

Kernels



Vermont Foodbank

Gratitude
Edition
2020



Looking forward to stories of hope in the new year



As I get older and my son approaches adulthood I find myself feeling more sentimental about holiday traditions, old friends, and experiences. After 10 years here at your Vermont Foodbank, however, I'm not sentimental about the past. Instead, I'm grateful for the impact we've made together, and I'm hopeful about tomorrow. When we join forces, you and I are better able to serve our neighbors who are making difficult trade-offs — prescriptions or food, utility bills or food, gas or food — every week. **You help make more fresh, nourishing food available to people where they learn, receive health care, work, and play.** I'm grateful for the stories our neighbors share so generously, that you read here in *Kernels*, so that you can experience your impact through the words of people whose lives you touched.

I look forward to the changes yet to come and to sharing more stories of hope from our neighbors.

Thank you for so generously supporting this work of unleashing the strength and resilience in communities across our state.

Thank You!


John Sayles
CEO



When Danielle needed help, she had a place to turn *because of you.*

Your Support

is helping Danielle and so many others who are struggling to afford healthy food. Last year, you helped share **2 million pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables.** Of that, **424,000 pounds were grown right here in Vermont.**

A widow is able to feed her three children, with *help from you*

After her husband passed away, Danielle struggled to make ends meet for herself and her three children. And when she lost her job, things got even harder. But thanks to you, help was there.

Danielle is a widow who has been raising three kids on her own since her husband passed away nine years ago. Her social security survivor benefits and income from her telemarketing job were just barely enough to pay the bills, but didn't leave much wiggle room for the unexpected.

So when Danielle abruptly lost her job, it became impossible to afford enough food for the family.

Her 11-year-old and 14-year-old are growing quickly and need a lot of food. Danielle is grateful for the free lunch her kids receive at school, but that's only one meal a day.

"I'll go without before they do — and I do to make sure my kids have food. I'll eat maybe once a day."

Aside from food, affording heat and hot water is her family's biggest challenge. At the time she shared her story, Danielle had no hot water. "To

take showers, we have to go to our in-laws' house. And to wash dishes I have to heat my water."

So Danielle turned to her local food shelf for help. And thanks to you, the shelves were stocked. "I've used them several times, that's how I was able to feed my kids last month."

When we heard about her challenges feeding her family, we told Danielle about the fresh food distributions at her local hospital that you make possible. She was thrilled.

"Oh perfect!" she said. "I'll go there tomorrow morning after I get the kids to school."

Danielle hopes to get another job — a good one in an office that pays well, where she would have regular working hours and be able to be home with her kids in the evening. But until then, **help is there *because of you.***

The kindness of a stranger changes everything for Lottie and her daughter

Lottie's challenges with affordable housing, childcare, and transportation have made it difficult to make ends meet. But the generosity of her community and donors like you have changed her life and inspired her to give back.

Lottie is a single mom living in Concord, Vermont. For Lottie, challenges with transportation and affordable childcare have made it difficult to make enough money to afford food. Despite working, she doesn't make enough to cover her basic needs, but is making too much to qualify for many assistance programs.

The cost of maintaining a reliable vehicle, and filling it with gas to get to work and to the grocery store, has been a struggle. **"You're forced to forgo [something] to fix your car, or pay childcare for the week, or to have to pay a bill. You have to neglect *something* in order to put food on the table.** The struggle is still there even though you're working," Lottie explains.

Lottie tried to change her life by moving to Maine. She left with her daughter and what she could fit in her car. "I'm very stubborn and hard-headed," Lottie says. "I didn't want to be on assistance when I left here, I wanted to be on my own."

Last year, you helped keep the shelves stocked for Lottie and other neighbors at 313 partner food shelves, meal sites, housing sites, hospitals, and schools throughout Vermont. You helped to share **9.7 million meals** with people facing hunger.

When they reached Maine, she worked as much as possible, but it was difficult to afford childcare for her daughter while she was at work. Ultimately the challenges Lottie found in Maine left her and her daughter homeless.

Lottie had a friend who would watch her daughter during the day so that she could work or find a job. "And at night, we would — I have a tiny little Chevy Aveo [...] — we would sleep in the car, on the seat, in the Walmart parking lot," Lottie remembers.

During this hard time, Lottie was grateful to have the support of her community. "I ended up reaching out to one of the local food shelves for help there, because I just couldn't make ends meet," she says.

Before long, Lottie moved back to Vermont where she got a job as a housekeeper at a hotel, but she had to travel more than an hour each way to get to work. "Even when I moved back here I was struggling."

One day, Lottie got a flat tire on her way home from work, so she put on her spare tire. But the very next day she got a second flat tire, and with no spare to use she was out of luck. Fearing that she would lose her job if she didn't get to work, Lottie asked her mother to pick her up and take her to work. She left her car on the side of the road with a note on it saying she would be back for the car after work.

Then something incredible happened.

A stranger found her car and bought her four brand new tires. “I didn’t know how I was going to afford a new tire or even fix the tire. It was either: fix the tire and go without milk and eggs, or go missing work until I got the tire fixed,” says Lottie.

This kind stranger was older, doing his best to make his own ends meet on a fixed retirement income. “He said I didn’t owe him anything,” Lottie remembers. He told her that when he was younger and struggling, someone helped him. All he asked of her was that she pay it forward.

“It brought tears to my eyes in how some people are so kind in this world and so willing to help you even in their own struggles. It restored my faith in humanity that there are still people out here willing to help one another.”

“Even if I’m struggling, it doesn’t matter. I know there are people who are worse off than me that don’t have anything. And if I had more room at home, I would take people in. Or if I had a camper in my yard, I’d let people stay in it. And I never used to be like that. So I think that guy brought out the better side of me.”

After working as much as possible and saving every dollar she could, Lottie found a place to live with a rent-to-own agreement. In four years she will own her home, and she won’t have to worry about housing anymore.

But Lottie knows there will continue to be challenges, so she is grateful that she can turn to her local food shelf when times are tough, thanks to your support. **“I couldn’t do it on my own, without the state help or the food shelf. No way could I do it,”** Lottie says.

The generosity of Lottie’s community and donors like you changed her life and inspired her to pay it forward. **“I’d like to have a garden big enough where I can donate to the food shelf. [...] And maybe give my eggs away from the chickens or the fruits and veggies that I grow. Or maybe teach people how to grow their own garden.”**



“It brought tears to my eyes in how some people are so kind in this world and so willing to help ...”



The magic of a family meal

A family enjoyed a festive holiday meal, thanks to donors like you.

Brittany and Clint's budget doesn't cover special holiday meals. As parents, it feels bad when they can't provide their kids with the festive food that other families seem to take for granted. Thanks to donors like you, their family was able to celebrate with a turkey — and all the trimmings — this year.

This past year, as the holidays began to roll around, Brittany wasn't sure her family would be able to celebrate in a traditional way. Brittany and her husband Clint both work, and they still struggle to make ends meet. They stretch every dollar to make sure their two boys have enough to eat — even if that sometimes means going without heat and special holiday meals.

"Holiday meals are expensive," Brittany says, **"and they're not in our budget. I knew we would eat on those days, but I was planning on serving grilled cheese sandwiches or spaghetti. I've never been able to buy a turkey."**

But because of generous supporters like you, there was more than grilled cheese on Brittany's table this holiday season.

"For Christmas and Thanksgiving this year, we got to eat meat, and it was such a luxury!" Brittany exclaims. "We also got cranberries, potatoes, pumpkin pie ... My son was so excited and kept saying, 'I love turkey!' **There was something so magical about being able to sit at the dinner table with my family and enjoy that holiday meal.**"

By keeping food shelves and meal sites stocked with fresh foods and pantry staples, you help make sure that families and neighbors across Vermont have the food they need, when they need it — and that everyone can celebrate with a delicious meal.

"I'm grateful, it's been such a huge blessing."

2019 Annual Report

Vermont Foodbank
www.vtfoodbank.org

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FY19

REVENUE

Food contributions	\$ 16,516,104
Financial contributions	\$ 5,562,768
Grants	\$ 3,942,647
In-kind contributions	\$ 115,550
Sales of purchased food	\$ 1,167,855
Delivery income and membership fees	\$ 220,529
Other income/net gain on investments	\$ 578,419

TOTAL REVENUE \$ **28,103,872**

EXPENSES

Food distribution	\$ 22,520,304
Management and general	\$ 740,105
Fundraising expenses	\$ 1,728,786

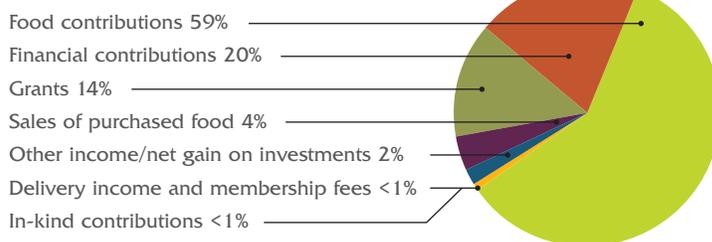
TOTAL EXPENSES \$ **24,989,195**

Change in net assets \$ 3,114,677

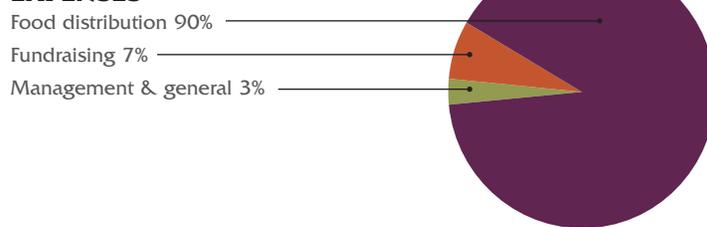
NET ASSETS beginning of year \$ 10,628,413

NET ASSETS end of year \$ **13,743,090**

REVENUE



EXPENSES



CONDENSED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FY19

ASSETS

Cash and marketable securities	\$ 7,327,474
Receivables	\$ 2,242,749
Prepaid expenses	\$ 46,594
Inventory	\$ 1,662,336
Property and equipment, net	\$ 3,506,589

TOTAL ASSETS \$ **14,785,742**

LIABILITIES

Accounts payable	\$ 879,959
Accrued expenses	\$ 162,292
Notes payable	\$ 401

TOTAL LIABILITIES \$ **1,042,652**

NET ASSETS

Unrestricted - undesignated	\$ 7,824,459
Unrestricted - property and equipment	\$ 3,506,589
Unrestricted - board designated	\$ 300,000

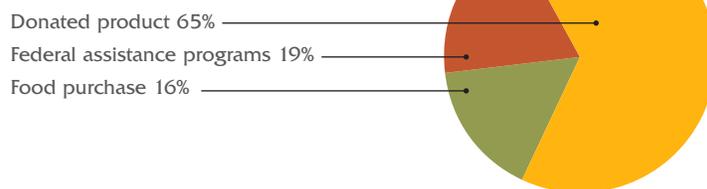
TOTAL UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS \$ **11,631,048**

Temporarily restricted \$ 2,112,042

TOTAL NET ASSETS \$ **13,743,090**

TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS \$ **14,785,742**

FOOD SOURCES



FOOD SOURCES IN POUNDS

Donated product	7,560,003
Federal assistance programs	2,249,784
Food purchase	1,877,936
TOTAL	11,687,723

FOODBANK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doug Lantagne, Chair	Liz Ruffa
Samara Bushey	Jan Scites
Mike Hourigan	Jeff Tieman
Penrose Jackson	Martha Trombley Oakes
Mitzi Johnson	Joe Zuaro



We use your support wisely. The Vermont Foodbank has been rated a "Four-Star Charity" for transparency and efficiency by watchdog Charity Navigator, charitynavigator.org.

Hunger doesn't wait



That's why it's important to provide meals and groceries that people can count on every month.

This winter, families and neighbors will be facing tough choices. They'll have to decide whether to pay for food or to pay for heat. Supporters who make an automatic gift to the Vermont Foodbank every month will help provide food so that it is there when it's needed, and not a moment too late.

A Vermont neighbor reached out to us to share their story:

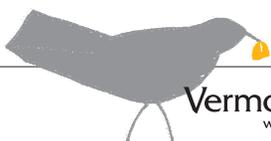
“Recently I lost my full time job and benefits due to a store closure. I prepare meals for my dad as I live with him. Obtaining food is hard as there is not enough money. I make many soups and stews. Dad never complains, instead he enjoys the simple meals. I worry that I am not providing him with protein or other foods I should.”

Thankfully, with your help, nutritious foods like fruits, vegetables, meat, and dairy can be available all year long to help families eat well, no matter what they are going through.

Please consider becoming a Sustaining Monthly Donor. **A \$30 monthly pledge can help provide enough food to feed someone — a child or neighbor — 50 meals, every month.**

If you're already a Sustaining Monthly Donor, thank you! Because of you, someone in need will have breakfast, lunch, and dinner today, or whenever they need it most. Because hunger doesn't wait until the fridge is full ...

Becoming a monthly donor is quick, easy, and secure. An automatic monthly gift means less work on your end and ensures that more of your donation helps people in need. **Sign up using the enclosed form or by visiting our website at www.vtfoodbank.org/give.**



Vermont Foodbank
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For all the latest information, visit our website at www.vtfoodbank.org.

We're very social!
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