

Vermont Foodbank Kernels

Winter 2013

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2013 Hunger Action Conference



The mission of the Vermont Foodbank is to gather and share quality food and nurture partnerships so that no one in Vermont will go hungry.

Learning About Food, Building Healthy Lives



Over the past decade the Vermont Foodbank has seen how providing practical knowledge about nutrition and food preparation, along with making fresh food more available, has transformed people's lives and helped them make healthy lifestyle choices.

Brian Dermody, or Chef Brian as he is called at the Community Kitchen Academy (CKA) in Burlington, has seen firsthand how knowledge about food can change people's lives. At the end of one of his first culinary job training sessions, one of his students, a single mother, approached him and said, "Before I took this course, I'd buy takeout food or feed my kids pizzas and subs. Now, because of what I've learned here, I come home every night and my kids and I cook together. They even ask me, 'Hey, Mom, what are we cooking tonight?'" This mother and her children are having fun, sharing valuable time with each other, *and* experiencing the gratification of creating a healthy meal together. (See the "Program Update" column on page 3 for more information about how our Community Kitchen Academy is expanding!)

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Note from the Chief Executive Officer

A Special Note



Representatives of Price Chopper Supermarkets present the Foodbank with a donation from their annual Check out Hunger Campaign. Pictured from L/R: John Sayles, Vermont Foodbank CEO; Mike Dennis, Store Manager; Jessica Morin, Regional Vice President; and Pat Tannotti, Zone Director for Price Chopper.

I cannot miss this opportunity to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for the tremendous outpouring of support this holiday season. The Foodbank was concerned about the slow pace of fundraising in October, November, and early December, so we let you know, and your response let us know how you feel about your neighbors and community. As a result, your Foodbank is moving forward with lots of positive momentum into this new year.

An Education Crisis?

“Education is in crisis.” If I had a dollar for every time I heard that phrase, we could fund the Foodbank for the next ten years. People are usually talking about our public education system, but education also applies to our food.

It has almost become a truism that many people don’t know how to cook from scratch anymore, or how to use low-cost ingredients to make hearty meals with lots of leftovers for lunch the next day. The existing food system promotes the use of processed foods that need little preparation and are often high in the fats, sugars, and salt that cause many of the diet-related diseases so prevalent today. I was fortunate enough to grow up with parents who were both raised on farms where cooking from scratch was second nature—my mother even baked bread every week. This was not the case for a majority of my friends, some of whom ate little more than canned food, prepackaged mixes, and fast food. Many of them did not learn to cook from scratch, and likely neither have their children.

This is not an issue that divides us along income or class lines; it is a societal/cultural issue that we all need to think about.

Your Foodbank is creating opportunities for our food insecure neighbors to learn about nutrition, acquire cooking skills, and experience the joys of eating fresh, whole foods. In this issue you will read about the Community Kitchen Academy, which offers college-level instruction on nutrition, food preparation, and food safety that would be the envy of all the localvores I know. *Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook*, created in partnership by Salvation Farms, Sterling College, and your Foodbank (available for download on our website), contains a wealth of information on Vermont produce as well as easy-to-prepare recipes accessible to all.

Nutritional information and healthy recipes are also included with our Commodity Supplemental Food Program boxes distributed to about 3,200 seniors a month, in BackPacks provided to 700 kids every Friday, and at Summer Food Service Program sites run by the Foodbank in the Northeast Kingdom.

Watch this newsletter for some new initiatives in the works, such as partnering with health care providers to get the right food to people with diet-related diseases and a nutrition and cooking program for low-income clients focused on healthy lifestyle changes. All of this is made possible by your continuing support. Please give generously to continue transforming lives and building strong communities.

“Your Foodbank is creating opportunities for our food insecure neighbors to learn about nutrition, cooking skills, and the joys of eating fresh whole foods.”

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– John Sayles, CEO



Program Update: Community Kitchen Academy



“The Community Kitchen Academy has been a life changer for me. It has given me confidence in myself. I now can go into any kitchen to work. If you love cooking and making people happy with food, CKA is wonderful place.”

– Kadeen Edwards,
2012 graduate



Program Success

CKA has been in operation since early 2009, in partnership with the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf in Burlington. There have been twelve 13-week sessions, graduating 87 students and boasting an 86 percent success rate with job placement or further education. More than 108,000 servings have been produced for people in need during that time.

In July, the Foodbank will expand the program to a second site in Barre in partnership with Central Vermont Community Action Council. We are looking to engage current and new partners to expand the program to Rutland and Brattleboro within the next three years.

The **Community Kitchen Academy** (CKA) prepares underemployed and unemployed Vermonters for careers in the food service industry and lifelong learning through an intensive program that offers culinary skills development, career readiness skills, and job placement.

Students actively develop and apply new skills by creating wholesome meals for those at risk of hunger using food that has been gathered from within our communities that may otherwise go to waste.

Upon graduation, students are ServSafe certified, a nationally recognized food service industry standard, and so are well positioned to obtain jobs in the food service industry. They also develop valuable life and professional skills, including goal establishment, résumé writing, interviewing, conflict management, and personal budgeting.

In addition to training students, CKA also performs another important function: gleaning produce, meat, and other foods that would otherwise be wasted from grocery stores, restaurants, local farms, and food service companies. Students work with instructors to transform this “rescued” food into delicious meals that are then vacuum sealed, frozen, and distributed through food shelves and meal sites. These easy-to-prepare meals are brimming with nutrition and provide food shelf visitors with food from highly desirable food groups such as protein, dairy, and vegetables.

ACCREDITATION

In 2012, Howard Fisher, former New England Culinary Institute (NECI) dean of academic affairs, encouraged the Foodbank to pursue accreditation for the CKA program. Howard offered his guidance and support to the Foodbank and CKA instructors at Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf, pro bono, throughout the accreditation review process. His years of experience at NECI and knowledge of culinary education informed the report that he wrote and submitted to the Vermont State Colleges Office of External Programs. The result is that CKA can now offer its graduates nine college-level academic transfer credits for completing the program.

Accreditation for this program has created a unique opportunity for struggling Vermonters to not only secure steady employment but also be positioned for continuing higher education. Additionally, as a college accredited program, the standard and content of the instruction and curriculum will be consistent across all sites, as the Foodbank expands and grows the program.



Veggie Educators Empower Food Pantry Clients

From **Just Food**, New York

Where do food pantry staff and volunteers go to unleash their inner food geek? Just Food has hosted a series of Veggie Educator trainings, bringing together 90 food pantry staff and volunteers to taste and talk about a rainbow of vegetables from golden beets to purple carrots, Swiss chard, and purslane to banana peppers and more.

The Veggie Educator trainings are part of Just Food's Local Produce Link program, which helps food pantries and other emergency food programs make fresh, nutritious, locally-grown food available to families and individuals in need. In addition to fresh local produce, the program provides food education for food pantry clients.

Shirrell Patterson, a long-time volunteer at St. Mary's Episcopal Church Food Pantry in Harlem, completed the Veggie Educator training in spring 2011. Shirrell volunteers her time on distribution days, talking with clients and staff alike about the vegetables on offer. Each week the pantry receives 180 pounds of produce, including a root vegetable, a salad or cooking green, and a seasonal vegetable from J. Glebocki Farm in Goshen, New York.

During a recent distribution, clients had the option to take home arugula, red spring onions, and kohlrabi. While most people are familiar with greens and onions, the oddly shaped kohlrabi bulb is more of a challenge. In order to encourage clients to take a chance on the root, Shirrell shared fresh slices of kohlrabi, recipes, and cooking tips.

Thanks to Shirrell's encouragement, many St. Mary's clients tried the kohlrabi, and enjoyed its

sweet flavor and crisp texture. Once she has them hooked, Shirrell shares pointers on using kohlrabi, from adding it to a salad to eating raw slices as a healthier snack alternative to potato chips. A few people who were already familiar with the vegetable shared their own tips with Shirrell and fellow pantry clients.

"I love vegetables, I eat them every day," says Shirrell. "In my community, I don't see a lot of children eating vegetables. I wish everyone could eat and enjoy vegetables—they don't know what they're missing! I like working with the clients, giving the veggies out and telling them all about them."

St. Mary's Pantry Director Janet Dorman, who has also participated in the Veggie Educator training, stresses the importance of using the knowledge clients already have when promoting the produce.

"It's so important to actually have samples out and talk about how these can be used like other vegetables people know—like 'these greens are like collard greens.' We just relate to knowledge that people already have." Janet encourages her Veggie Educators to value that knowledge and to use it to empower their clients.

Just Food is a nonprofit organization that connects communities and local farms with the resources and support they need to make fresh, locally grown food accessible to all New Yorkers. For more information about Just Food, visit <http://www.justfood.org>.



"In my community, I don't see a lot of children eating vegetables. I wish everyone could eat and enjoy vegetables – they don't know what they're missing!"



Learning About Food, Building Healthy Lives

Continued from page 1



This mother's children may also be getting more great food experiences such as those at Barre Town Elementary school, where passion and excitement about food is palpable. Susan Barnard, the school's K-2 physical education teacher, has started the Crops for Kids program in which students connect directly with the food they eat. She realized that, to make healthy food choices, children need a clear understanding of where food comes from. "It's more than just a school garden," says Barnard. Beyond the students and teachers starting seeds inside, moving them to the cold frame, and putting the plants in the ground, the kids also taste test food, learn about food production across academic disciplines, and share the food with their families. "During the summer, different families take care of the garden each week," added Barnard. "Each week a different family tends to the weeding, watering, and harvesting, so they are taking fresh veggies and fruits home with them during the summer." What started as a school program is now taking root among the children's families, who are planting gardens at home and cooking with more fresh vegetables. "I am absolutely

What started as a school program is now taking root among the children's families, who are planting gardens at home and cooking with more fresh vegetables.

convinced that change happens in schools," says Barnard, "and in Vermont and here at Barre Town Elementary School, we are leading the way!"

Elders are also benefiting from an increased awareness about nutrition and fresh, local food. Cathy Paquet, the nutrition and wellness coordinator at the Central Vermont Council on Aging, sends out monthly nutritional information to all of CVCOA's meal sites. Now, a new initiative is going even further and actually helping senior meal programs purchase fresh, local food. "At all of the meal sites," says Paquet, "the staff cooks from scratch, so this program is encouraging them to build relationships with local farmers."

Joni Brown is one of those who cook from scratch for seniors. Since Brown arrived as the cook at the Twin Valley Senior Center in Marshfield, a Foodbank network partner, the food scene has definitely undergone a transformation. "When I first got here, there was a pretty basic menu. I've changed it up a bit and introduced foods the seniors probably never tried like collard

greens and kale or cold carrot salad with peppers and onions. I made chicken teriyaki, which they had never tasted. They love it!" Contributions to the Center come from many sources, including the Vermont Foodbank's Gleaning Program. Brown says, "The Foodbank also delivers produce here. They often ask us if we can use some extra produce. I always say yes, and then figure out a way to use it." Brown's innovations even extend to the Meals-on-Wheels deliveries. "We'll get an excess of things like cucumbers, so we'll fix these little goody bags with something like cucumber and tomato sandwiches. The seniors love these fresh sandwiches, and

they are getting a little extra nutrition."

Knowing how to prepare food, eating meals together as a family, knowing (and liking!) foods that are good for us, connecting with the people who grow our food — these are all values that make for healthier, more productive lives.

Right: Executive Director Rita Copeland is proud of the Meals On Wheels packages that are prepared at the senior center.



Left: Joni Brown, head cook, with volunteer Bruce MacDonald showing off a fresh green salad.



eating better on a budget



10 tips to help you stretch your food dollars

Get the most for your food budget! There are many ways to save money on the foods that you eat. The three main steps are planning before you shop, purchasing the items at the best price, and preparing meals that stretch your food dollars.

1 plan, plan, plan!

Before you head to the grocery store, plan your meals for the week. Include meals like stews, casseroles, or stir-fries, which “stretch” expensive items into more portions. Check to see what foods you already have and make a list for what you need to buy.

2 get the best price

Check the local newspaper, online, and at the store for sales and coupons. Ask about a loyalty card for extra savings at stores where you shop. Look for specials or sales on meat and seafood—often the most expensive items on your list.



3 compare and contrast

Locate the “Unit Price” on the shelf directly below the product. Use it to compare different brands and different sizes of the same brand to determine which is more economical.

4 buy in bulk

It is almost always cheaper to buy foods in bulk. Smart choices are family packs of chicken, steak, or fish and larger bags of potatoes and frozen vegetables. Before you shop, remember to check if you have enough freezer space.

5 buy in season

Buying fruits and vegetables in season can lower the cost and add to the freshness! If you are not going to use them all right away, buy some that still need time to ripen.

6 convenience costs... go back to the basics

Convenience foods like frozen dinners, pre-cut vegetables, and instant rice, oatmeal, or grits will cost you more than if you were to make them from scratch. Take the time to prepare your own—and save!

7 easy on your wallet

Certain foods are typically low-cost options all year round. Try beans for a less expensive protein food. For vegetables, buy carrots, greens, or potatoes. As for fruits, apples and bananas are good choices.



8 cook once...eat all week!

Prepare a large batch of favorite recipes on your day off (double or triple the recipe). Freeze in individual containers. Use them throughout the week and you won't have to spend money on take-out meals.

9 get your creative juices flowing

Spice up your leftovers—use them in new ways. For example, try leftover chicken in a stir-fry or over a garden salad, or to make chicken chili. Remember, throwing away food is throwing away your money!

10 eating out

Restaurants can be expensive. Save money by getting the early bird special, going out for lunch instead of dinner, or looking for “2 for 1” deals. Stick to water instead of ordering other beverages, which add to the bill.



Help end hunger in Vermont – one person at a time.

Please use my generous gift to support all of the Foodbank's vital programs to provide food to kids, seniors, and families every day of the week.

\$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other \$ _____

Charge my gift to: VISA MasterCard AMEX Discover

Card # _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Name as it appears on card: _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I want to become a sustaining donor by giving a gift every month.

Deduct my monthly gift of \$ _____ from my bank account.
My voided check is enclosed.

Charge my monthly gift of \$ _____ to my credit card.

Last year, as many as
86,000 Vermonters accessed
food through our network of
**280 food shelves, meal sites,
senior centers, and after-
school programs throughout
the state.**

VERMONT FOODBANK
**P.O. BOX 471
BRATTLEBORO, VT 05302-0471**

*Please complete and return with your check (if applicable)
made payable to Vermont Foodbank in the enclosed
envelope.*

Braised Bacon Cabbage

Published in *Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook*
(Adapted from *Jamie's Food Revolution* by Jamie Oliver, Hyperion Books)

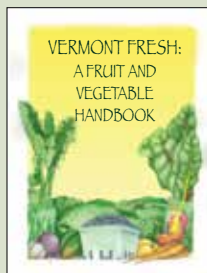
Serves 4

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
5-6 strips bacon, chopped into
small pieces
2 teaspoons garlic
(minced or powdered)
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
1 tablespoon butter
1 medium head cabbage
1 chicken bouillon cube
Salt and pepper

Preparation

1. Quarter and core the cabbage. Slice leaves into thin strips.
2. Heat olive oil in large saucepan. Add bacon and cook until crisp.
Stir in garlic.
3. Add Worcestershire sauce, butter, and cabbage. Stir well.
4. Dissolve bouillon in 1 cup hot water and
add to saucepan.
Cover and simmer 5 minutes.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste. Serve hot.



The publication of *Vermont Fresh: A Fruit and Vegetable Handbook* was a collaborative effort of the Vermont Foodbank, Salvation Farms, and Sterling College. The handbook highlights 40 fruits and vegetables that are particularly well suited to the

Northeast region and addresses growing, storage, recipes, and nutritional information.

The handbook increases the information available on how to use fresh foods and complements work being done statewide through the Foodbank's Gleaning

Program to increase access to Vermont-grown foods.

More than 160 copies were distributed to Foodbank network partners. Pages can be easily photocopied and used for cooking demonstrations and classes. The handbook has been especially helpful to food shelves when large quantities of specific crops are available and offers quick and simple recipes for everything from squash to kale, beets, and more.

The handbook is available as a free download on the Vermont Foodbank website at www.vtfoodbank.org.





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SAVE THE DATE!

2013 Vermont Foodbank Hunger Action Conference

The Foodbank's annual Hunger Conference will be held on **Tuesday, May 7, 2013**, at the **Sheraton Conference Center in Burlington, Vermont**

What new questions will help us create innovative solutions to complex challenges, like hunger in our community? How can our perception of problems be transformed in order to uncover new possibilities for achieving positive results? How does our vision of a fully nourished community guide our work in making our vision a reality?

The **2013 Vermont Foodbank Hunger Action Conference** has been designed to help us discover "what works" to create positive change around complex social issues. Conference-goers will be inspired by shining examples of success from around the country, engage in meaningful dialogue about our own best practices, and build upon and create results that work in Vermont.

Featured presenters, Dr. Lindsey Godwin and Dr. Matthew Moehle, will lead us through a day of experiential learning where we will utilize some of the latest and best practices for creating positive change. This conference will be filled with ideas and experiences that will move us from inspiration to action.

Please join us to explore these new ideas, cultivate partnerships, and nourish yourself so that you can help nourish others in Vermont.

Visit www.vtfoodbank.org for a detailed agenda and registration information.

