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harvest

Thanksgiving 2022

The Value of a Helping Hand

“It could make a
difference in changing
someone’s world.”

—Zuri Dixon, client at Beverly Bootstraps

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Catherine's Message

Dear Friends,

Thanksgiving is one of my favorite holidays: no cards, no gifts... nothing but family and friends and hopefully—ideally—remembering and recognizing good fortune.

This issue of Harvest is dedicated to that recognition—a thank you to and from clients, partners, volunteers and donors, who explain how necessary, valued and meaningful our work is. And how much remains to be done.

Whether it is recognition of GBFB 2022 volunteers, the support of Boston-area restaurants and their patrons for our new The Helping Menu program, or the new community investment grants we've made, the message remains constant. We thank you and could not do it without you.

I'm especially heartened by a remark from volunteer Anne Randolph, who doubled her efforts at the GBFB when Covid hit. "There's actually quite a lot in the world that people do for other people," she says.

And the power of giving reaches far beyond the immediate benefits of a food box or a wholesome meal. As clients such as Zuri Dixon, who draws on food pantry Beverly Bootstraps for support, will attest, "It's about helping people function in their lives, and feeling included—being able to be a part of the world."

Our warmest wishes to you this Thanksgiving.

Gratefully,



Catherine D'Amato
(She/Her)
President and CEO



Addressing Client Barriers in Fall River



Left to right: Michele Moniz, Lucy Colman, Mayor Paul Coogan, Helen Rego, Robert Allen, Dave Perry (ED Greater Fall River Food Pantry), Sophia England (GBFB intern), Rachel Weil (GBFB staff).

Better understanding the barriers to food access enables us to serve clients and communities more effectively—a conclusion underscored by recent research by GBFB's statewide food insecurity survey. But, effectively acting locally requires a closer, more intimate look.

We recently turned our attention to the Southcoast region as our data has shown that this region experiences significantly high rates of food insecurity for our service area and Fall River in particular faces one of the highest. There was an opportunity to approach that disparity differently—so we are.

We partnered with the YMCA Southcoast and the Southcoast Food Policy Council to focus on the City of Fall River. Fall River not only has a strong network of providers, including United Way and more than 30 highly client-focused organizations, but also vibrant cultural diversity. One in five residents were born outside the U.S.

So, we conducted a community survey in five languages, asking about food pantry access including transportation, operating hours, food preferences, discrimination and registration requirements. More than 160 responses were analyzed by Rachel Weil on GBFB's Community Investment Team and shared with the Fall River working group, who will determine the next steps.

Directly connecting to clients to better inform our services, creating a replicable model for engaging clients and addressing barriers for other regions across our network are our goals. As Rachel explains, "If this model for engaging with community works, we can take this on the road and help address barriers across our network."

Learn more at:

GBFB.org/about



Beverly Bootstraps provides critical resources to families and individuals north of Boston. They open four days a week for clients to “shop” the pantry for fresh produce, proteins, staple items and extras.

Stories of Hope: Zuri Dixon

Zuri Dixon* knows something about navigating through adversity—and the value of a helping hand, especially during the holidays.

A 40-year-old mother of four teenagers—all of them with special needs—her days are dedicated to managing school and doctor’s appointments. Her husband works full-time, but they often find themselves mired in the frustration of accessing benefits: “We qualify for free lunches,” she explains, “but we don’t qualify for SNAP, and I’m always going back and forth with Social Security... to try to keep healthcare benefits.”

For nearly 14 years, GBFB partner Beverly Bootstraps of Beverly, MA, has been her go-to provider of food support, particularly at this time of year. “That holiday food helps a lot... A family like mine might have spent \$200 on a Thanksgiving meal. And we’ve cut it down to \$50 now for just the items to go with whatever the pantry gives us.”

But it’s not just about the food, she says. It’s so much more. “This is where I can go to get a backpack if I need one, if I need help filling out an application for something—copies, whatever—I can come here... It’s about helping people function in their lives and feeling included, being able to be a part of the world.”

“It’s about helping people function in their lives and feeling included, being able to be a part of the world.”

—Zuri Dixon,
on the impact of GBFB partner Beverly Bootstraps

“There’s been a couple of times I couldn’t get here, and they delivered the food to my house,” she adds. “They brought the food in the trucks directly to my house! What kind of people do that? They knew, and it was because I’m traveling back and forth, and my child is sick... things like that.”

So, what would she say to a potential donor?

“I think I would tell them that if they could understand that people struggle, people are really trying hard and it’s a difficult time right now... it could make a difference in changing someone’s world.”

**Name has been changed and images are representative*

Something for Everyone at Thanksgiving

GBFB does more than just feed our neighbors. We also invest in our community in a variety of ways—including funding. Over the last decade, GBFB has distributed more than \$2 million to our network of 600 partners through grants and financial support. In 2022 alone, GBFB partners have received Community Investment Grant funding for capacity building totaling some \$850,000—thanks to our donors. These investments play a critical role in our mission to end hunger here, helping to enable our food distribution partners to distribute more nutritious food to more people.

“We believe that the only way to achieve our mission to end hunger here is to do it together.”

—Jonathan Tetrault,
GBFB’s Vice President of Community Impact

But as this Thanksgiving approaches, the need persists, and we recognize our partners need a bit more support. We began looking for a way to do something even more expansive. The result? A decision to provide one-time funding to ALL of our partners to respond to the immediate needs this holiday season due to inflation and the ongoing impact of the pandemic.



“This is the season of giving and our partners are giving so much each and every day to those they serve,” says Jonathan Tetrault, GBFB’s Vice President of Community Impact. “We believe that the only way to achieve our mission to end hunger here is to do it together. The ability for us to Feed Eastern Massachusetts relies on the strength of our partners and investing in their expertise—we value their ability to know what’s best for their community.”

Giving is on the Menu

If you’re a patron of Boston-area restaurants, you may be encountering some compelling new menu choices.

This fall, GBFB launched a new program called The Helping Menu, to coincide with Hunger Action Month.



Participating restaurants are adding a simple item—an appetizer or entrée—to their menus that offer an opportunity to donate directly to GBFB. Menu selections might include ‘Twice Baked Goodness,’ or ‘Scratch-made Support,’ with descriptions such as, “Somewhere, someone is missing a meal. Add this to your order and you are making a donation directly to The Greater Boston Food Bank.”

Guests simply order the appetizer or entrée, and that item is added to their check as a donation to GBFB, collected through the restaurant’s POS terminal—a simple, impactful way for restaurants to support GBFB—and with no out-of-pocket expense to the restaurant.

“Feeding people and giving back to our community is a key ingredient to our life’s work.”

—Joanne Chang and Christopher Myers
Myers+Chang and Flour Bakery+Cafe

Early adopters of GBFB’s program include Myers and Chang, Harvest, The Banks Fish House and Trillium. With continued outreach, GBFB anticipates many more restaurateurs to participate in the program.

Thank you GBFB Partners!

For two decades, GBFB has been giving awards to its partners who support our work. It's one way that we say thank you to the companies, organizations, individual donors, public advocates, food pantries, hunger-relief partners, volunteers and many others who are helping us to reach our goal to end hunger in Eastern Massachusetts.

The acknowledgements range from the Founders Award, which recognizes an individual or organization who demonstrates extraordinary leadership after GBFB's Founder, Kip Tiernan, to Individual Volunteer of the Year—an individual or group that has volunteered for at least two years and has had a significant impact on GBFB.

These 2022 recipients personify the method and mission of GBFB. Thank you, and congratulations to all who were honored this year:



William Bigelow, Chief Operating Officer for Blount Fine Foods, accepts the Partner Appreciation Award from Cheryl Schondek, Chief Operating Officer at The Greater Boston Food Bank.

2022 Partner Appreciation Award Recipients

Founder's Award | MathWorks

Leadership Award | Mintz

President's Choice Award | WCVB Channel 5

In-Kind Donor of the Year | Outfront Media

Food Donor of the Year | Blount Fine Foods

Community Partner of the Year | Loaves & Fishes Pantry

Volunteer of the Year: Individuals | Anne Randolph of Cambridge, MA and Mike Collins of Needham, MA

Volunteer of the Year: Institution | McKinsey & Company

Public Advocates of the Year Award

Senator Harriette Chandler (State Senate Advocate of the Year)

Representative Dan Hunt (MA House of Representatives Advocate of the Year)

Nominee: Massachusetts Department of Agricultural Resources (MDAR) (Advocate of the Year | State)

Public Advocate of the Year Award: Organization | Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Congratulations to GBFB's Individual Volunteers of the Year!

Anne Randolph of Cambridge, MA, had been volunteering at GBFB since April 2017. But when the pandemic brought the meaning of 'food insecurity' home to everyone, it prompted her to redouble her effort and time. To date, she has offered more than 900 hours of service to GBFB.

Described by the GBFB team members as a 'superstar,' Anne can usually be found at the far end of the food sorting room, positioned to answer questions from new volunteers. The work has brought with it its own awareness and reward: "There's actually quite a lot in the world that people do for other people," she says.

Mike Collins of Needham, MA, has logged more than 480 hours—60 days of work—in supporting GBFB's mission. Mike is efficient,



effective and responsible, and his kind demeanor and background in training pay dividends in the encouragement and assistance he gives new volunteers. And everything he does, the GBFB team members report, is done with a smile.

"It's made me appreciate how close to the bone a lot of people live. It's made me well aware of their vulnerability."

**—Mike Collins,
one of the recipients of the 2022 Individual
Volunteer of the Year award**

Anne Randolph (top) and Mike Collins (bottom) received our Volunteer of the Year awards for 2022

Give the Gift of a Healthy Meal This Holiday Season

Help The Greater Boston Food Bank provide more than 23 million healthy meals to thousands of people across Eastern Massachusetts this holiday season by joining our Hunger Free Holidays campaign. Every \$30 you donate provides a complete holiday meal for a family in need.

Donate today or form a fundraising team to bring together family, friends, or coworkers.

Visit us online to learn more including how to set up your own fundraiser.

Hunger Free Holidays



GBFB.org/Holidays

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