:

**Liberty Mutual has been a strong partner** since 1988, encouraging their employees to support those in need through the Give With Liberty giving campaign and volunteer program, providing generous grants through the Liberty Mutual Foundation, as well as campaign funding for our distribution facility.

**“Our support and volunteering with GBFB allows Liberty Mutual employees to play a part in strengthening the local community and improving the lives of their neighbors. It gives our employees the chance to connect with others who share their passion for GBFB’s mission, and helps to transform and enhance employee relationships and teamwork.”** – Paul Concepcion, Accountant – Commercial Insurance Finance – Reinsurance, Liberty Mutual.

**Trip Advisor has been an enthusiastic, employee-driven partner since 2012.** The international company empowers employees to give back locally – providing \$250 annually to every employee to donate to their charity of choice. GBFB participates in their nonprofit fairs, and Trip Advisor volunteers embrace innovative opportunities to help GBFB sort and pack food for distribution to those who need it most.



**“We want our employees to live in communities that are healthy and strong. As a technology company, we’re used to measuring our outcomes in a very tangible and detailed way. The same goes for what we do on a philanthropic and volunteer level. We know we’re making a strong impact when we partner with GBFB.”** – Tali Golan, Head of TripAdvisor Charitable Foundation, TripAdvisor.

**Biogen (pictured above) has partnered with GBFB** since 1995, and provides generous support and encourages their employees to dedicate a “Day of Service” each year at GBFB.

**“The Greater Boston Food Bank changes lives in a positive way, which is something that aligns with Biogen and our employees who Care Deeply and Change Lives by creating innovative medicines for serious illnesses. Our employees and interns enjoy volunteering at The Greater Boston Food Bank because they feel a direct connection to their community and are proud of the strong impact of our financial support.”** – Chris Barr, Executive Director, Biogen Foundation and Associate Director, Community Relations, Biogen.

These corporations are Partners for Impact who wholeheartedly engage with GBFB to make a real impact on our mission to End Hunger Here. Together, we are making a difference, and we could not do our work without their support. To learn more about how to engage your company with GBFB and become a Partner for Impact, visit GBFB.org.



## Committed to a Hunger-Free Community: Brookline Family Helps Sustain GBFB

Henry and Lisa Chen of Brookline are members of The Greater Boston Food Bank's (GBFB) Sustainers Circle, a growing group of families and individuals who pledge monthly donations to support our mission to End Hunger Here. They spoke recently about their commitment to our work, and what it means to help those facing hunger in our community.

“My family emigrated from China – first to Vietnam, then to the U.S. – in pursuit of a better life,” noted Henry. “We settled in Boston in the early ‘80s, where my father started what would become a successful chain of grocery stores in Chinatown and Boston’s surrounding area. Food was

the family business, and he would always quote a Chinese proverb and say, ‘people take care of their stomach first; you can’t do anything if you’re hungry.’

“So, when we studied how we could give back locally, GBFB was a natural fit as the ‘mother ship’ for hunger relief in the region. If GBFB doesn’t do well, all the food pantries and other local organizations that distribute food won’t either.”

Lisa, who emigrated from Hong Kong to attend Tufts University in the late ‘90s, also appreciates that their daughters, 10-year-old Ellie, and 7-year-old Stella, are learning the

importance of committing to a cause they believe in through the Sustainers Circle. “Our daughters can relate to this issue because we also participate in their school’s food drive twice a year, to benefit the Brookline Food Pantry,” she explains. “In addition to raising their awareness of the needs of our neighbors, knowing that we donate to GBFB every month is teaching them how they, themselves, can contribute to make a positive difference.”

“That sense of sustained commitment,” adds Henry, “is important for us as a family.”



GBFB's Sustainers Circle has grown to more than 1,100 individuals and families who pledge monthly gifts to support our work. Their committed generosity allows us to focus on achieving a hunger-free eastern Massachusetts. Last year, Sustainers Circle gifts provided 1.5 million healthy meals to struggling families in our community.

**Learn more about the Sustainer’s Circle, and the benefits of joining:**

**GBFB.org/sustainers**



## DISTRIBUTING FRESH PRODUCE WITH COMMUNITY MEDICAL CENTERS

GBFB is raising awareness about the connection between hunger and health by piloting new partnerships with community health centers that serve areas with high levels of food insecurity. The approach involves a simple method of screening their patients for food insecurity paired with regular, on-site fresh produce Mobile Markets.

Our new Mobile Market at the Charles River Community Health Center in Allston, which started last April, has served a growing number of struggling families. Participants choose from a 'rainbow' of diverse produce items (e.g. apples, melons, cucumbers, onions, celery, carrots and sweet potatoes), and receive nutrition information, as well as simple recipes, to help them integrate healthier food choices into their diets.

### How does it work?

Those who agree are screened using the Hunger Vital Sign™, a two-question tool based on the US Household Food Security Scale to identify individuals at risk of food insecurity. We found that 99% of those screened had regularly been unsure where their next meal was coming from during the past year. This supports GBFB's focus on partnerships with area healthcare centers, where we can reach more vulnerable members of our community who are facing hunger. Impact to date at Charles River Community Health Center includes distributing 15,000 pounds of fresh produce, enough for 12,500 healthy meals and serving more than 416 people at the last distribution. We're looking forward to launching more of these partnerships in the near future to help create a hunger free eastern Massachusetts.

## Food Safety at GBFB and Beyond

Contaminated foods can cause food borne illness, which is a common and potentially serious problem that sickens as many as one in six Americans each year. Ensuring the safety of every food item distributed by The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB) is an important part of our mission to End Hunger Here, and we work closely with our network of member agencies to ensure that food safety is a priority.

"We serve some of the most vulnerable members of our community," notes Lauren Casale, our Senior Nutrition Education Coordinator, and one of two Registered Dietitians at GBFB. "People with a strong immune system might get sick from contaminated food for a few days and then recover. But for very young children, pregnant women, seniors, those who are homeless – and others who may have weakened or compromised immune systems – a food borne illness can be deadly."

GBFB's commitment to the proper storage and handling of food to avoid food borne illnesses is comprehensive. Our own internal procedures rigorously adhere to best practices in food safety. We conduct regular workshops and provide support for each of our 550 member agencies (and their volunteers) to make certain they, too, understand and follow best practices. Our goal is to ensure that all GBFB-provided, as well as other sourced foods, remain safe to eat.

"GBFB's food safety education program teaches best practices all the way down the chain – from its arrival and sorting at our warehouse, through delivery to our agency partners, and, finally, to those in need," continued Ms. Casale. "We also encourage and provide resources to our partners to enable them to reach out to and educate their clients about the importance of proper storage and handling of food."

**Graphic: Tips from GBFB's  
Food Safety Workshop**

