When Lisa, a 52-year-old veteran living in Rutland, Vermont, had a stroke, she had to stop working while focusing on rehabilitation. Without a job, she struggled to afford her basic needs like a roof over her head and food on the table. “I had looked into resources in this area just in case I became homeless.”

When a VA worker referred her to the Vermont Foodbank, everything changed. Thanks to your support, the Foodbank was there to help Lisa get signed up for 3SquaresVT, a program that provides her with money each month to purchase the food she needs.

“It was a helpful bridge to keep me going and now I just went back to work part-time. I don’t have a vehicle and can’t drive right now due to the stroke. I am still developing my peripheral vision so it’s hard for me to walk to a food shelf and carry back everything I need for a month. With the [3SquaresVT] card I can just get a few items when I need them at a grocery store and carry them home.”

Thanks to you, Lisa had a place to turn during a challenging time in her life. With your help, she can keep food on the table while she continues to recover from her stroke.

You are helping to change stories

Stories are what move us. In fact, humans are hardwired to respond to stories about our fellow humans. When stories move you to take action—to donate, volunteer, or advocate—that’s a chance to help turn stories of challenge into stories of hope and opportunity.

Over the past year, I have heard and told many stories about our neighbors and it has solidified my belief that we need to trust the genius and beauty of everyone in our community. Sharing stories allows us to learn from each other, better understand each other’s unique life experiences, and find ways to connect, help, and strengthen our community.

Learn your neighbors’ stories. And take action with me to make sure they can all be stories of hope.

Thank you!

John Sayles
CEO

A veteran in Rutland gets the help she needs

Lisa is a veteran living in Rutland who recently had a stroke. She couldn’t work while rehabilitating and was struggling to make ends meet. Thanks to your generous support, she could turn to the Vermont Foodbank for help.

When Lisa, a 52-year-old veteran living in Rutland, Vermont, had a stroke, she had to stop working while focusing on rehabilitation. Without a job, she struggled to afford her basic needs like a roof over her head and food on the table.

“I had looked into resources in this area just in case I became homeless.”

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“With your help, Vermont veterans like Lisa have a place to turn when times get tough.”
My name is Zoey and I’m 11 years old. […] My mom works really hard to make sure me and Zeus have a roof over our head and enough to eat. When we’re eating, she’ll make sure we eat first and are full. Then if there’s leftovers she’ll make dinner for herself. She works from home, but I know it’s still a struggle.

During the school year, I get free lunch and breakfast at school, which helps my mom make sure we have enough food for the weekends. But during the summer when school is out, we don’t have those meals, so instead we go to the free lunch […]

I’m really happy that we have it. To everyone who makes it possible I want to say thank you. Because you’re making kids like me happy and our parents happy too, by making it easier for all of us to get enough to eat.

They serve us turkey and cheese, peanut butter and jelly, apples, carrots and broccoli. It’s really good food that gives me the energy I need to be active and play with my friends. It also helps my mom not stress, because she doesn’t have to worry about finding money to feed us extra meals during the summer. […]
Two older Vermonters now have the food they need because of you

Joseph and Harold are retired and doing their best to afford their needs on a limited social security income. Once they’ve paid for rent, utilities, and health care costs, there isn’t enough money left for food. Thanks to you, help is there.

Joseph is an older Vermonter helping provide care to his friend and housemate, Harold.

“We are two older people who have been retired for 9 years. We receive social security as our main source of income and recently it has been increasingly hard to make ends meet,” says Joseph. “Rent payment, utilities, food, insurance payments, medication eats up our social security and we must make every penny count. Many times it has come down to paying rent, utilities, insurance, and medication at the risk of going without the basic food items to ensure balanced meals.”

Joseph knows that wholesome food is critical for their health, but with a limited budget it is very hard to afford high quality, nutritious food.

“I try to give us balanced meals but sometimes it is difficult because of the price of food. Harold has high medical costs due to lymphoma and I try to do my best as his caretaker, yet we can’t always afford the foods we need.”

But then Joseph connected with the team at the Vermont Foodbank. And thanks to your support, we were able to help. Now Joseph and Harold receive monthly boxes of food, as well as funds to purchase groceries using 3SquaresVT, a program that provides them with money each month to purchase the food they need. “I received a response quickly and the program was explained to me. Emily, the Foodbank worker, contacted me and helped me through the application process which turned out to be an easy process.”

Within a couple of weeks, Joseph’s application was accepted and he began receiving benefits to help him and Harold purchase food every month. Between this and the monthly food boxes, things are looking up.

“We are now eating well-balanced meals and these funds have taken the pressure off of securing finances to buy food.”

Because of your support, Foodbank programs like these are there to help ensure that everyone has the food they need. On behalf of Joseph, Harold, and the neighbors you help every year, thank you!
We’re halfway through summer. **Kids experiencing hunger right now know exactly how many days are left before they’ll have reliable breakfasts and lunches at school again.**

Hopefully you’ve noticed that, in the last few years, we’ve worked really hard to share real stories with you. You’ve heard directly from kids and parents about how hunger is impacting their lives, the challenges and hardships they face. You’ve also heard from those same kids and parents about the joy and love in their lives, their achievements, the dreams they are reaching for. These stories might have resonated with you, maybe they’ve felt familiar, and perhaps they inspired you to make a gift.

For every story you’ve heard, there are thousands more that remain unspoken. **You can help ensure everyone has the food they need.** Now, while kids are out of school, is an especially critical time.

Here are some of the stories we’ve shared with you this year. In each of these stories, you heard about the challenges and tough decisions kids and parents are making, especially in the summer:

- “During the school year I can provide enough, but in the summer it gets frightening. **It seems to cost me ten times more to feed them since they’re not receiving free breakfast and lunch.** To make up for it, we all skip breakfast and I feed them what I can for lunch.”  
  – Teresa, parent

- “When I was really young I walked in the kitchen thinking, ‘what’s for breakfast?’ But there was nothing in the cabinets, and I thought, ‘oh no.’ My mother caught me digging in the cabinets and said, ‘**Sorry we can’t have anything for breakfast, lunch or dinner today.**’ So we just snacked a little. It made me feel so hungry, it felt pretty bad.”  
  – Kitiana, 5th Grader

- “They are amazing children and I want to give them everything. It’s heartbreaking that I can’t. Money is really tight. **Sometimes I skip meals so that they can eat, and sometimes the only thing I can afford are noodles.** So, we eat noodles all week, even though I know that’s not healthy. My children are my everything; without them, I don’t know where I would be. I love them, and they love me, and I know that we’ll overcome this hard time together.”  
  – Angela, parent

Please make a gift today so that no kid has to go hungry this summer. With one month to go, there’s still time to help a kid in need.