



A FOND FAREWELL Maria Jimenez Retires After 25 Years

We bid a grateful goodbye to our Staff Assistant, Maria Jimenez, after 25 years of dedicated service to the Center. Maria's welcoming smile and calming presence greeted and reassured clients day after day. As one client observed, "You made me feel important, not like a low person. When I was sad, you made me smile." We are grateful for Maria's kindness, generosity, and humor these many years.

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WHAT DOES 25 YEARS AT THE CENTER LOOK LIKE?

- More than 10 million pounds of food distributed
- Over 104,000 clients served
- Half a million client visits

WHAT'S THE LATEST ON THE KIDS' SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM?

Pantry volunteer Marie Marchese interviews director Heidi Nortonsmith

“We know many families struggle to give their kids three meals a day. We can't just turn a blind eye and pretend food magically appears.”

Heidi Nortonsmith, Northampton Survival Center executive director, is speaking about the Center's very own Kids' Summer Food Program. Started 17 years ago to serve children eligible for free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs in public schools, the program runs for the 10 weeks of summer vacation throughout the 18 communities that make up the NSC service area. As Heidi sees it: "The free meal programs must be widely accepted as valuable, since they're in place in every school system in the country. So how can we feel it's okay if children don't have food for 10 weeks in the summer?"

According to Heidi, the kids' program provides groceries for 42,000 meals. And as the program has matured, so have those meals. Fresh milk bought from local farmers replaced powdered milk, for example; and whole-grain granola snacks have been added in recent years. In 2014, the Center changed its method of distribution for this program, replacing pre-packaged

selections of grains, vegetables, and other foods with the "client choice" approach. As a "choice" pantry, clients can determine for themselves which fresh and shelf-stable items work best for their own breakfast, lunch and dinner tables.



Volunteers are at the heart of making our summer food program a success.

"This year we clarified our mission and brought the kids' program more closely in line with our renewed emphasis on the nutritional value of the food we provide," Heidi explains.

“The Kids' Summer Food Program goes right to heart of why we do what we do. Children are the most vulnerable.”

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THE KIDS' SUMMER FOOD PROGRAM BY THE NUMBERS

More than **1/4** of our clients are age **17** or younger

Provides **42,000** meals each summer

Serves **625** children across Hampshire County

\$250 provides **4** children with breakfast and lunch all summer

WE RECENTLY REFOCUSSED OUR MISSION WITH A FEW SMALL ADDITIONS:

The Northampton Survival Center is **dedicated** to improving the quality of life for low-income individuals and families throughout Hampshire County by providing **nutritious** food and other resources in an **atmosphere** of dignity and respect.



A COMMUNITY BURSTS WITH GENEROSITY

The Post Office Food Drive

Seven postal trucks at a time are lined up in the Survival Center parking lot, all brimming with bright orange bags bursting with cans and boxes of food. Each of these 10,000 bags was hand-delivered by volunteers to homes all over town, then filled with nutritious groceries by caring neighbors. On the second Saturday of May every year, postal carriers arrive throughout the day bearing over 20,000 pounds of food. They are greeted by an enthusiastic crowd of workers—volunteers of all ages—eagerly unloading the trucks, sorting the items, and stacking packed boxes from floor to ceiling in the Center’s warehouse. Dozens of postal workers and over a hundred volunteers, plus donated refreshments from local businesses, make this a fun and memorable annual community event.

See related volunteer story on page 4.

A DELIGHTFUL NEW PRESENCE

Carolina Ramirez, Pantry Manager



We are thrilled that Carolina joined us as Pantry Manager this Spring after having volunteered at length for our sister organization across the river in Amherst. As she describes herself, “**My passion for and commitment to helping the less fortunate made it easy for me to want to work at the Center.**” I’m privileged and delighted to join the NSC team, who received me with open arms as if they had been waiting for me for a long, long time. My academic interests include criminal justice, religion and foreign languages, and, in my free time, I enjoy reading, shopping, cooking and volunteering.”

A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Joe Debiec

After graduating from college in 2002 Joe spent a majority of the next six years living and traveling abroad, mostly in Asia. He has lived in Northampton for eight years and works in the International Education field, as Director of Programs at CISabroad. In February, Joe and his wife welcomed their second child into the world. Joe came to the Center as a pantry volunteer in 2011, and starts his board service this summer.



María José Giménez

María José has worked as a freelance translator, reviser, and language consultant for 14 years. In addition to her professional work in English, Spanish, and French, she has translated poetry, short fiction, essays, screenplays, and a mountaineering memoir. María José volunteered for the Center for several years, both in the pantry and as a translator, before joining the board this Spring.





COMMUNITIES WE SERVE:

Chesterfield
Cummington
Easthampton
Florence
Goshen

Hadley
Hatfield
Haydenville
Huntington
Leeds

Middlefield
Northampton
Plainfield
South Hadley
Southampton

Westhampton
Williamsburg
Worthington

MOVING TOWARD STABILITY
THE NEW CLIENT SUPPORT SERVICES PROGRAM

As a partner of the United Way of Hampshire County, we're working on responding to our community's call for programs that support people on their path from crisis to stability to self-sufficiency. Building upon a robust referral system that's been in place for decades, we're now creating a program that brings a wide variety of resources on-site for clients while they're picking up groceries at the Center.

With a new workshop area, and thanks to some start-up funding from The Beveridge Family Foundation, the program is beginning to take off, and clients are grateful to have much-needed services at their fingertips.

Do you have something to offer? We're seeking to provide resources to address the broad spectrum of challenges our clients face. Please contact heidi@northampton-survival.org if you have a skill or a connection that could add to this effort.

CURRENTLY IN PLACE



Tapestry Health
Blood pressure checks, pregnancy tests, STD screenings, and appointments for more complex questions and services



Public Health Nurse
Flu shots, advice about medications, assessment of treatment options



SNAP Counseling
assistance with new applications, appeals, navigating the system, problem-solving

AREAS OF FUTURE CONCENTRATION

We're currently surveying clients about their areas of need and exploring options for more workshops. Examples:

Physical and mental health

Medical, dental, stress, wellness, exercise, addiction, brain trauma, counseling



Nutrition, food security and employment

WIC, career development, resume and job hunting, dietician, meal preparation, vegetable gardening

Housing and safety

Fire safety, domestic abuse, veterans' housing, fuel assistance, sheltering programs, first aid, CPR



Financial and legal

Transitional assistance, budget counseling, legal services, tax preparation assistance, debt reduction

Education, recreation, children, parenting

Summer camps, fitness opportunities, community colleges, mentoring, computer training, literacy programs, parenting support



Language and culture

ESL, translation, language classes, citizenship programs, cultural support programs



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Tim Jones, *Vice President*
Mark Sullivan, *Treasurer*
Debin Bruce, *Clerk*
Michael Cohen
Joe Debiec
Chris DeFrancis
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Walter Clune
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Donor Relations Coordinator
Carolina Ramirez
Pantry Manager

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United Way of Hampshire County

VOLUNTEERS OF ALL AGES RECEIVE AS WELL AS GIVE AT THE CENTER

Dan Kirsch and Sons

"Volunteering for the Post Office Food Drive at the Northampton Survival Center has become an important tradition for my two sons and me. We talk about it throughout the year and jump at the chance to sign up each spring. The food drive is an ideal volunteering project for our family. **The work itself is actually fun.** There's a buzz of frenzied energy as the postal trucks pull up, mounds of orange bags get wheeled into the building, and we kick into food sorting mode. **It's also a real life reminder to all of us that hunger is a reality where we live.** And those mountains of orange bags are a great reminder of how generous our neighbors can be in the face of that reality. We always take away fun memories of the



Post Office Food Drive plus a sense that we've helped a little bit by connecting our generous neighbors with our hungry ones."

Kathy Sinclair and Lynne Brill



"We love volunteering because of the clients. One of our favorites, who recently passed away, used to come to the produce counter every Wednesday morning for her veggies, fruit and bread, and we would talk about her lovely coat or scarf and laugh and joke together. When she was ready to leave, she would hug and kiss each one of us and say 'God bless you.' **It's often obvious that clients appreciate the help they get from the Center, but many give US gifts of gratitude and appreciation.** This dear client was an appreciative and caring friend who brought us her blessing and her gratitude each week. What a treasure."

Helping the Community Find Us

We're happily sporting a new sign on Prospect Street that will soon be accompanied by lights and a resurfaced parking lot. Our sincerest thanks for the sign design go to Rob Stewart, Creative Director, and Damia Cavallari, President, of Transit Authority Figures. Rob and Damia also created the original carrot logo that has so distinctively been identified with the Survival Center. www.transitauthorityfigures.com

