

Nutritious Meals Win Against Chronic Disease

LISA'S STORY

At 35, Lisa's diagnosis with aggressive Multiple Sclerosis threw her stable home into chaos and poverty. Maintaining a balanced, nutrient-dense diet is critical to helping her avoid the malnutrition associated with MS that causes fatigue and worsens major symptoms. Lisa gets the healthy, made-from-scratch meals she needs to fight her disease from Community Servings, a local food and nutrition program that receives a variety of food from The Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB).

This is Lisa's story.

"My husband and I had just bought a house to renovate in Quincy, and I remember walking on the front grass one day and feeling a strange numbness in my feet. My doctors told me I had a virus and it would go away, but for five years, I lived with what I believed to be a virus, suffering from a number of side effects including stumbling and clumsiness. Finally, after more tests, I was diagnosed with primary progressive MS, which is extremely fast moving. I was in a wheelchair within five years of being diagnosed.

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HEALTHIER LIVES - HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

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MEMBER OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

Healing Hunger

Dear Friends,

People lacking enough nutritious food struggle to thrive; in fact, they weaken. And too often, they get sick with chronic diseases and conditions that are expensive to treat. Without proper nutrition, we see an increased risk of obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and various cancers. For vulnerable individuals facing hunger — access to healthy foods is critical to staying healthy and maintaining productive and successful lives.

This issue presents two, inter-connected challenges for GBFB: how to provide not just enough food, but the kinds of food that will help nourish health and prevent illness; and how to educate struggling families about the critical importance of eating a balanced, high-nutrient diet.

GBFB's long-standing commitment to building healthier lives means constantly increasing the diversity and nutrient-quality of the foods we provide: last year, 82% of the 54 million pounds of food we distributed met the highest nutritional standards. And 25% of that 54 million pounds was fresh fruits and vegetables, many grown right here in eastern Massachusetts. To help our member agencies keep up with our growth, and ensure they can safely store the fresh produce and other nutritious foods we're distributing, GBFB is awarding capacity-building grants to help with capital upgrades, such as refrigeration.

Two registered dietitians make up GBFB's "nutrition team" which manages our rigorous internal food ranking system, and designs and presents innovative nutrition education programs that introduce new foods and cooking methods to promote healthier eating. From interactive nutrition "fairs" for kids, to an accessible newsletter that includes information, advice and recipes, we're encouraging those we serve to embrace the foods that will keep them healthy and strong.

The medical doctors on GBFB's Board of Advisors reinforce that "food is medicine." We see what happens to those in our communities who can't afford enough healthy food to feed themselves and their families. When they weaken or get sick, it impacts all of us.

That's why so many generous individuals, private foundations, local corporations, farmers, food manufacturers and visionary government partners support GBFB in its work. Together, we are helping to heal the thousands of food insecure people in eastern Massachusetts, and making a critical difference in the health and wellbeing of our neighbors in need.

Join us! Your commitment and generosity are essential to enabling GBFB to achieve its mission to End Hunger Here.

Sincerely,



Catherine D'Amato
President and CEO



NUTRITIOUS FOODS SPEED HEALING AT BOSTON MEDICAL CENTER

In a groundbreaking partnership to build healthier lives and communities, GBFB provides the high-nutrient foods that Boston Medical Center (BMC) doctors "prescribe" for their patients to heal and prevent illness. BMC's Preventive Food Pantry was established to address nutrition-related illness and under-nutrition among its low-income patient community by distributing the healthier foods struggling families often can't afford, but that are essential to helping to regain and maintain health.

"Unfortunately, the cheapest foods are usually the most processed, with high fat and sugar content, and little in the way of nutritional value," explained Catherine D'Amato, President and CEO of GBFB. "Unhealthy diets can lead to serious illnesses, such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease. We're pleased to work with BMC to help heal and prevent many health challenges by ensuring their patients have access to the nutritious foods their doctors tell them they need to stay strong and active."



Like many of our 550 member agencies throughout eastern Massachusetts, BMC gets the majority of their food items from GBFB. Each week, GBFB provides close to 12,000 pounds of food to BMC's Preventive Food Pantry - including fresh fruits and vegetables - which is enough for 10,000 healthy meals. Primary care providers at BMC's clinics and centers refer patients with special nutritional needs to the pantry by writing prescriptions for supplemental foods that best promote physical health, prevent future illness and facilitate recovery. In addition, a Demonstration Kitchen educates patients about nutrition through cooking methods that align with their medical and dietary needs.

Latchman Hiralall has been the pantry's manager since it opened in 2001. "Initially, they wanted to call this the 'food pharmacy,'" he recalled. "We anticipated perhaps 500 patients per month, and today we're serving 7,000 - which includes family members. We're healing patients and enhancing diets for entire families, and we couldn't do this without the healthy food we receive from GBFB. Together we are creating a healthier community all around."

Photo courtesy of BMC's Preventive Food Pantry



LISA'S STORY (Continued from p. 1)

"Our kitchen wasn't wheelchair accessible and the nature of MS made the act of cooking extremely difficult. Before Community Servings, I felt guilty that I was no longer able to prepare nutritious meals for my husband. I would often share my hospital meals with him to ensure that he would eat.

"Now that we are receiving weekly, home-delivered meals from Community Servings, we have enough to eat. I don't have to make sacrifices in my diet or feel guilty that I am able to eat, while my husband is not. We don't have to worry about food preparation and we are able to look forward to having a variety of good meals every day, that include wild rice, homemade soups and fresh in-season vegetables like butternut squash and asparagus.

"MS has made me extremely bony and thin, but I still have a large appetite. I went from an empty refrigerator and not eating to having three nutritious meals daily. We couldn't, at the same time, care for my physical needs and do all that is required to prepare nutritious meals. Community Servings, and the food they receive from GBFB, is truly the best option for ensuring we have access to a variety of balanced meals every day."

Healthier Lives — Healthier Communities

What we eat is central to our health. Doctors tell us that if we don't get a basic balance of nutrients every day, we are at higher risk of diseases such as type 2 diabetes, obesity, heart disease, stroke and some cancers. With 78% of today's healthcare expenditures going to the treatment of chronic disease, what and how we eat affects us all.

The good news is that food can act as medicine to maintain, prevent, and even treat disease. And today, medical treatment often involves advice to eat certain foods or to maintain specific diets, interventions that are cost effective and non-invasive. Access to nutritious foods is the foundation of good health. At GBFB, we believe this access is a right.

We are dedicated to providing the high-nutrient foods and services that can help those we serve to stay healthy and to be active members of our community. GBFB's team of Registered Dietitians ranks every food item that

passes through our warehouse, which is how we know that 82% of the 54 million pounds of food we distributed last year met the highest nutritional standard. More than 25% was fresh fruits and vegetables, a figure we will increase to 35% in the coming years.

GBFB's Nutrition Team also leads a variety of community initiatives such as interactive nutrition fairs and a regular newsletter called *Nutritious Bytes*, targeted at our member agencies and clients. These are ways to promote sustained health by sharing health information, educating about the nutritional value of different foods and demonstrating tips on simple and low cost cooking methods that are easy for families and individuals to prepare.

To continue to expand and refine these efforts, GBFB uses advanced geo-mapping technology, which allows us to pinpoint areas of high need. We then work with our member agencies in those areas to develop focused plans. Because some of the most nu-

tritious foods require refrigeration and specialized food storage facilities, we offer small capacity building grants for member agencies to apply for to help ensure they can keep up with GBFB's growth.

The recent addition of two more medical doctors to GBFB's Board of Advisors aligns with our focus on healthy foods and healthier lives: Dr. Vin Gupta, Pulmonary & Critical Care Fellow, Brigham & Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School; and Dr. Tamara Baer, Pediatrician at Boston Children's Hospital. In addition, chairing this Board is Dr. Allen Hamdan, Vice Chairman of the Department of Surgery for Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center (BIDMC) and the driving force behind Food is Medicine. An annual Food is Medicine event, led by Dr. Hamdan, has raised \$177,000 for GBFB over the past three years – enough to provide 530,000 nutritious meals for our neighbors facing hunger.

“As a physician, I can order state-of-the-art diagnostics and offer the best possible treatments, but it is not enough. Without question, access to healthy food is the best medicine.”

- DR. ALLEN HAMDAN,
Vice Chairman, Department of Surgery
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

ADVOCATE FOR MEFAP

Support an increase in the Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP: DAR 2511-0105) funding to \$20M, which helps The Food Bank Coalition of Massachusetts provide nutritious food, such as fresh fruits, vegetables, protein, dairy and grains, to our neighbors in need.

Share why MEFAP is important to YOU. #MEFAPMatters

Find and contact your State Rep and Senator and advocate. (malegislature.gov/People)

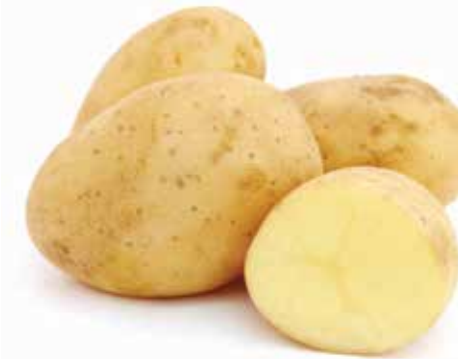
CABBAGE

A good source of potassium and vitamin C, cabbage can help to control blood pressure and improve immune function. A fiber-rich food, it helps to regulate the body's use of sugars, keeping blood sugar and hunger in check.



SWEET POTATOES

A plant native to America, a medium sweet potato contains four times the recommended daily amount of vitamin A. This vitamin is necessary for skin and hair health and assists with eyesight, especially night vision. Vitamin A is fat-soluble, so add a small amount of fat, like olive oil or sour cream, to maximize absorption.



POTATOES

Potatoes, especially their skins, are an excellent source of potassium. A mineral your body needs for regulating heart rate activity and building muscle, potassium also helps you to break down and utilize carbohydrates.

BEETS

The deep red of beets is due to antioxidants which can help to reduce the risk of some cancers. They are an excellent source of folate which helps reduce the risk of birth defects in pregnant women. The greens are especially nutritious, rich in calcium, iron and vitamins A and C.



KIDNEY BEANS (CANNED)

A great source of protein and iron, beans are rich in both soluble and insoluble fibers. Soluble fiber is able to help reduce blood levels of cholesterol while insoluble fiber can aid in bowel regulation and help combat colon cancer.



WHAT YOU MIGHT FIND AT GBFB:

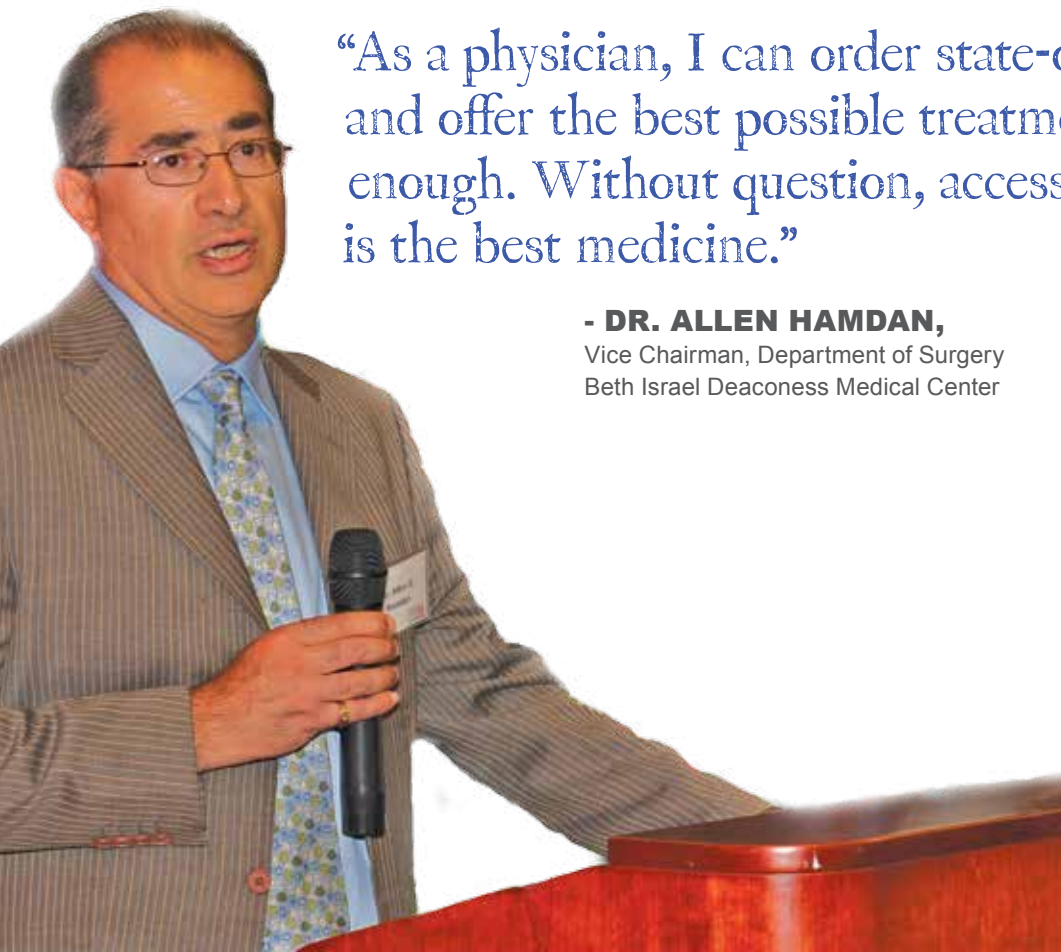
Winter Food Items

Eighty-two percent of the 54 million pounds of food GBFB distributed last year met the highest nutritional standard. More than 25% was fresh fruits and vegetables, a figure we will increase to 35% in the coming years. Here are some regular items that can be found in our warehouse this winter.



CITRUS

(primarily grapefruit and oranges)
Citrus fruits, like oranges and grapefruits, are high in vitamin C which helps wounds heal faster. It also helps your body to absorb iron, which can boost your immune function and help your body to use oxygen better, giving you more energy.





NEW BALANCE HELPS TO END CHILD HUNGER

Athletic footwear and fitness apparel retailer, New Balance, is a dedicated corporate partner that generously supports GBFB's programs for the one in four children facing hunger in eastern Massachusetts. Since 2007, New Balance has awarded GBFB \$320,500 through its Foundation, and employees from its Boston and Lawrence facilities have volunteered more than 1,500 hours.

Last year, the New Balance Foundation awarded \$25,000 toward GBFB's Child Hunger Initiative, a direct and critical response to the pressing issues of childhood hunger in our communities. Many struggling families can't afford to provide their children with the high-nutrient foods they need to stay healthy and active. The consequences are dire: infants and toddlers in food insecure households are 30% more likely to have a history of hospitalization; 90% are more likely to be reported in fair or poor health; and nearly 70% are more likely to be at risk of developmental delays.

Through the Child Hunger Initiative, GBFB is increasing the amount of nutritious foods we distribute through our direct distribution programs such as our School-Based Pantries, as well as through our 550 member agencies that include food pantries, community meal programs, and after-school programs that reach children with safe, healthy food. The grant, given via New Balance's "SparkStart" initiative, allowed GBFB to distribute 90,000 pounds of healthy food including fruits and vegetables. That was enough to provide 75,000 nutritious meals to hungry children and their families.

"Inside each child lives energy waiting to be ignited, but that can't happen if he or she is hungry," noted Amy Sweeney, Community Outreach Manager, Charitable Programs New Balance Athletics, Inc. "We choose to support GBFB because we know that children's health and well-being depends on their access to nutritious food, and GBFB has the mission and operation to make that happen. The result is healthier young lives, and a stronger community all around."



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1 - GBFB, led by President and CEO, Catherine D'Amato (center), accompanied by CFO, David Noymer (left) and COO & Vice President of Distribution, Carol Tienken (right) was ranked #10 by *The Boston Globe Magazine* and The Commonwealth Institute (TCI) in their annual list of Top 100 Women-Led Businesses in Massachusetts. Awardees were honored at the Seaport Boston Hotel this past fall. GBFB was also recognized as an innovative and forward-thinking organization for using geo-mapping technology to identify food insecure areas in eastern Massachusetts, allowing us to target those who need our help the most.

2 - WAAF's annual Rock For Change raised more than \$70,000 this past December, enough for more than 210,000 meals. Over three days, the station took song requests in exchange for donations from listeners. GBFB Events Manager, Carlen Singmaster (left) took calls with WAAF host Lyndon Byers ("LB" - right). Over the years, WAAF has raised more than \$1.5 million for GBFB and other regional food banks, enough to provide more than 4.5 million meals! **3** - Harpoon Brewery held their 9th Harpoon Helps Grateful Harvest Dinner to a sold-out crowd benefitting GBFB in late November. Among the attendees were GBFB VP of Acquisition and Supply Chain, Cheryl Schondek (second from left) and GBFB Board of Advisor member, Phil Licari (second from right).



WHOLE FOODS INNOVATES TO END HUNGER HERE

The supermarket chain, Whole Foods, is a creative and committed partner in GBFB's mission to End Hunger Here. Since 2000, area store donations of nutritious foods, innovative food drives, and dedicated volunteerism have enabled GBFB to provide close to one million healthy meals to struggling families in eastern Massachusetts.

Kimberley Rose, Whole Foods' Vice President of Purchasing, Merchandising and Distribution and a member of GBFB's Food Industry Council shared, "Our business is intimately tied to the neighborhood and larger community that we serve, and in which we live. At Whole Foods, we believe that access to nutritious foods is a fundamental right for everyone, and our partnership with GBFB allows us to live that mission and do our part to remedy food insecurity in our communities."

Whole Foods' annual "Feed 4 More" food drive is just one example of their creativity and support for GBFB. Each November, customers can donate as they check out to provide non-perishable foods for distribution to area food pantries by GBFB. Last year's drive raised enough to contribute three tractor trailer loads of staples such as spaghetti, organic vegetable soup, long-grain rice, canned vegetables and beans.

With 98.5 CBS Radio's Sports Hub, Whole Foods also supports GBFB through an innovative food drive in which 10 cases of food staples are donated every time the New England Patriots sack an opposing quarterback. During the past several seasons, this "sack drive" has resulted in more than 500 cases of nutritious food items for distribution to families in need.

"Whole Foods is a wonderful partner, and isn't shy about finding new and creative ways to support us," acknowledged Cheryl Schondek, GBFB's Vice President of Food Acquisition and Supply Chain. "Their food drives, celebrity endorsed food donor events and leadership on our Food Industry Council are helping GBFB to provide One Meal a Day to every person facing hunger in our communities. We are so grateful."



Kids Who Care Make a Tangible Contribution

When area schools are on break, GBFB opens its doors to volunteers as young as age ten, giving them a chance to play their role to End Hunger Here by sorting and packing nutritious food for distribution to children, veterans and seniors facing hunger. Our Kids Who Care program allows a family to share the volunteer experience together. During their shift, families work on a specific food distribution project while learning about GBFB's critical mission to End Hunger Here and gaining exposure to GBFB's operations and best practices in food handling and safety.

On December 29, during school break, a group of young volunteers and their families spent their day at GBFB, helping to provide over 3,000 healthy meals for those in need. Susan Farris, a member of our Harvesters Circle of donors and Women Fighting Hunger Steering Committee, was there with her mother and 13-year-old son, Fionn. "It is important to provide my son with experiences that teach life lessons and the opportunity to give back," she explained. "At Kids Who Care, Fionn 'get's it,' because his contribution is so tangible and real; he knows that

he, himself, bagged almost 300 pounds of food today, and that it will provide 250 meals for vulnerable seniors in Taunton."

Harvesters Circle includes families and individuals who donate \$1,000 or more annually to GBFB. In addition to receiving special acknowledgement for their dedication and generosity, these donors regularly volunteer with us to learn more about GBFB's mission to End Hunger Here in eastern Massachusetts.



An upcoming Kids Who Care event will take place on April 19.

To learn more, visit

GBFB.org/volunteer

"It is really special for three generations of our family to be volunteering side-by-side for an organization that does so much for our community," concluded Farris. "We choose to support GBFB because we know our contributions make a genuine difference."