



## SURPASSING EXPECTATION

“My first visit to the Northampton Survival Center shattered my expectations for a food pantry. I had imagined clients who were entirely dependent on processed food, stuck with poor eating habits, and without the resources to cook fresh foods. What I found were people who were there to pick up seasonal produce, meat, and dry goods, which they were quite adept at preparing. It was not a room of sullen strangers who kept to themselves; **I found both the clients and staff to be a community who smiled and exchanged news, who greeted friends and shared stories.** People who rely on

the Survival Center have an amazing selection of food to meet their needs, along with a warm sense of community created by the staff, volunteers, and each other.” —*Deb, volunteer cooking instructor*



## A HOPEFUL PLACE IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

Dear friends,

To be sure, these are challenging times for many of us. Economic uncertainty, political upheaval, and civil unrest on matters both global and local can give rise to feelings of disempowerment, isolation, fear, and hopelessness.

I am comforted and encouraged to see first-hand at the Center how effectively we humans can overcome and rise above these feelings of despair. We do this by **coming together as a community, rolling up our sleeves**, and **casting off hopelessness** in favor of helping others. Volunteers, clients, donors, staff—each of us give and receive as we build a connection by being part of something inclusive and affirming, and bigger than our individual selves.

I invite you to find solace by taking part in building this community with us. Come lend a hand, make a contribution, share a smile with a new friend, feed a family, and help relieve your neighbor's burden. We're all in this together. —*Heidi Nortonsmith, Executive Director*





In March, a volunteer popped into Heidi's office with an envelope, tossed it on the desk, and said cheerily "happy birthday to me!" as she skipped out the door. The envelope contained a \$3,000 gift, after putting in a two hour shift, on HER birthday.



## A BIG THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Thanks to many local business sponsors and in-kind donations, our Volunteer Appreciation party was a smashing success featuring Latin tunes from MarKamusic, bar-b-que, Smuttynose beer, and Crooked Stick Pops.



## ALICIA STEWART: "PERSONAL SHOPPER"

“My greatest joy is in bringing light into people’s day by becoming their personal shopper.”



Alicia Stewart has been volunteering with the Center for years. She owns and runs River Valley Transcription, and in her free time enjoys helping folks through her Handy Ma'am business.

“My volunteer work at the Center is mainly at the grocery counter. I love working with the other volunteers and staff. They are all wonderful! I feel very fortunate to be a part of this endeavor. My greatest joy is in bringing light into people’s day by becoming their personal shopper. During the Post Office Food Drive, **to see the generosity of our community in giving back** to this great organization is amazing and wonderful and **re-energizes my faith in the human spirit.**”

## 10 REASONS FOR VOLUNTEERING HERE

*as reported by our volunteers*

- 1 Meet great people who share your commitment to helping others.
- 2 Get satisfaction from helping people directly with one of life's basic needs.
- 3 See the relief and appreciation on the faces of people whom you are helping.
- 4 Help out a terrific organization, run by caring, devoted, and capable people.
- 5 It's fun!
- 6 Volunteering is a great way to "give back" to the community.
- 7 Helping those in need makes you appreciate everything you have in your life.
- 8 Volunteering at the Center is a terrific break from your usual routine, job, home, life, etc.
- 9 Helping others makes you feel good about yourself.
- 10 Volunteering with a group of people who are focused on the same thing makes you feel a part of a team for good!

That same week, during a site visit from our United Way funders, the guests remarked on how much JOY they felt from all corners of the building during their tour.



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

MEET CARLOS RIVERA, OUR PANTRY MANAGER

We are thrilled to welcome Northampton-native Carlos Rivera to our team as Pantry Manager. Carlos brings a breadth of skills and expertise with him, having served as a social worker and program coordinator with several area non-profits in addition to his experience in warehouse and grocery inventory management—a perfect fit for a role that combines client services and food distribution. As Carlos describes the Center, “There is this remarkable

culture of love, giving, and compassion at the Survival Center. It’s so encouraging and infectious to see so many people donate their time and talents in service of the community. There is a phrase that I hear often from the folks who donate their time to run workshops at the Center, ‘It feels really good to be able to give back.’ One thing has been clear to me since working at the Center—**there are blessings not just in receiving but also in the giving.**”



Carlos’ enthusiastic words about some of the services offered to our clients:



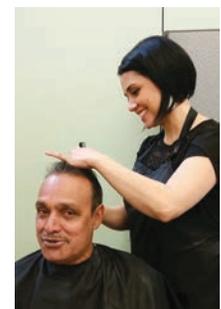
**SNAP support:** Navigating the paperwork and phone calls that are required to fill out a SNAP application can be a daunting task for some of the folks who come into the Center. Judy has been helping people enroll for SNAP benefits at the Center for about a year. She is courteous, caring, and efficient, making this overwhelming task flow effortlessly for our participants.

- **Screening for good health:** Having knowledge about ourselves can be empowering. Knowing your blood pressure and screening for glucose levels can be a first step in creating healthier eating habits and lifestyle changes. Felicia Cortes, from A Caring Heart, conducts outreach at the Center. She is accompanied by a nurse who screens for blood pressure and glucose levels. She also connects our participants with



Personal Care Assistants along with other health-related programs.

- **Hair styling:** Many participants have told me that having a hair stylist at the Center would be very helpful. I asked my sister Marilyn, who owns a salon, if she could volunteer her services. She committed to coming in once a month, but after her first visit, asked if she could volunteer twice a month. For her it felt very rewarding to see joy in people’s faces. A new hairstyle can be transformative. People feel better about themselves, and it empowers them to make other positive changes in their life.





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## REACHING NEW HEIGHTS THROUGH OUR BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

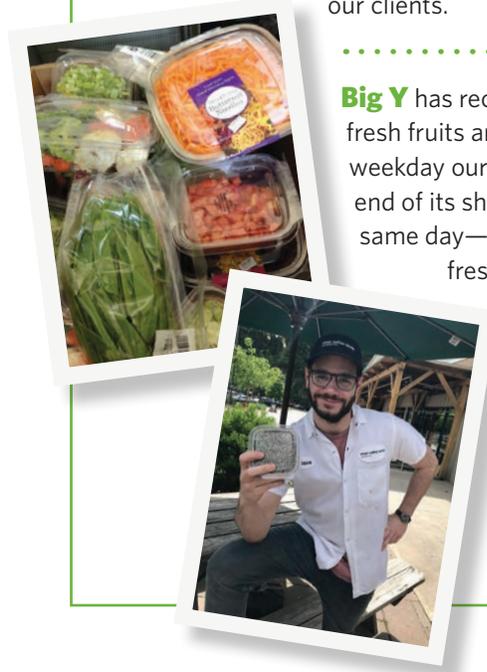
### Three great local partners willing to go the extra mile

Every year, we build connections throughout the community to allow us to procure roughly 800,000 pounds of food for as little expense as possible. Recently, special partnerships with local businesses have catapulted us into new levels of meeting clients' needs, thanks to their willingness to work creatively with us.

**Stop and Shop stores** throughout western Mass now partner with the Food Bank to freeze meat that is coming close to the sell-by date to distribute to food pantries and meal sites. We receive about 500 pounds of frozen meat each week, roughly doubling what we can give to our clients.



**Big Y** has recently begun to donate fresh fruits and veggies to us. Each weekday our volunteers pick up produce which is nearing the end of its shelf-life. We are able to distribute those items the same day—food doesn't go to waste, and clients have more fresh choices.



**River Valley Co-op** has been donating food to us since they opened in 2008. We receive items from almost every department. Our clients are grateful to have the high quality and variety—who wouldn't love roasted root vegetables or a quinoa salad from their deli?!



United Way of Hampshire County

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter by email, please let us know through the Contact form on our website.

## Our Annual Vineyard Concert

Saturday, Sept. 9, 5–7 pm  
 Rain date Sunday, Sept. 10, 4–6 pm

Glendale Ridge Vineyard\*  
 Southamton, Mass.

Come enjoy wine, a picnic, and a concert with MarKamusic!



\*formerly Black Birch Vineyard