



harvest

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Summer 2024

Finding Strength and Compassion Amidst Hardship

“The food pantry means the world to me because, without them, we probably wouldn’t eat as much as we do now.”

— DeeAnn, a client at the Salvation Army Food Pantry in Quincy, MA

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Catherine's Message

Dear Friends,

Thank you for standing with us to strengthen our community by providing healthy, nutritious food. For many of us, the summer months beckon warmer weather, outdoor activities, cookouts, and building memories with family and friends. And yet, some of our neighbors will continue to struggle to put food on their tables while their children are on school break – like our neighbor DeeAnn and her daughter Nevaeh share. Our recent statewide report affirms that 1 in 3 people continue to face food insecurity in MA due to the high cost of living and food.

It will take our collective efforts to feed our community not just this summer, but throughout the year. That is why we're thankful for volunteers like Merrill Forman. She understands the importance of providing our children with the fuel they need to learn, grow, and thrive. We're grateful for long-standing partners like BJ's, whose commitment to eradicating food insecurity spans more than a decade, and for community partners like Damien's Place, who are stepping up to better serve their community and support the GBFB mission, thanks to the support and donations from people like you. They all share our commitment to building stronger communities – by nourishing our children and families.

Each of us has the power to end hunger here, and that's why BJ's invites you to join them in supporting our Growing Healthy Futures campaign this summer.

Thank you for continuing to do your part.

Gratefully,



Catherine D'Amato
President and CEO



Donate at:
[GBFB.org/Harvest](https://www.gbfb.org/harvest)

Study Reveals Persistent Elevated Levels of Food Insecurity

GBFB conducted its fourth annual statewide survey on food insecurity in Massachusetts in collaboration with Mass General Brigham and support from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education through a USDA grant.

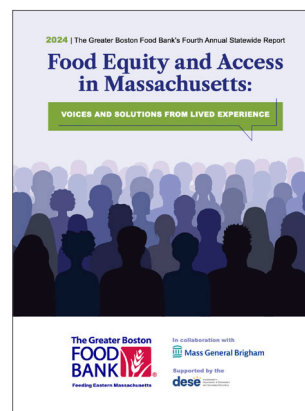
Between November 2023 and March 2024, researchers engaged more than 3,000 adults, learning that food insecurity persists at incredibly high levels (35%) due to rising cost of groceries, the end of many COVID policies and the inflated cost of living.

This year, researchers added more detailed demographic categories including American Indian/Alaska Native, senior- and college-level hunger to further capture the diversity of food-insecure populations in Massachusetts.

“The high cost of food is just so outrageous for those living paycheck to paycheck.”

—White Senior Man utilizing SNAP and a Food Pantry,
Middlesex County

The focus of this year's report centers on the solutions and voices of those experiencing hunger. Although many food-insecure households utilized WIC, SNAP, HIP, food pantries, community meal programs, or mobile markets, they remain inadequate at the current funding level. This report highlights that hunger is no longer an emergency, it is a chronic issue that is plaguing too many in our state. It also highlights the need for increased collaboration among community members, private and nonprofit organizations, government and philanthropy.



Read full report and specific policy recommendations here:

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



DeeAnn and her daughter, Nevaeh (left), DeeAnn with her aunt and her daughter, Nevaeh (right)

Finding Strength and Compassion Amidst Hardship

In the heart of the bustling city of Quincy, DeeAnn, and her vibrant seven-year-old daughter, Nevaeh, find solace and sustenance at GBFB's partner, The Salvation Army food pantry. DeeAnn leans on the pantry's support to fill their plates. "The food pantry means the world to me because, without them, we probably wouldn't eat as much as we do now," she confides, appreciation shining in her eyes. "We're grateful because it does wonders for us."

At 49, DeeAnn is a single mother of three with two older sons in addition to Nevaeh. She shoulders the weight of responsibility while being unemployed with unwavering determination. "It gets a little tough," she admits, "but we make it happen."

"Being out of school and not having school lunch impacts a lot."

—DeeAnn

DeeAnn works to stretch every penny, struggling to afford rent and electricity each month. SNAP assistance helps, but it's not enough to ease the burden. The constant balancing act between bills and expenses weighs heavily.

Yet, she perseveres, buoyed by love and support. "I just keep a positive mind and keep it moving."

Despite the challenges, Nevaeh thrives with her eagerness to help, driven by her deep affection for her mom. She eagerly anticipates their monthly visits to the pantry, cherishing the fresh fruits and veggies, especially strawberries—her favorite.

DeeAnn and Nevaeh find strength and compassion in The Salvation Army, knowing that they are not alone in their struggle. With the support of the pantry, DeeAnn dreams of stability and a brighter future, where they are no longer living paycheck to paycheck and can break the cycle of poverty.

Their story resembles countless others, illustrating the resilience of the human spirit amidst hardship. Together, they embody the unwavering determination to overcome, empowered by the nourishment they receive through food and community support.

Volunteer Spotlight

Merrill Forman: A Sweet Story of Dedication and Compassion



Merrill during one of her recent visits to volunteer at the GBFB Yawkey Distribution Center in Boston

Behind the scenes at GBFB, amidst the towers of food and bustling volunteers, lies a sweet story of dedication and compassion. It's the story of people like Merrill Forman, who have found purpose, community, and fulfillment in giving back.

"I have been aware of The Greater Boston Food Bank for as long as I can remember," says Forman, "I began volunteering there thanks to an invitation from a friend to join her group for a day of volunteering during COVID, and I welcomed the opportunity to lend a hand."

Stepping into GBFB for the first time, the sheer scale of the operation and magnitude of need in the community took her breath away. Ever since, Merrill has enjoyed volunteering one day a week at GBFB. She believes it's important to help uplift others in any way that she can and modestly model the values of compassion and caring.

"I worked in education for over 30 years. I saw what it was like for families whose kids didn't have enough to eat, how hard it was for them to concentrate, to learn, and to thrive."

—Merrill

She understands that every dollar donated and every hour volunteered brings us one step closer to ensuring that no one in our community goes hungry.



Chickpea and Cucumber Salad

Ingredients

- 2 bell peppers
- 1 English cucumber
- ½ bunch green onions
- 3 tbsp lemon juice
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup tahini
- 4 cups mixed greens (or spinach, lettuce)
- 1 15.5 oz can reduced-sodium chickpeas

Directions

1. Drain and rinse the chickpeas.
2. Chop the peppers, cucumber, and green onions.
3. In a blender, purée the green onions, lemon juice, oil, and 5 tbsp of water to make the dressing.
4. Transfer the dressing to a medium bowl and whisk in the tahini until smooth. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
5. In a large bowl, toss the greens, chickpeas, cucumber, and peppers. Add your desired amount of dressing and toss until well combined.

For more healthy recipes, visit clickncook.org.

Damien's Place Transforming the South Coast

Hunger is a big problem, and big problems call for big solutions.

Damien's Place Food Pantry in Wareham is a GBFB partner agency that is making big moves to help end hunger on the South Coast of Massachusetts, with the food bank playing a pivotal role, providing a 3-year \$450,000 Community Investment Transformational Grant thanks to the generous support of donors like you.

Damien's has utilized this GBFB grant to open a new food pantry and warehouse facility that will transform the way it serves people in Plymouth County, particularly in the Wareham, Brockton, and New Bedford areas.

The old food pantry location did not have the capacity to keep up with the community's needs. It required people to wait outside, sometimes in inclement weather, to receive a pre-selected carriage of food. The new food pantry empowers guests by providing healthy food in a full-choice environment that resembles a grocery store, allowing guests to choose the food that best meets their cultural or dietary preferences. Land at their new location will also serve as a Community Garden in Wareham.

The new Damien's also has additional warehouse space which allows around 40 other GBFB partners to pick up food from there twice a week, strengthening the entire network of food pantries in the South Coast region.

By supporting GBFB and all our local partners, you are making big solutions like this possible.



Cheryl Schondek, GBFB's COO, joins partners at Damien's Place to celebrate the opening of their new pantry in Spring 2024

Nourishing Families Who Depend on Them

Headquartered in Marlborough, Massachusetts, for more than 40 years, BJ's has been committed to making a positive impact in communities where its team members live and work.

At the heart of BJ's mission lies a profound purpose—to help families meet their essential needs—by providing



The BJ's team works to nourish our communities across our region

access to nutritious food and supporting education, health, and wellness. BJ's is proud of its longstanding efforts to help nourish local families and reduce food waste through food and financial donations.

Partnering with Feeding America and local food banks across its footprint for more than 15 years, BJ's has been instrumental in providing millions of meals for families in need. Through the BJ's Feeding Communities program, surplus fresh produce, meat, poultry, seafood, dairy, and bakery products find their way to those who need it most. In 2023 alone, BJ's helped to provide over 11.8 million meals to families facing food insecurity, with more than 425,000 pounds of food donated directly to GBFB and its network of partners.

As the lead supporter of GBFB's **Growing Healthy Futures Campaign**, BJ's is thrilled to deepen its partnership with GBFB to make a real difference in the lives of families. They hope their commitment will inspire others to join them in contributing to healthy futures for local youth.

Fuel growing minds with healthy food.



Nourished by



Learn more

