



harvest

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Fall 2024

Expanding Our Impact

“We need to feed these people that are really in need—not just our family, but the rest of the people out there in the community, too.”

— Jairalis, a client and volunteer at the Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School Mobile Market in Boston, MA

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Catherine's Message

Dear Friends,

Hunger continues to be a big problem in Massachusetts—and big problems call for big solutions. This summer, we proudly completed Project COLD—the single-largest investment in our facility since 2009. This expansion allows us to distribute more nutritious, perishable food to our partner agencies across Eastern Massachusetts—like Acord Food Pantry, a 2024 GBFB Community Investment Grant recipient serving the North Shore.

This fall, I'm particularly inspired by the power of the individual in the pursuit to end hunger. Take Jairalis Mercado, a volunteer and client of the Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School's Mobile Market, or Joe DeSantis, a generous donor who walked the 572-mile Camino De Santiago—and raised over \$100,000 in support of GBFB's fundraising effort to **Fill the Fridge**. Their efforts help ensure that more fresh food reaches our neighbors in need.

Partners like Wildgrain—a bake-from-frozen delivery service—are also critical to GBFB's work. Through Wildgrain's ongoing cause marketing campaign, they're helping provide healthy food to the one in three food-insecure individuals in Massachusetts.

September is Hunger Action Month™, and we hope you'll join us by donating, volunteering or learning about hunger in your community. Or, consider contributing, like Joe, to our efforts to **Fill the Fridge**, and help us fill our expanded cold storage facilities with nutritious food.

From all of us at GBFB, thank you for helping us end hunger here.

Gratefully,



Catherine D'Amato
President and CEO



A Building for The Future: Project COLD Expands Our Impact

In May 2024, GBFB launched Project COLD (Creating Optimal Logistics for Distribution), an initiative aimed at rightsizing GBFB's warehouse to support its response to the historic need in Eastern Massachusetts—and, in turn, distributing more fresh, nutritious food. Backed by state and philanthropic funds, this ambitious project marks the single-largest investment in GBFB's Yawkey Distribution Center in South Boston since it was built 15 years ago—and remarkably, was implemented without shutting down warehouse operations for a single day.

“One in three people experienced food insecurity this past year. Hunger is a big problem that calls for a big solution, and reinforcing our infrastructure helps draw us closer to our goal of three healthy meals per day.”

—Jonathan Tetrault, VP of Community Impact and Operations, The Greater Boston Food Bank

By expanding our cold storage capacity and **Filling the Fridge** with the help of our donors, GBFB can provide a greater variety of fresh foods like fruit, vegetables, protein and dairy. These foods are among the most desired items by our clients and play a critical role in creating healthier communities. The centerpiece of the project is a new refrigeration unit that stores 400 pallets of perishable food, allowing GBFB to distribute an estimated seven to eight million additional meals each year. The addition of several new warehouse components—including high-speed roll-up doors, two new truck bays, an industrial freight elevator and extra receiving space—has also helped expedite shipping and receiving processes. Another improvement: An updated volunteer space with picture windows, which allows volunteers to witness the impact of their efforts and donations firsthand.

Moving forward, this significant investment enhances GBFB's ability to eradicate hunger across Eastern Massachusetts. The next step: help us **Fill the Fridge** with nutritious food and feed our neighbors. Every dollar donated brings us closer to our goal of three healthy meals per day.



Scan here or visit [GBFB.org/Harvest](https://www.gbfb.org/Harvest) to learn more and help us **Fill the Fridge!**

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



Jairalis pictured at the Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School Mobile Market

Nourishing Her Family, Empowering Her Community

When times get tough, Roxbury resident Jairalis Mercado turns to GBFB’s resources to ensure that her children—Mimi, 13, and Jeanalis, 14—are getting the nutritious foods they need to thrive. And with another child on the way, she’s grateful for any assistance her family receives: “Not a lot of people get the benefits they need, so I think the food bank is a good resource for the community. For me personally, I don’t get [SNAP]...I have gotten help from food pantries.”

“We need to feed these people that are really in need—not just our family, but the rest of the people out there in the community, too.”

—Jairalis Mercado

For eight years, Jairalis has been both a client and a volunteer for the Mobile Market at her daughters’ school, Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School. A GBFB direct distribution partner since 2013, the school hosts a monthly Mobile Market that distributes high-quality, nutritious and free food to approximately 80-100 of the school’s families. Among the five schools in the program, it’s currently the only one located in Boston.

Volunteers like Jairalis are the lifeblood of Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School’s Mobile Market. To help serve the school’s low-income families, they assist in setting up a farmer’s-market-style pantry, allowing clients to “shop” from a diverse selection of fresh produce, dairy products and high-protein items. Jairalis’ family greatly values this variety: “[My daughters] love eating a lot of fruit and vegetables,” she shares, “It’s always important for a kid to have not just rice, beans and chicken, but fruits and vegetables, too.”

For Jairalis, volunteering at the Mobile Market is about giving back to the program that has helped her provide for her family: “I’ve just been helping in whatever way I can, and I think it benefits parents who can’t afford food... because I rely on the food pantry also.” With the help of programs like these, she’s determined to give her children the lives they deserve, “There’s help out there...but I still have to thrive and push forward.”



A GBFB truck arrives for a delivery to Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School

Volunteer Spotlight

Joe DeSantis: Fundraising along The Camino De Santiago



Joe proudly represents GBFB on his 572-mile pilgrimage

For Joe DeSantis, the 572-mile Camino De Santiago pilgrimage was more than just a challenge—it was an opportunity to give back to an important cause: “I’ve lived in Boston for almost 20 years, and GBFB’s mission really supports my belief that no one should go hungry.”

Before his 40-day journey from St Jean Pied de Port, France to Finisterre, Spain, Joe pledged \$500 a day towards filling GBFB’s new refrigeration facilities—made possible by Project COLD. These funds will help GBFB provide more fresh food to food-insecure individuals across Eastern Massachusetts.

By sharing his story on social media (@jdsontheway on Instagram), contacting friends and family and working with GBFB, Joe hoped to multiply his original \$20,000 goal. After a month of fundraising and one week on the trail, Joe reached an astounding \$100,000. “It felt like there was a true mission in this effort. I was excited to share with people what I was doing, and also link it to the food bank,” he shared, “I was blown away by people’s generosity.”

Joe’s journey highlights the profound power that individual commitment can have on our mission to end hunger here, “It was important that it was not just for me, but for others.”



Apple Crumb Dessert

Ingredients

- Cooking spray
- 1 ½ pounds apples peeled, cored, and sliced
- ⅓ cup raisins
- ½ cup quick oats
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- ⅓ cup apple juice

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray a 9x9 inch pan with cooking spray.
2. Spread apple slices over bottom of the dish, top with raisins, and set aside.
3. In a small bowl, combine oats, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Spread evenly over apples.
4. Drizzle apple juice over the top. Cover and bake 20-30 minutes, or until apples begin to soften.
5. Uncover and bake an additional 15-20 minutes until apples are soft.
6. Optional: top with vanilla ice cream or yogurt for an added treat!

View this Click 'N Cook recipe online at [GBFB.org/Harvest](https://www.gbfb.org/Harvest).

Upcoming Events

You have the power to help us end hunger here. Mark your calendar and join us for upcoming events and fundraisers!

Learn more and RSVP at [GBFB.org/Harvest](https://www.gbfb.org/Harvest)

September 19:
Taste of the Food Bank



September 26:
WCVB Day of Giving



October 17:
Women Fighting Hunger



Acord Food Pantry: Tackling Hunger on The North Shore

When asked what she loves most about her job after 10 years as Acord Food Pantry's executive director, Stacey Verge emphasized community: "There is power in having so many people working toward the same goal, and it's wonderful to have that support." The pantry opened in 1991 and has been a GBFB partner for more than a decade. It now serves six North Shore towns—Hamilton, Wenham, Essex, Topsfield, Ipswich and Manchester—and, on average, 468 clients per month. Unfortunately, the number of clients served is up 56% over this past year, demonstrating the continuous increase in the need for food.

Acord is also one of the nearly 600 agency partners supported by GBFB's Community Investment Grant Program, which helps partners better meet the needs of their communities. Over the past decade, nearly \$7 million worth of financial assistance has been awarded.



Acord Food Pantry Executive Director, Stacey Verge, poses with the pantry's new van

Acord's grant enabled the purchase of a new van for food deliveries, pick-ups and Mobile Markets. "It's made a big difference, and we haven't even tapped the full capacity of what the van will allow us to do," said Verge.

In addition, Acord Food Pantry received more than \$130,000 worth of free food over the past year from GBFB—about 100,000 pounds. "We literally couldn't operate without The Greater Boston Food Bank," Verge shared, "Our clients particularly like perishable foods—they're looking for meat and fish and milk, so it's been amazing to have those delivered by GBFB."

By supporting GBFB, you're helping fuel a food distribution network across Eastern Massachusetts and funding critical initiatives like the Community Investment Grant Program, which helps partners serve more clients, distribute more food and better assist underserved communities.

The Power of Partnership: Wildgrain and GBFB

Wildgrain was born from the pandemic when co-founders Johanna Hartzheim and Ismail Salhi identified a need for high-quality carbs, delivered door to door. Since then, they've worked with small bakers and pasta makers to offer the first bake-from-frozen subscription box for sourdough breads, fresh pastas and artisanal pastries.

Wildgrain's founders are passionate about delivering quality products with simple ingredient lists, while expanding access to healthy food in Massachusetts. Since 2020, they've proudly partnered with GBFB to help provide nutritious foods to our most vulnerable neighbors.

As part of an ongoing cause marketing campaign, for every new subscription, the company donates four meals to GBFB. Wildgrain's new loyalty program also gives subscribers the opportunity to donate extra meals to GBFB, and Wildgrain employees build family boxes at our warehouse once a year.

The response from Wildgrain's customers has been tremendous. Over half a million meals have been donated, with Wildgrain's annual contribution in 2024 totaling over \$113,000. Next year, they expect an even bigger donation.

Together with our partners, we have the power to increase access to nutritious foods for everyone in our community. Wildgrain exemplifies that, in our work to end hunger here, we are greater together.

Over half a million meals have been donated, with Wildgrain's annual contribution in 2024 totaling over \$113,000.



Wildgrain co-founder, Johanna, and team assembling family meal boxes during a volunteer visit to GBFB

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO END HUNGER HERE

Every action counts.

September is Hunger Action Month™. In addition to volunteering and advocating for food assistance, you can **Fill the Fridge** at GBFB. Donations help us provide more perishable items, including fresh fruits, vegetables and eggs, to the one in three people in Eastern Massachusetts who face hunger.

Help us **Fill the Fridge!**

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



Hunger Action Month | **FEEDING AMERICA**