



SPRING 2014

Then & Now

ENDING HUNGER IN MARYLAND



A NEWSLETTER FOR FRIENDS OF THE MARYLAND FOOD BANK

IN THIS ISSUE *The Big Chill* • *School Pantries Spell Success* • *Spring Forward*

LETTER FROM THE CEO

The Road Ahead

"The road is long, with many a winding turn..." So goes the old song — and also the history of the Maryland Food Bank, which this year celebrates 10 years in its current headquarters and 35 years since its founding. As we reflect on these milestones, the first word that comes to mind is progress. In 1979, we distributed 400,000 pounds of food to twenty-some organizations in Baltimore City. Today, we move that much in a single week and serve nearly 1,000 soup kitchens, pantries, shelters, schools, senior living facilities, low-income housing projects, and recreation centers across the state.

You'll notice that we're thinking beyond traditional food assistance organizations to reach needy children and families where they live, work and play. This outside-the-box approach has happened within our walls, too. Sorting and packing food from a conveyor belt has taken the place of lugging boxes by hand. Virtual food drives, which supply most-needed items by the case, are edging out traditional food drives that deal in single cans. A team of food solicitors has built relationships with retail, wholesale and farm donors to transform our inventory from non-perishables like soup and soda, to truckloads full of fresh protein and produce.

All of this is innovative in an industry that for years followed one model. Food came in from the same few donors and went back out to the same few soup kitchens and shelters. Fortunately, the Maryland Food Bank was built on innovation and insight. With each curve in the road, we have carefully mapped a path forward, never content to stay still, and never afraid to explore newer, bigger and better ways to serve those in need. It's this combination of prudent planning and pioneer spirit that has guided us through the past 35 years, and will continue to lead us on the road ahead.

We've come a long way, but as long as there are families in Maryland who don't know where their next meal is coming from, our journey is far from over.



DEBORAH FLATEMAN PRESIDENT & CEO



ABOUT THIS ISSUE

This issue is all about Innovation — one of four tenets in our strategic five-year plan. Read on to see how we've coupled outside-the-box thinking and planning ahead for a real impact on hunger in Maryland.

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▼ 2004: Executive Chef Aida Blanco gives the first tour of the Charles T. Bauer Community Kitchen—one of many investments that have led to big-time innovations!



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FOOD BANK**
UNTIL HUNGER ENDS.

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The Big Chill



▲ *High-quality USDA commodities line the walls of the newly-expanded freezer.*

The Maryland Food Bank just got a lot cooler thanks to a recent 8,000+ square-foot addition to our freezer.

And thank goodness we did! “The freezer was so full, our warehouse workers had to store pallets of food on the floor. But then they had to move those pallets just to access products on the shelves,” says Senior Vice President of Operations John May. “Now that we have more space, things are moving much more efficiently.”

The biggest reason for the addition was our recent designation as the state’s

TEFAP distributor (see box, right), which meant more frozen USDA product coming through our doors. Additionally, more capacity was needed for meat donations, which have grown exponentially for us in the last few years as a result of Perdue Farms’ generous support and our Retail Rescue Program, which picks up high-quality proteins from supermarkets across the state. According to USDA guidelines, if frozen on or before the sell-by date, this meat can be used safely for six months.

The freezer’s innovative floor plan also includes a packing room that’s directly connected to our Charles T. Bauer Community Kitchen. Volunteers will package and freeze meals in the new room, freeing up much-needed space in the kitchen. A brand-new defrost cooler sits on the other side of the freezer, providing controlled temperatures for MFB Kids™ meals, which are made fresh daily and never frozen. “The reconfiguration has already had a positive impact on our production process,” says Executive Chef Aida Blanco. “The way the spaces are integrated is really fantastic.”

With more protein and fresh meals full of fruits and vegetables coming out of the kitchen, this freezer gives us the capacity to grow not only in quantity, but in quality of food!

.....
Ten years ago...



~200,000 pounds of protein & produce annually

Today...



12.5 million pounds annually

What is TEFAP?

The Maryland Food Bank was recently chosen to handle the state’s TEFAP distribution—shorthand for The Emergency Food Assistance Program. This federally-funded initiative has two goals: supporting food production industries in the U.S., while simultaneously providing food assistance to families in need.

Here’s how it works: the USDA purchases food from growers, wholesalers and manufacturers across the country, giving highest priority to nutritious foods like produce and protein. This food is delivered to distribution hubs in each state—often food banks, but not always—which then get the food to local feeding sites. The state chose us because we are an expert at getting food to those in need, efficiently and effectively!

Fresh Take: Mobile Pantries

The Maryland Food Bank has operated mobile food pantries for years, delivering food to central locations in low-income communities for immediate distribution to families in need. Initially, our mobile pantries were split into two categories—Produce Giveaways, which distributed fresh fruits and vegetables in urban areas, and Pantry on the Go, which dealt primarily in non-perishable foods and operated in every kind of community. Over the past few years, though, we've realized that it's not only families in urban neighborhoods that need more fresh produce. Food-insecure families across the state are making their food purchasing decisions based on affordability, choosing low-cost fast food that will leave them feeling full, rather than higher cost, nourishing foods that have fewer calories.

Unfortunately, families' health is paying the price. Diabetes, obesity and other chronic health issues are on the rise in low-income communities nationwide. In 2010, the Maryland Food Bank responded, launching the Farm to Food Bank Program to engage growers and gleaners in the fight to end hunger. Four years later, we have a steady supply of fresh fruits and vegetables flowing through our warehouse—so strong that we have been able to merge our mobile food programs into one. Today, every Pantry On the Go event includes fresh, nutrient-rich produce alongside non-perishable staples like pasta and rice.



▲ Food Solicitor Amy Cawley will be out in the field even more thanks to a recent truck donation!

Off the Road

Earlier this month, the Maryland Food Bank received what some might view as a peculiar donation for a hunger-relief organization—a Ford pick-up truck. Those familiar with our Farm to Food Bank Program, however, know this gift is an absolute gem.

Launched in 2010, the Farm to Food Bank Program has engaged more than 50 growers in supplying fresh, local produce for hungry families. On the Eastern Shore, Food Solicitor Amy Cawley drives from farm to farm overseeing gleanings and coordinating donation pick-ups—sometimes even borrowing her own dad's truck to transport smaller loads herself.

That's why, when Perdue and the Richard A. Henson Foundation announced their interest in donating a truck to the program, Amy was thrilled. "You have no idea how excited I am," she says. "When you're working with farmers, having a truck is just an essential." With her new all-wheel drive truck, Amy will be able to plunge right out into the fields, load as many as two pallets into the truck bed, and even haul a small trailer behind her to carry more.

Armed with a new truck, Amy has high hopes for this year's growing season. "You never know what's going to happen," she says, "but it's always exciting to see what Mother Nature will bring!"



Then & Now

The Evolution of Ending Hunger

2004: Harvest for the Hungry Founder Larry Adam (left), Governor William Donald Schaefer (center) and former food bank director Bill Ewing (right) pose with blueprints for our current headquarters.



▲ 2008: Elected officials and Perdue executives break ground on a new Eastern Shore Branch freezer.



▲ 2014: Bernice Bishop, from Women Empowering Women, picks up fresh produce. Fresh food now constitutes a third of our inventory.

Origins

Just a few decades ago, supermarkets, manufacturers, wholesalers and growers routinely threw away unsold, but still edible food. It wasn't until 1967 that the first food bank was established in Arizona and began regularly collecting unused food for distribution to local pantries and soup kitchens. A decade later, the idea reached the East Coast—specifically Ann Miller, a nurse and civil rights crusader, who had seen the effects of hunger firsthand.

Within a year, Ann had recruited a corps of volunteers and founded the Maryland Food Bank—only the third in the nation. From a 10,000 square-foot warehouse in Baltimore City, the food bank distributed 400,000 pounds of food to 28 local soup kitchens and pantries in its first year. Just one year later, the food bank established a branch on the Eastern Shore and set its sights statewide.

Flash Forward

The ambition and innovation that would become hallmarks of the Maryland Food Bank were clearly present from the very beginning. We were pioneers in a new, uncharted field. Yet, where other organizations might have been content to serve locally and grow slowly, we seized every opportunity to feed more people.

Our eye is still on the prize, but these days we do a lot more looking before leaping. Innovation comes after months, if not years, of careful planning. We wouldn't be where we are now without those heady early days, but it's amazing to look back and see how our operation used to work—and how far we've come.

Fresh Thinking

For example, early on our shelves were primarily filled with non-perishables. But instead of cans of soup and boxes of pasta, it was jars of artichoke hearts and pizza sauce—odd, unrelated items. It's taken years of education to get donations of peanut butter, cereal, tuna fish and other nutrient-rich staples that can be made into meals.

As *The Baltimore Sun* reported in 1979, the first donations to the food bank also included “300 cases of frozen donuts.” In contrast, today, our freezer is full of protein and produce—the result of thoughtful investments in capital projects and programs. Chief among them was the 2004 purchase and renovation of our current headquarters, containing three times as much freezer space as our previous facility. We subsequently expanded the freezer at our Eastern Shore Branch, hired two full-time food solicitors to focus on building relationships with retailers and growers, and expanded our Pantry On the Go Program to get perishable food into the hands of families in need quickly.

Finally, in 2010, we launched our Charles T. Bauer Community Kitchen and began extending the shelf-life of nutrient-rich perishables by incorporating them into healthy frozen meals. Thanks to equal parts innovation and investments, we're slated to distribute more than 12.5 million pounds of protein and produce by the end of this fiscal year, June 30.

Full Speed

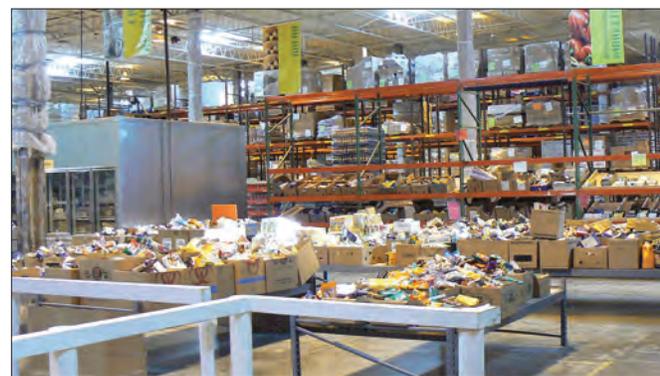
Another change is how we process mixed donations like food drives. In the 1980's and 90's, we struggled to make sense of millions of boxes, bottles and cans. With a small staff, we turned to volunteers and began sorting the food into four categories—bottles, cans, dry goods and non-food items—which were left in bins for our network partners to sift through. Imagine, a soup kitchen volunteer trying to make spaghetti might spend hours picking through cake mixes, bags of flour and crackers to find a few boxes of pasta!



The move to our current building in 2004 meant more floor space, and the ability to have more specific categories. But the real innovation happened in 2007, when we installed a high-speed conveyor belt. Now, volunteers stay stationary, packing into highly specific categories like canned meats, condiments, juice and breakfast foods. A team of 25 hardworking volunteers can pack 10,000 pounds of food in a single afternoon and when our partners need pasta, they can order a pre-packaged box that contains just that!

Big Picture

Perhaps the biggest shift is in how we measure success. Early on, we could only judge effectiveness based on the number of pounds we distributed. In 1997, Feeding America (then America's Second Harvest) introduced the Hunger Study, which surveyed network partners and clients to understand who we were serving and how well. A few years later, they launched the Map the Meal Gap Report, combining data from the U.S. Census Bureau, Bureau of Labor Statistics and USDA to



▲ 2005: Before our conveyor belt was installed, volunteers grabbed handfuls of canned goods and sorted into giant bins for partners to sift through.

see who we weren't serving, and how much more was needed.

Together, these studies show us which communities are underserved and allow us to implement thoughtful strategies—from helping our partners build capacity through trainings and grants, to launching direct service programs that reach at-risk populations. As always, we are striving to do more each and every day. Because, while we've found new and better ways to do things, one thing hasn't changed: our determination to feed as many families as possible and ultimately end hunger in Maryland.

School Pantries Spell Success

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary/Middle School in the Park Heights neighborhood of Baltimore City is home to a school pantry — one of 200 across the state that are getting food to children and families in familiar, stigma-free environments. Here, we talk to Principal Rachel Brunson and Community Coordinator Al Watson about how their pantry is helping students and the community at large.

Q. What made you want to work with the Maryland Food Bank to set up a pantry at your school?

A. A lot of our kids come into school in the morning and they're hungry. This community is very needy and what we're finding is that families as a whole are struggling. We wanted to get the food bank involved because we wanted to bring some additional resources to this community.

Q. Do you believe there's a connection between hunger and a child's academic success?

A. I truly believe—as a matter of fact, I know—that hunger has an impact on a child's learning experience. If a child is having hunger pains, they're not going to be able to focus. I have scholars who come here in the morning with medication, and they depend on having a meal in the morning here at the school so that they can take their medication and better focus in the classroom. We've had incidents where students have become angry, and in some situations even violent, and after speaking to them, it's: "Oh, I'm hungry." And after they've had something to eat, that behavior dissipates and they are able to settle back into the class.

Q. Have you noticed any changes in your academic community since the school pantry has taken root?

A. Yes, we have been able to get parents more involved in coming to the school! They come to get the food and while they're here they're able to have conversations with our teachers about their children. We've also begun to reach out to parents with additional services. We are

going to be offering a pre-GED program, we provide information on health care and other benefits, and we've got a financial literacy initiative in the works. The school pantry has helped to build trust with the community because they really know that we're here to help.

Q. Do you think that the pantry is having an impact on your community beyond the classroom?

A. It has definitely made a difference—not just for the school and the families who come in—but for the community as a whole. The word has spread throughout Park Heights that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary/Middle School is a resource for families who are hungry. Many students' families are bringing food to the elderly in the community who don't have the means to travel. This pantry has grown more quickly than we ever expected, but these families need food and we are happy to be able to provide it. This community has been neglected for such a long time, and we want to bring back the hope. We want to lift this community up.



▲ Faculty and staff at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary/Middle School strive to "lift the community up" with a pantry, pre-GED programs, health outreach and more.

A Helping Hand

Cierra Watkins was 23 when her mother underwent surgery for a brain tumor. That's when she began caring not only for herself and her two daughters, but also her mother and three younger brothers, ages 12, 14 and 16.

Getting everyone where they needed to be—kids to school, her mother to doctor's appointments—didn't leave time for much else. And with her mother's condition in flux, Cierra had to be available at a moment's notice, making it impossible to keep a job. Luckily, Cierra's daughters' school, Moravia Park Elementary, had a school pantry. "It would be hard without it," she says. "There would be days where we just wouldn't eat."

Rather than sitting at home while her mother recovers and her daughters and brothers grow, Cierra spends her days at the school's Judy Center—an early childhood education center that's home to the school pantry and other support services. There, Cierra helps serve breakfast and lunch; organizes the pantry; assists in the classroom,



▲ *Cierra Watkins volunteers every day—serving breakfast, stocking shelves, chaperoning field trips and even helping with puzzles!*

and more. Says the center's Senior Administrator Michelle Matthews, "It's a misconception that parents don't want to be involved. They do. We just have to show them how. But Cierra is special—she'll do anything!"

And despite everything she's been through, Cierra is grateful. "There are some kids who have nothing. I know I'm blessed and what little I can do to help others, I will."

Stronger Seniors

Every second Tuesday of the month, like clockwork, a Maryland Food Bank – Western Branch truck pulls up to Brunswick House, home of our newest senior pantry. It's the sixth to launch in Western Maryland since 2012, hosting monthly distributions for residents struggling with fixed incomes and limited mobility. "This is just wonderful, especially for those that can't drive," says Mary, a resident who helps with the distributions.



The pantry at Brunswick House is especially important since the local supermarket, which was within walking distance, closed recently. Another resident, Horace, misses more than just the food from the recently-shuttered grocery store: "I used to go twice a day to talk to people and get some exercise, too. I miss that."

The things Horace mentions—independence, mobility and personal interaction—are key, says Brunswick House service coordinator Kathi Geisbert, who worked with food bank staff to get the pantry up and running. "We want to keep people here and healthy, instead of going into assisted living."

It's easy to see how perfectly the senior pantry fits with that goal. On one Tuesday morning in April, residents shared recipes, poured samples of juice, and helped each other carry bags back to their rooms. Just like everything we do, senior pantries are about much more than food—they are creating a sense of community and improving lives.

◀ *Senior pantries offer food and a sense of community for residents Gloria (left), Mary (center) and Janice (right).*

WE ARE... EVOLVING



▲ Above: AARP volunteers were out in full force, encouraging Safeway shoppers to donate. Right: The family of Harvest for the Hungry Founder Larry Adam poses with bags at the Spring Forward Food Drive Kick-Off.



Spring Forward Food Drive

When Harvest for the Hungry Founder Larry Adam passed away in 2013, the food banking world lost a true leader. The Maryland Food Bank is dedicated to carrying forth his legacy and thankfully, we're not alone. From March 1 – 8, AARP, the Girl Scouts of Central Maryland, Safeway, WBAL-TV 11 and the U.S. Postal Service came together for the 27th Annual Harvest for the Hungry Spring Forward Food Drive. This was one of Larry's favorite drives because of the time of year it occurred—after the holidays, when hunger is no longer in the spotlight and the Maryland Food Bank needs more help than ever.

The drive kicked off on February 27th when WBAL meteorologist Ava Marie sprinted through the Towson Safeway store on a two-minute shopping

spree for the Maryland Food Bank. Customers cheered her on as she grabbed \$150 worth of soup, canned tuna fish and peanut butter before hitting the check-out. The next day, food drive sponsors, Maryland Food Bank supporters and Larry Adam's family gathered for a formal press conference at Faith Community Church, a longtime food bank partner in Northeast Baltimore. Over and over, speakers emphasized the ease of participating in the drive—by donating bags of most-needed items at Safeway stores, dropping off non-perishables at post offices or giving online through a virtual food drive. The event concluded with heartfelt remarks from Larry and Dave Adam, who thanked food drive sponsors for keeping their father's memory

alive and made the ceremonial first donation—50 of Safeway's pre-packed bags on behalf of the Adam Family.

Throughout the following week, AARP members and girl scouts took turns staffing Safeway stores, urging customers to donate a bag or two. Girl scouts also went door to door collecting food and letter carriers happily accepted donations at post offices. By week's end, more than 4,750 bags had been donated at Safeways, and nearly 5,000 pounds of food collected by enterprising girl scouts and letter carriers!

Thanks to all who participated and made this year's Harvest for the Hungry Spring Forward Food Drive such a resounding success!

CARRYING ON Larry Adam worked tirelessly to get as many people and organizations as possible involved in ending hunger. One of his most recent recruits is Anderson Automotive, which extended the Harvest for the Hungry Spring Forward Food Drive into its dealerships and ended up collecting more than 1,300 pounds of food and \$5,225!

In The Bag

We've all experienced it—an adorable child outside the store asks you to donate food. You leave the store and while juggling bags, your heart sinks: you forgot to buy an extra can.

Food drives like this aren't just a hassle for you and the volunteer collecting, but hard work for the food bank too. We have to pick up the food, unload it, and recruit volunteers to sort, pack and move it through the warehouse before ultimately sending it out to families in need. The whole process ends up costing us \$.41 per pound of food!

But, we've got this figured out—it's in the bag.

Pre-packaged bags, like the ones recently sold at Safeway stores, don't require any processing on our part and reach families in need faster, at a much lower cost. Even better are monetary donations, which allow us to buy the foods we need most wholesale and have them delivered directly to our warehouse. A single warehouse worker can unload entire pallets of macaroni & cheese, peanut butter and more, without ever having to sort or repackage it. And, because they're



▲ Pre-packaged bags get to families in need fast!

in-demand items, they're back out the door immediately. With efficiency in mind, we—and our supporters—are getting a lot smarter about food drives!

Big Thanks!

Early this year, the Maryland Food Bank – Western Branch reached a major milestone: its biggest financial donation to date! The gift was \$50,000 from Dot Foods, a national food distributor with a history of philanthropy and social responsibility.

Though headquartered in Illinois, Dot Foods has a facility just a few miles down the road from our Western Branch in Hagerstown, MD. They brought the Maryland Food Bank to the attention of Dot Foods corporate, and, there was no question that the Maryland Food Bank was the right organization to support.

"Because food is our core business, it's a natural extension to provide charitable support to food banks," says Brian Duffield, general manager at the Williamsport Distribution Center.

The Western Branch has definitely earned its stripes since launching in 2012, more than doubling distribution from 1.2 million pounds in FY 2012 to 2.4 million in FY 2013. Only partway through FY 2014, the branch has distributed more than 3 million pounds and expects to surpass 4 million by June 30.



▲ Brian Duffield (left) of Dot Foods poses with Maryland Food Bank – Western Branch Managing Director Matt Thompson (right).

With Dot Foods' historic donation, we're confident the branch will continue to grow its distribution exponentially, providing Western Maryland with the nutrition needed to build stronger, more resilient communities.

Thank you, Dot Foods!



We are...

Maryland Food Bank

It takes more than just food and funds to operate the Maryland Food Bank. We simply could not have distributed 28 million meals last year without the dedication and commitment of many thousands of Marylanders.

Let's do the numbers...

More than 115 staff, three branch locations with a combined 125,000 square feet of inventory, 975 partner agencies, 9,000 volunteers, a dedicated board of directors and more than 30,000 donors and supporters, just like you.

Thank you being part of the movement to end hunger in Maryland!

Join us online.



www.mdfoodbank.org

Read All About It!

Hot off the presses and brimming with insight, the Maryland Food Bank's FY 2013 Annual Report marks a turning point in how we're thinking and talking about hunger. This year's report is called "Intersections," and it explores the ways that hunger can impact four areas that are the foundations of our society—health, employment, safety and education. Alongside photos of our programs at work, we explain not only how we are ending hunger, but how by doing so, we are changing the dynamics of other complex issues.

It's part of a deeper dive we're taking into the ways hunger impacts our state, and presents holistic approaches that shorten the line of people in need and ultimately build stronger, more resilient communities. The Maryland Food Bank has had boots on the ground since it was established in 1979—and it still does today. But over time, we've begun to take a step back and look at hunger as a more systemic problem that affects every aspect of a person's life, and thereby the community around them.



We've come to believe that ending hunger is the first step to building a stronger state. In order to achieve a hunger-free state, Marylanders of all ages, races, and political affiliations will have to see the value in joining this fight—and unite under the common belief that we can attain our goal.

Read the full FY 2013 Annual Report at www.mdfoodbank.org and share your thoughts about hunger's intersections with us at voices@mdfoodbank.org.

MFB VOLUNTEERS



▲ Colette Steinmeier has volunteered a lot of places in her life, but she likes it here because she says it doubles for an aerobics workout!

We celebrated all the individuals and groups who make our work possible during *Volunteer Appreciation Week* April 7–11. The event came on the heels of a record-breaking March when more than 3,500 hours were donated! Check out all the *Volunteer Appreciation Week* photos on Facebook and call today to schedule a session.