



# harvest

Winter 2024

## Nutritious Meals are a Lifeline

“It’s nice to help others in  
the community who also  
need help.”

— Anna, a client and volunteer at Sacred Hearts  
Food Pantry in Haverhill, MA

### Inside Harvest:

- Industrial Athletes Make Our Operations Hum
- Anna’s story
- It’s My Privilege to Give Back
- Recipe: Roasted Sweet Potato & Acorn Squash Bisque
- A Community-Driven Mission
- Committed to Building Thriving Communities

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## Catherine's Message

Dear Friends,

Today, far too many families and individuals are squeezed financially due to the high cost of living. The cost of goods and services today is markedly more expensive than just two years ago—that is why so many of our neighbors are struggling. They are choosing between paying for groceries, housing, childcare, prescriptions, or other bills. Unfortunately, that means a growing number of people are turning to our partners for food assistance, with our partners reporting another 12 percent increase in demand this past year.

That's why GBFB is committed to distributing high-quality, nutritious food, and you can help us by supporting our Spring for Meals campaign this March. Visit our website to learn how you can help us provide fresh fruits and vegetables to our neighbors in need. This fresh food helps people like Anna—a senior living on a fixed income—who is thankful for the fresh fruits and vegetables available to her through her local food pantry, thanks to GBFB.

In this issue, you will learn about the critical role our warehouse operations team plays in distributing 100 million pounds of food annually to serve 190 cities and towns across Eastern Massachusetts. Your donation and the support of partners like Liberty Mutual enable us to purchase and distribute food to sustain our neighbors in those communities.

With your help, together we can end hunger here.

Gratefully,



Catherine D'Amato  
President and CEO



## Industrial Athletes Make Our Operations Hum



*GBFB's Warehouse Operations team works as a well-oiled machine to get food into the community to feed Eastern Massachusetts.*

Dedicated and dynamic, our warehouse operations power our efforts to alleviate hunger by distributing food to the 190 communities we serve. Clocking in before dawn, these logistical experts orchestrate the precise movement of 15,000 cases of food out the door daily, translating into 100 million pounds of food distributed annually.

Our warehouse facility operations, transportation, and inventory operations encompass four teams that take immense pride in their work, functioning like a well-oiled machine to get food into the community. These industrial athletes form the backbone of our operations to power our network of 600 distribution sites throughout Eastern Massachusetts.

Between organizing orders, selecting products, moving pallets, shipping inventory, and delivering orders, our team moves quickly and efficiently to meet the escalating demand for nutritious meals. They utilize data-driven practices to carefully select and package food orders while leveraging technology to keep our operations flexible, accurate, and efficient while reducing waste.

"This team is amazing; they energize me to do my best every day. They not only support the mission—they live it, breathe it, and own it," said Cheryl Schondek, Chief Operating Officer. "They are a big part of why we are so successful at what we do—distributing healthy meals."

Learn more at:

**GBFB.org/about**





*Out of gratitude, Anna has volunteered at Sacred Hearts Food Pantry for the past seven years. This picture of her is from one of their Friday food distributions.*

# Helping Others Gives Me Purpose

Anna's journey from Newcastle, England, to the United States is one of love, commitment, and perseverance. Having married a military service member in Italy, the couple eventually moved to Massachusetts—and yet her delightful British accent, a testament to her roots, has persisted over the 30 years she has lived here. With two sons to raise, she shares that they had difficulty making ends meet.

She is grateful that she found help nearby at the Sacred Heart Food Pantry in Haverhill, MA. It became an anchor, providing essential groceries and a sense of community and purpose. Anna's openness about her struggles, including being a caretaker for a grown son with special needs, serves as a powerful reminder that sometimes families need a helping hand. As a senior now on a fixed income, she has also relied on help with rent and other expenses. While she does receive SNAP benefits and income as the caretaker for her son, she adheres to a tight budget with little to spare.

"The cost of vegetables and food is extremely expensive, and my son's a vegetarian. The fact that we can get fresh fruits and vegetables here is a tremendous help."

Becoming a volunteer seven years ago, Anna now helps others needing food assistance. She shares, "It's nice to help others in the community who also need help. It gives me purpose and helps me to stay active."

Her role goes beyond distributing food; for Anna, it's how she expresses gratitude for the support she receives. In Anna's eyes, the food pantry is a lifeline for individuals like her. As a volunteer and client, Anna embodies the spirit of giving back and providing support that extends far beyond the pantry's shelves.

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**"It's nice to help others in the community. It gives me purpose and helps me to stay active."**

**—Anna**

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## Volunteer Spotlight

### Deborah Kane: It's My Privilege to Give Back

Deborah Kane is an enthusiastic ally of our mission to end hunger here, as demonstrated by her dedicated and broad-ranging involvement with GBFB. She advocates for support amongst her Columbia Threadneedle colleagues, both nationally and locally, and volunteered answering phones during WCVB's Annual "Day of Giving" fundraising event benefiting GBFB. And when she is not attending to duties as a committee member for our Annual Women Fighting Hunger Breakfast, Deborah actively participates in other GBFB events with like-minded advocates across Eastern Massachusetts.



*"I want to make contributions,  
offer creative ideas, introduce others  
to the cause, and give of myself  
to support you and the  
communities that you serve."*

—Deborah

"It's my privilege to support The Greater Boston Food Bank. I want to do everything possible, professionally and personally, with my money and time, to advocate for GBFB," said Deborah Kane. "I want to make contributions, offer creative ideas, introduce others to the cause, and give of myself to support you and the communities that you serve."

Her commitment to GBFB spans more than a decade, and her influence extends far beyond the walls of formal committees, as she relishes every chance to educate and engage others about the profound impact of GBFB. She proudly leverages her time and passion to help strengthen our community and invites you to join her.



## Roasted Sweet Potato & Acorn Squash Bisque

### Ingredients

- 3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and diced
- 1 medium acorn squash, halved, seeds and pulp removed
- 3 tablespoons olive oil, divided
- 1 medium onion, diced
- 4 cups water or vegetable or chicken broth
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon, ground

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. Line 2 baking sheets with foil and spread sweet potatoes on one sheet. Place acorn squash face up on the second sheet. Drizzle 1 tablespoon oil over sweet potatoes and divide 1 tablespoon oil between the squash halves, making sure to spread it around so all of the cut squash is covered.
3. Turn squash over so it is cut side down. Roast sweet potatoes and acorn squash in the oven for 45 minutes.
4. Remove from oven and allow to cool until the squash is easy to hold without burning your hands.
5. Once cool, peel off the skin of the squash, then dice. You can also scoop the squash out of the skin instead of peeling and dicing.
6. Meanwhile, heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a large soup pot over medium heat. Add onion and sauté until it begins to brown, about 5 minutes.
7. Add garlic, ginger, and cinnamon to the pot and cook for 1 minute.
8. Add sweet potatoes, acorn squash, and 4 cups water to the pot and bring to a boil.
9. Reduce heat and cook for 20 minutes.
10. Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Once partially cooled, add soup mixture to a blender and blend until smooth.
11. Return to pot and serve.

**For more healthy recipes,  
visit [clickncook.org](http://clickncook.org).**

# A Community-Driven Mission

As the primary food source for our neighbors in need, GBFB is pivotal in supporting organizations like Our Neighbors' Table (ONT), a fast-growing food access organization serving 12 communities in northern Essex County.

A longtime GBFB strategic partner, ONT represents the needs of its community and the broader Seacoast Food Providers Network. "It speaks to the collaborative nature of our relationship as we work together not only to get enough food but the right kinds of food into the community," says Lyndsey Haight, Executive Director. "It's absolutely critical, giving us the opportunity to create a consumer driven safety net that truly serves those we are helping."

Over the years, ONT received capacity grants from GBFB, but a three-year \$150,000 per year transformational grant to build the Seacoast Regional Food Hub in Salisbury was born from a year of collective planning and GBFB leveraging learnings and experience from its other long-term investments to make lasting infrastructural improvements. The hub, set to open this summer, will span 27,000 square feet, with a third dedicated to storage for smaller agencies. Over 2,000 square feet of refrigeration will increase capacity to provide more fresh, healthy food, such as dairy and produce. Once complete, the hub will support more than 30 agencies serving more than 32,000 people.

Reflecting on GBFB and the community's support, Haight expressed, "They share our commitment to universal food access and prioritize it by investing their time and treasure. This project is truly a testament to so many champions, including GBFB, and our shared passion for serving our neighbors."

GBFB's investment in ONT is part of our larger effort to fortify the infrastructure of our Eastern Massachusetts community through the \$6M commitment we have made over the last ten years, thanks to our generous donors.



*Mock up of the Seacoast Regional Food Hub which will increase infrastructure, promote collaboration, and lead to a food secure lower Merrimack Valley.*

## Committed to Building Thriving Communities

Liberty Mutual Insurance, at its very core, is about being there for people when they need it most. This goes beyond a corporate credo; Liberty Mutual and its employees donate their time and resources to back up those words. GBFB is grateful to Liberty Mutual and its employees for volunteering hundreds of hours annually and donating more than \$500,000 to GBFB through their matching gift program since 2020.

Recognizing that a community flourishes when its people feel safe and have their basic needs met, Liberty Mutual's giving centers around helping their most vulnerable neighbors, investing in organizations and programs that strengthen and build resiliency in local communities.



*Liberty Mutual employees surprise GBFB with a \$10,000 grant as part of the company's 110 gifts campaign.*

"GBFB is an essential partner in combating food insecurity across Massachusetts," said Melissa MacDonnell, President, Liberty Mutual Foundation. "Far too many families struggle with not knowing when or where their next meal will come from. GBFB ensures that our neighbors, who are experiencing tremendous hardship, have access to the most fundamental of needs, like food, so they can survive and ultimately thrive."

Liberty Mutual has supported GBFB for more than three decades, helping provide more than 8 million nutritious meals for our neighbors in need across Eastern Massachusetts.



# Spring for Meals

Supported by



## Fresh Food for Our Neighbors in Need

Spring is the season when fresh fruits and vegetables become more plentiful across Eastern Massachusetts. Still, the enormous increase in the cost of food over the past two years has made it difficult for our neighbors in need to purchase the healthy food they need to thrive. Instead, they are often forced to opt for less expensive—and less healthy—options.

Right now, 1 in 3 of our neighbors are experiencing food insecurity—many of whom are turning to our 600 partners for food assistance for the first time. How can you help?

March is National Nutrition Month, and your support for our Spring for Meals campaign will help GBFB deliver fresh, healthy food to our neighbors in need across 190 communities in Eastern Massachusetts. Thanks to your support and Delta Airlines' matching gift, together we can end hunger here.



[GBFB.org/SpringForMeals](https://GBFB.org/SpringForMeals)

“On top of all the expenses we have... house insurance, the electric bill, and water, our biggest expense is groceries. This really helps our budget.”

—Ricardo, a client at Walpole Community Food Pantry

