



GBFB.org

harvest

Summer 2021

Home Is Where Your Neighbors Care

“Everybody is like my family here.”

- Pedro, client at The Family Pantry - Damien's Place, Wareham

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**FEEDING
AMERICA**



Dear Friends,

Everyone has a role in ending hunger, and GBFB is fortunate to have friends like you who embrace yours. Together, we're working toward a future where every family can walk into a grocery store and buy what they need.

To lift our communities, we must address root issues that have been starkly highlighted by the pandemic, as we report on page 5. Injustice and inequality both contribute to the chronic food insecurity that keeps families trapped in a cycle of need. If we're going to build that future without hunger, it will take ongoing collaboration with donors like you, pantries like Damien's Place, volunteers like Ashanti, and partners like MathWorks.

Damien's Place expanded its services during the pandemic—an incredible feat, given the increased need. Driving the expansion was a grant from GBFB, made possible in part by friends like you. You'll hear from Jackie, the pantry's director on this page.

To mark her 26th birthday, Ashanti brought a group of friends to pack Family Meal Boxes at GBFB. We celebrate her wonderful contribution on page 4.

GBFB also has the honor of partnering with MathWorks to help local students of all ages succeed this school year. You can learn more about their \$1 million Growing Healthy Futures campaign as well as the match we are working towards on page 4.

When it comes to ending hunger, one of us isn't the answer; we're all the answer! Thank you again for doing your part. Together, we can end hunger here.

Gratefully,



Catherine D'Amato
President and CEO



Sustaining the Southcoast



Jackie and her husband, Patrick, sort through recent food donations from their community in Wareham. She calls her work at the food pantry a "way of life."

"I always joke that we're the only business in town trying to go out of business," laughs Jackie Arsenault, director of Damien's Place.

Jackie and her team are in the business of feeding East Wareham, where this GBFB partner agency is located, and several surrounding communities. When the COVID-19 crisis began, Jackie made a bold decision. "We've been open to anyone who needs food, and we want to stay that way!" she vows.

Thanks to the steady support of GBFB, Jackie is confident about making this happen. Friends like you have already enabled her to double the capacity at Damien's Place in this time of historic need. "We took on more space to prepack bags of food and store them," she explains. "This has helped us serve up to 160 people every week."

"GBFB has been fantastic," Jackie continues. "We never got to a point where we ran out of food. We were even able to help supply two other local pantries."



"We've been open to anyone who needs food, and we want to stay that way."

-Jackie

Being able to sustain her neighbors in need—like Pedro and his family, whom you'll meet on page 3—is so important to Jackie.

"This isn't a job for me, it's a way of life," she says simply. "On my days off, or lying awake at night, I'm constantly thinking of ways to improve our pantry. It's a passion. I love being able to interact with our clients."

Through your support, you can help Damien's Place continue to improve just as its dedicated director envisions. Thank you for helping all of our local partners take on hunger.

[Learn more at:](#)

[GBFB.org/distribution](https://www.gbfb.org/distribution)



Pedro not only receives food at Damien's Place, a GBFB partner agency in Wareham, he also helps out and gives back as a volunteer.

Generosity is One Key Component to A Healthy Diet

Pedro and his family came to the Southcoast area from Puerto Rico 12 years ago. Here they found a warm and welcoming community with a multilingual church. It was the perfect place for Pedro and his wife Maria to raise their three children.

While full of wonderful new opportunities, life here has not been without its challenges. In recent years, both Pedro and Maria have been dealing with medical issues that prevent them from working. Not having enough healthy food to eat quickly became a serious concern.



*"The food is beautiful,
the pantry is beautiful,
the whole team is
just beautiful!"*

-Pedro

Fortunately, Pedro's family can always count on generous friends like you. By giving to The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB), you enable us to support

a network of more than 600 local partner agencies, including Damien's Place, a food pantry and community resource center in East Wareham.

"Thank God for the big family at the pantry!" Maria says, smiling brightly. "We receive bread, meat, potatoes, carrots, canned soup, bananas, cheese—everything we need, at the holidays and all year long!"

Pedro can barely contain his gratitude as he adds, "The food is beautiful, the pantry is beautiful, the whole team is just beautiful!"

In fact, Pedro is so inspired by the kindness he receives that he volunteers at Damien's Place every other Saturday morning. He helps set up for the distributions and delivers food boxes to members of his church who don't have access to transportation.

"Everybody is like my family here," he beams.

This is the real impact of your gifts to GBFB: You help forge connections that change lives—and strengthen our entire community. Thank you for your dedication to ending hunger across Eastern Massachusetts.

Greater Than the Sum of Our Parts

MathWorks-sponsored campaign doubles gifts to end student hunger

The math always adds up. When a student has healthy food to eat, their concentration improves. That ability to focus is essential to good grades and long-term success!

To help GBFB end student hunger, MathWorks, the leading developer of mathematical computing software for engineers and scientists, is sponsoring a \$1 million campaign called **Growing Healthy Futures**.

This amazing initiative will double donations to GBFB during July, August, and September—potentially totaling \$2 million in urgently needed food for students of all ages and their families!

For college students, healthy food can mean the difference between passing and failing. For grade-schoolers, three nutritious meals a day are essential to their growth and learning.

When you help GBFB and MathWorks **grow healthy futures**, you'll put twice the resources toward programs like our School-based Pantries and Family Meal Boxes—both critical to ensuring our local scholars will be ready to start the new school year with plenty of nourishing food.



GBFB.org/GHF

Together, we can provide 4 million healthy meals for students and families in need. That sum is incredible, but what it represents is even greater: the foundation for a more successful, healthier future for our whole community.

Sponsored by:  MathWorks



Volunteer Spreads Cheer, Light, and Love



Superstar volunteer Ashanti (center) and her friends loved helping at GBFB.

Dorchester native Ashanti Lacet is on a mission to make a positive impact in our neighbors' lives every month. In May, Ashanti and her team of close friends joined us in the GBFB warehouse to pack Family Meal Boxes.

"GBFB had availability on my birthday," Ashanti laughs. "So I said, let's get the gang together and go volunteer!"

"Everyone loved it," she continues. "It was so naturally rewarding. People got fed and I'm glad I was able to be a part of it, especially during COVID."

Ashanti realized she had a passion for making a difference while she was working at a rehab clinic as part of her college thesis. She noticed right away that people appreciated even the smallest gestures.

"They'd thank me just for my time and understanding," she recalls. "I really loved the feeling of changing people's day!"

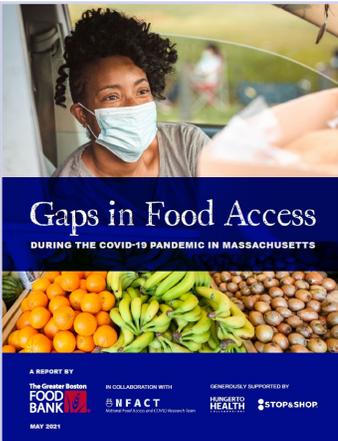
"I want to be a resource for the community!"

-Ashanti

Energized by this experience, Ashanti launched The Lacet Project, her own personal initiative to spread cheer, light, and love. She has brought backpacks full of school supplies to underprivileged students in Haiti. Here at home, she has handed out "blessing bags" filled with toiletries, socks, and other essentials. And she helps to stock community fridges with free food for anyone who needs it.

Ashanti also uses social media to publicize where neighbors can find help and how they can give back, too. "I want to be a resource for the community!" she says.

From all of us at GBFB, thank you for the good you're doing, Ashanti—and for spending your birthday with us!



New Study Lays Groundwork for Eliminating Food Insecurity

To gauge the impact of the pandemic on hunger in our state, GBFB conducted a survey in partnership with the National Food Access and COVID Research Team, the Hunger to Health Collaboratory, and Stop & Shop.

Between October 2020 and January 2021, our researchers engaged with 3,000 residents online and found that 30 percent were experiencing food insecurity. Latinx and Black populations, already affected at higher rates by the COVID-19 crisis, also faced hunger at disproportionate rates, at 58 percent and 45 percent, respectively.



“Food pantries are very helpful when you’re having a hard time. They’re for anyone looking to add food to their house if they can’t afford the grocery store.”

- Single mom, Malden

The resulting study also seeks to identify key barriers to food access because, despite the record-breaking need, only 1 in 3 people reported using food pantries. Many of our neighbors felt strongly about remaining self-sufficient. Embarrassment, misunderstandings about qualifications, and fear of discrimination also factored into the low resource use rate.

With the support of friends like you, GBFB will put this data to work to address the inequities that lead to food insecurity in our area. We will strive to:

- Reduce stigma surrounding food pantry use.
- Connect with communities of color to dispel concerns about discrimination.
- Collaborate with diverse groups and amplify their voices in all we do.
- Provide an equity perspective on food distribution and access.

Together, we can ensure every neighbor has access to the nutritious food they need to thrive.

You can read the full study online at:

[GBFB.org/data](https://gbfb.org/data)



Avocado Summer Wrap

Serves 4 (1 wrap each)

Ingredients

- 1 medium avocado ripe, seeded, peeled, and cut into chunks
- 1/2 cup plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 teaspoon lime juice
- 1/2 cup blueberries fresh or thawed frozen
- 1 small carrot grated
- 1/4 small red onion chopped
- 2 cups fresh arugula chopped (or greens of choice)
- 12 ounces cooked chicken breast cubed (about 1.5 cups)
- 4 each whole wheat tortillas

Directions

1. Mash half the avocado chunks with yogurt and lime juice in a medium bowl.
2. Add remaining filling ingredients, including the rest of the avocado chunks; mix gently.
3. Top each tortilla with 1/4 of filling mixture.
4. Roll tuck in ends. Slice in half diagonally, securing with toothpicks, if needed.

For more healthy recipes, visit clickncook.org

Your gift doubles!

Grow healthy futures with GBFB and MathWorks.

You can help kids across Eastern Massachusetts eat healthy today so they can reach for the stars tomorrow.

Your gift by September 30th will help provide **2X** the healthy food for students of all ages and their families.

To help end student hunger, give online today at: **[GBFB.org/GHF](https://www.gbfb.org/GHF)**

Sponsored by:

