

FALL 2016

Gather. Share. Nurture.

# Kernels



Vermont Foodbank

[www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org)

A member of

**FEEDING  
AMERICA**



## Creating a Holiday Season for Everyone in Vermont

Do you have fond memories of gathering around the kitchen table? Of sharing a piping hot holiday meal in the comfort of friends and family? Celebration, community, plenty—these are the promises of the holiday season, a time when food brings people together and creates lasting memories.

For many of our neighbors, food or a lack thereof, causes stress and fatigue. Not knowing where your next meal will come from or how to provide quality food for your family weighs on the hearts and minds of 153,000 of our neighbors who turn to the Vermont Foodbank each year for food help.

*continued on page 3*



## NOTE from the CEO

You'll read all kinds of food memories in this issue of *Kernels*. I certainly have my own—lots, in fact. My parents grew up on Minnesota farms where hearty homemade meals were the norm. Coming home from school to the smell of baking bread meant a thick slab, steaming hot and chewy, slathered with butter that soaked right in. I can still smell and taste that memory.

By supporting the Vermont Foodbank, you're helping to create just those kinds of memories. Joining together around the Foodbank's mission builds community well-being and makes fond food memories—something we can all have in common.

A memorable meal is a good analogy for the way your Foodbank develops human potential and community well-being. A memorable meal is well planned. The flavors and textures are carefully chosen to complement one another. You select the best ingredients you can afford, all of which are created in their own right by farmers, growers, and value-added processors. Experts are consulted (cookbooks, friends, your mom perhaps). You apply your skill, knowledge, and hard work to prepare each dish. Your guests arrive and you serve your masterpiece! Even though one doesn't like Brussels sprouts and another is a vegan, everyone finds something to enjoy, and best of all, the company and conversation are great. You'll remember this meal for a long time.

Building community well-being and striving to help each person meet his or her potential through your Foodbank isn't so different from creating a memorable meal. It takes lots of planning. The logistics of getting food from here

to there and the detailed planning required to coordinate people and programs—whether it's a VeggieVanGo event at a hospital, a VT Fresh tasting demo, or the Community Kitchen Academy—involves hundreds of details that must be anticipated. Different partners and different community needs must be aligned in just the right way so that everyone is heard and all needs are addressed. Additionally, each partner or community has its own story and history that needs to be known and appreciated. Experts are consulted (government officials, community leaders, fellow nonprofit partners, and our neighbors with lived experience). Finally, someone has to orchestrate by inspiring everyone to show up with passion and contribute to solutions as the inevitable challenges arise.

Finally, everything comes together, and, well, someone doesn't like Brussels sprouts and another is a vegan (or someone's car broke down or the grant wasn't renewed). But you know what? Some of our neighbors showed up, and they liked the meal (and gained some hope and discovered some of their personal potential). And today was better than yesterday. When that happens over and over, as it does in all of our communities every day, it builds resiliency and community well-being. And it was a good experience that someone will remember for a long time. That meal made a difference. Let's start the next one.

Your continued support keeps those meals coming, and our community is better for it. Please give generously.

With gratitude,

  
John Sayles, CEO



# Creating a Holiday Season for Everyone in Vermont

*continued from page 1*

For so many, the holidays can be a difficult time—a harsh reminder of the struggle of not having enough to eat.

For 30 years, the Vermont Foodbank has worked to provide food to those who are hungry. This year, the Foodbank provided more than 12 million pounds of food—delivered to food shelves and meal sites, hospitals, schools, and housing sites. And this year, the Foodbank also turned its focus to fresh—fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, healthy dairy—to improve the quality of food available for those most in need.

We believe that food is a right. By providing food to those in need, the Vermont Foodbank is bringing communities together, transforming lives, and providing a Vermont

where people have the food they need to thrive and flourish.

In this issue of *Kernels*, Foodbank volunteers and donors, employees and volunteers at food shelves and meal sites, and neighbors who have received help from the Foodbank share their stories and memories. These stories aren't extraordinary—just honest memories of food: food as culture and history; food as time and place. They are stories of families and relationships forged and strengthened by food.

Because of your support and ongoing partnership, you are creating a holiday season for everyone in Vermont in which food brings people to together and creates lasting memories.



**Gather. Share. Nurture.**

# Food Stories...

## Jean Senstad Dickinson

Vermont Foodbank Donor

It will soon be time to find the sandbakkell tins and make the dough:

1 cup of butter

1 cup of sugar

1 egg

A capful of vanilla or almond extract

Enough flour (2-plus cups) to make a stiff dough

The dough is pressed into the fluted sandbakkell tins as thin as possible and baked to a golden brown (at 350 degrees for 12 minutes or so). Next, the finished sandbakkells are gingerly removed by tapping the edges of the hot tins against a cutting board or such, until they fall out. When cool, they are ready to be packed and mailed in the Christmas boxes to our family, far and wide. Plates of sandbakkells are given to neighbors.

My Grandmother Larson brought her original sandbakkell tins from Norway when she moved to Wisconsin in the 1860s. Sandbakkells have been our family's taste of Christmas in Norway every Christmas since.



## Susan Pratt Fox

Executive Director, Meals on Wheels of Bennington County

When I was 12, in 1969, my mother died. It was a very difficult time, and food was not a priority for those caring for my 4-year-old twin brothers and me. We were fed, but not nurtured. There were no more family meals; we subsisted on processed food—TV dinners, Spaghetti Os, and rock-hard pieces of mystery meat. We never had a vegetable that wasn't canned or frozen. I pretty much stopped eating altogether.

Once a week I helped my maternal grandmother. She cooked the old-fashioned way. Grandma Samson taught me how to prepare simple, delicious food. After a cooking lesson, we'd set the table in a very formal way, sit down with my grandfather, say grace, and dine as a family. I was grateful for both the food and the conversation.

The combination of cooking with my grandmother and eating healthy food helped me see that despite the loss of my mother, someone cared for me and held me through a very difficult time. I learned to nurture myself, and I became a chef and a social worker.

The loss I experienced at an early age empowered me to care for myself and others—especially those who are alone and unable to prepare food for themselves.

Holidays have always been celebrations to share with friends and family. Just before Thanksgiving 14 years ago, I began volunteering at Meals on Wheels, preparing and delivering meals to the homebound. Many of the people I delivered to had no one to celebrate holidays with. They were grateful for the meal, and even more for the time I spent with them.

My children are now grown, and I have experienced the difficulty of being alone during holidays. The ritual of preparing a holiday meal and sitting down at the table are things I now share with the family of seniors at our community meal sites. I am grateful to provide a festive holiday meal and the opportunity for fellowship for those who, like me, are alone.

**Gather. Share. Nurture.**

## Susan Kochinkas

Director, Putney Food Shelf

One of my first memories of sharing food is of Christmas Eve at my grandparents' house in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. My grandmother was all about showing her love through food. And Christmas Eve was all about being Swedish. The food at the table came from that heritage: lutefisk (boiled cod) with a white mustard sauce, boiled potatoes, beet salad (the only color on the table), pickled herring, Swedish meatballs, rye bread, and sylta (a weird pressed meat with spicy peppercorns that probably included headcheese). For dessert we had rice pudding—one bowl that would have a whole almond hidden in it. If you found it, you'd get a prize. I swear that is the only reason my sister and I would eat that dessert! Now my grandmother's cookies . . . well, that's a whole other (delicious) story!

It was a fairly disgusting meal, one that I tried unsuccessfully to create years later for my own family for purely sentimental reasons. At that point, I realized that it was the tradition of bringing together family that was important. Food was our excuse to get together. Come for a meal, break bread, share a treat, and spend time with family.



## Jessica Walters

Community Kitchen Academy Student

One memory I have from my childhood is of my mom cooking my favorite foods on my birthday. It is a tradition I kept up with my children. I really enjoy cooking for my children. Cooking relieves a lot of stress for me. When I was a child, some of the foods I wanted my mom to cook were shepherd's pie, spaghetti, and her famous homemade mac and cheese. Those are still some of my favorites, and I have learned to cook them on my own.



## Ashlie Moore

Community Kitchen Academy Student

Food is a common denominator for every living thing on the planet. It is something everyone needs to survive. For some, making food is a passion, an art, and a way to show their creative side.

My first memory with food was from an experience I had when I was five. I was helping my mom make meatloaf, mashed potatoes, and corn on the cob. I remember how excited I was when the food's aroma started to fill the house. From then on, I was always in the kitchen watching and offering to help my grandmas and aunts as they cooked.

A young girl with dark hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt, is smiling warmly at the camera. She is seated at a wooden dining table. In front of her is a large, golden-brown roasted turkey on a wooden platter, surrounded by various side dishes including mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, and bread. The table is set with glasses of red wine, a lit candle, and silverware. The background is softly lit, suggesting a cozy indoor setting.

# Food Stories...

## Sandy Doten

Vermont Foodbank Volunteer

I grew up in a family of eight children . . . yes, eight! Dinnertime was always an adventure. You definitely wanted to be sure you were at the table on time! We always had enough but never an abundance, so it was important to get there for your share! If you didn't like what was served and you were hungry, it was best to eat it anyway, as there weren't other options.

Thanksgiving dinner was probably my favorite meal of the year. For the size of our family, we had to get a very large turkey. My mother would get up at 5:00 in the morning to get it ready to go in the oven. She always made her own stuffing, and I remember the old meat grinder we used to grind the cooked giblets she added.

Waking up on Thanksgiving Day to the smell of turkey roasting was so homey and comforting. My sisters and I would help peel potatoes for boiling and prepare the apples for pies. My mother made the best pies! Her crusts were wafer thin and so flaky they melted in your mouth. (Sadly, I could never get her technique down, much to the disappointment of my own family.)

Along with a variety of vegetables and bread, we also had a cottage cheese salad that was made only for the holidays, with cottage cheese, pineapple chunks, and green olives. A family favorite! All the while the meal was being prepared, the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade was playing in the background. We would stop our preparations for a moment to see which huge balloon character was making its way down the parade route.

Just before the big meal, it was my father's job to carve the turkey, slipping us small pieces to nibble on. The platters were piled high with white and dark meat. When everything was ready, every inch of the table was filled. All 10 of us would find our seats, and the passing would begin. To avoid utter chaos, we passed everything counterclockwise until everyone was served and the nearly empty plates were returned to the center of the table.

So much abundance, and we were so thankful! When all was finished, the girls would clear the table and hand wash and dry the dishes while our brothers lay in turkey comas in front of the football game on TV. After a few hours, we would wander back into the kitchen for a piece or two of pie and look forward to having leftover turkey sandwiches for the next couple of days.

## Harpoon Point to Point

The 15th Annual Harpoon Point to Point bicycle ride presented by National Life Group on Saturday, August 13, was a truly epic event.

Our courageous riders braved the storm of the summer to fight hunger and make it a memorable year. Thunder and lightning couldn't keep us from our goal of feeding our neighbors in need.

The Harpoon Point to Point is the Vermont Foodbank's largest annual fundraiser, a collaborative effort of the Harpoon Brewery, the Point Radio Network, National Life Group, and the Vermont Foodbank to raise awareness and funds for Vermonters in need. This year, 741 registered riders helped us raise more than \$205,000 to fight hunger in our communities.

Thank you to Harpoon Brewery, our generous sponsors, all of the riders, and everyone who donated to the Vermont Foodbank in support of a rider.



## Upcoming Events



### New Year's Eve Gala

**Ring in the New Year with the Foodbank at the best bash around!**

Join us at the Sheraton Hotel in Burlington for a spectacular New Year's Eve Gala to benefit the Vermont Foodbank and the South Burlington Rotary. This classy soiree will feature exceptional food, fun live music, dancing, and more.

Tickets are available here: [www.vtfoodbank.org/NYE](http://www.vtfoodbank.org/NYE)



### Twin City Subaru

For the fourth consecutive year, Twin City Subaru has named Vermont Foodbank its hometown charity for its annual Share the Love event. From November 17 through January 3, Subaru of America will donate \$250 to a charity of the customer's choice for each new Subaru sold or leased. Vermont Foodbank will be listed as the dealer's unique local charity option and has received overwhelming support from customers in the past.

For all the latest information, visit our website at [www.vtfoodbank.org](http://www.vtfoodbank.org)

We're very social! Join us on:



Gather. Share. Nurture.

CONTACT US:

Vermont Foodbank

33 Parker Road • Barre, VT 05641

Tel: 802-476-3341 / Fax: 802-476-0319



## THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, GIVE THE GIFT OF A MEAL!

Donate to the Vermont Foodbank in lieu of gifts. With a donation of \$35 you can send your family, friends, and business associates a holiday card, letting them know a donation has been made in their name to the Vermont Foodbank.

Make your purchase online at [vtfoodbank.org/holidaycard](http://vtfoodbank.org/holidaycard), or fill out the form and return it to the address listed below. Please note all cards will be sent directly to you, the buyer, for sharing.

The holiday gift card was created for the Foodbank by Vermont artist Bonnie Acker. **Each card provides more than 100 meals for our neighbors in need.**

YOUR NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE NUMBER: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **PLEASE ENCLOSE A MINIMUM GIFT OF \$35.00 PER CARD**

CHARGE MY (CHECK ONE):  VISA  MASTERCARD  AMEX  DISCOVER

CARD NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

Order online at [vtfoodbank.org/holidaycard](http://vtfoodbank.org/holidaycard) or mail completed form to:  
Vermont Foodbank, Attn: Holiday Card, 33 Parker Road, Barre, VT 05641

**PLEASE NOTE:** *To ensure that your holiday gift card arrives on time, please be sure to mail your form to us by December 14.*

**Thank you for providing the gift of meals to Vermont families this holiday season.**

**Gather. Share. Nurture.**