

## ABOUT FOOD LINK

In early 2012, DeAnne and Julie were picking up bread at one Panera Bread location 6 nights a week and distributing that bread to 4 low-income housing communities. Six years later, over 150 Food Link volunteers pick up high-quality fresh food from 19 local grocers, farms, and prepared-food stores, and deliver it to over 30 social service agencies serving people in need. Food Link has come a long way from collecting bags of bread. We now move 1,400 lbs. of food every day, which yields **over 500,000 lbs. of food each year.**

Did you know that Food Link is the **ONLY** local food rescue organization actively collecting and distributing food seven days a week? As Julie says, **"We know there's excess food every day, and we know there's hunger every day. Hunger doesn't take a vacation!"**

## Food Donors

Boston Area Gleaners - Waltham  
 Equal Exchange Cafe - Boston  
 Great Harvest Bread - Lexington  
 La Patisserie - Winchester  
 Lexington Community Farms  
 Magic Bites - Arlington  
 Neighborhood Produce - Somerville  
 Panera Bread Burlington/Fresh Pond/  
 Lexington/Woburn  
 Russo's - Watertown  
 Trader Joe's - Arlington/Burlington/Fresh  
 Pond  
 Wegmans - Medford  
 Wicked Bagels - Lexington  
 Whole Foods - Arlington/Medford

## Founders' letter

We are so pleased to share our Impact Report for FY 2018 with you. The past year included many exciting advances for Food Link, from adding a third staff member, to obtaining a small office space, to being very close to having our own operations facility. Our goal of having a dedicated operations facility that will allow us to connect our office staff, volunteers, food sorting, and storage space will be a dream come true. It will provide a more streamlined link between our food donors and our recipients, with increased efficiency and abundant cold storage. All these successes that maximize our social impact are thanks to the support of community members like **you...you help us power this momentum.**

In six years, we have moved from being two women with our minivans to being an organization much larger than our original goals and dreams. As we evolve, we also are working to ensure that when the time comes, Food Link continues beyond our own efforts.

In these pages, you'll learn more about our growth over the past year and about where we hope to be very soon. We thank you for being a part of our past and present and we hope you will join us in nourishing our community as we move forward.

Thank you,

Julie Kremer and DeAnne Dupont, Co-Founders



*A bounty of produce ready for sorting and distribution by our volunteers from left to right Mark, Julie Kremer (Co-Founder), Doug, Elise Springuel (Volunteer Coordinator), Judy and Nate.*

## OUR PARTNERS

### Major Corporate and Foundation Sponsors / Grantors

Arbella Insurance Group Charitable Foundation  
Arlington Community Development Block Grant  
Belmont Savings Bank Foundation  
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center  
Cambridge Savings Bank  
Cambridge Trust Company  
Combined Jewish Philanthropies  
Cummings Foundation  
Follen Church Society  
Foundation for Metrowest  
Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund  
General Catalyst Group Management, LLC  
George A. Ramlose Foundation  
Leader Bank  
The Lenny Zakim Fund  
The Ludcke Foundation  
Morgan Stanley Global Impact Funding Trust, Inc.  
Project Bread  
Russell Colgate Fund  
Schwab Charitable Fund  
Shippy Foundation  
Theodore Edson Parker Foundation  
The TJX Foundation, Inc.  
Watertown Savings Bank  
Wheelabrator Technologies, Inc.

### Impact Numbers

1,400 pounds of food rescued daily from 19 donor partners  
11 communities served  
30 delivery sites receiving food  
18,000 people receive fresh food from Food Link annually  
150 dedicated Food Link volunteers aged 8 through 90  
172 hours of service provided weekly by Food Link volunteers

## A BIGGER STEP FORWARD

The new fiscal year began with a huge vote of confidence from the Town of Arlington – a \$327,000 Community Development Block Grant to be used for the purchase of a new operations facility.

The Arlington Food Pantry space that Food Link currently shares is headed for demolition in 2019. It is imperative that Food Link settles into a new home before that time, and the Town of Arlington, through this grant, provided the boost to make that happen.

Currently we are leasing a compact office on Brattle Street and we are using freezer and refrigerator space at several locations – we are grateful to those who have loaned us space, but it will be tremendously easier for everyone when our operations and storage are in one building together.

Food Link is very close to securing a warehouse-like space, and is working avidly on laying the foundation for a fundraising campaign to purchase that space. “If we are going to raise all the grant and donation money, it’s worth it to buy,” Julie states. She jokingly adds, “In a new space, something like a donation of 200 frozen pizzas or 14 boxes of bananas in the heat of the summer would no longer cause stress over where to store them or how to deliver them immediately!”

### A Big Thanks to our Volunteers

“Food Link is about the connection. Our volunteers are forming relationships with the people they deliver to. It’s not just a driver and a delivery. Our volunteers become ambassadors – they spread the word about food waste to their families and friends. They are extremely invested in what they do. Without our volunteers, we wouldn’t exist.”

DeAnne Dupont, co-founder



Stephen, a resident, with Cherman Pierre, a staff member, of STEPS - Wayside Youth & Family Support Network.

## Food Link reaches out to STEPS

"It's package day!" That's the announcement going around on Thursdays at the STEPS program in Arlington.

For the participants in the STEPS program—young adults who have experienced homelessness, housing insecurity, or significant emotional difficulties—"package day" is something they look forward to all week.

That's the day these young adults receive fruits, vegetables, and prepared foods from Food Link. The STEPS program director, Lindsay Meredith, said they particularly love the prepared foods for snacks in the afternoons. Lindsay says that STEPS also uses the vegetables in the cooking classes they run. After the participants learn how to prepare the vegetables in interesting ways, they are allowed to bring home some of the donated vegetables to use in their daily diets.

Lindsay says, "Now, when we give tours to potential STEPS participants, we tell them about the Food Link donations—and it definitely serves as a way to increase interest in coming to our center. For this and for many other reasons, we're thrilled to be connected to Food Link."

## THANKSGIVING

Co-founder Julie picked up 1,100 lbs. of produce to distribute the evening before Thanksgiving—if she hadn't, it would have gone to waste—ironically so, at a time that our nation celebrates harvest and bounty! Much of the produce was taken home by clients of the Arlington Food Pantry that same night to prepare for their Thanksgiving meal. The following day a volunteer distributed the remaining produce in Lowell, so that even more families could share the bounty Food Link received.

## Who We Serve

American Legion Post 39  
 Arlington Boys & Girls Club  
 Arlington Food Pantry & EATS  
 Arlington Housing Authority - 4 sites  
 Arlington Senior Center  
 Arlington Youth Counseling Center  
 Belmont Food Pantry  
 Bunker Hill Community College - Charlestown  
 Eliot Community Human Services,  
 Young Adult Vocational Program - Arlington  
 Emmanuel Evangelical Church - Everett  
 Fidelity House - Arlington  
 House of Hope - Lowell  
 Housing Families Inc. - Malden  
 Jewish Family & Children's Services - Waltham  
 Joseph M. Tierney Learning Center - Boston  
 LEX Eat Together - Lexington  
 Lowell Transitional Living Center  
 Massachusetts Bay Veteran Center - Somerville  
 Medford Community Cupboard  
 Medford Council on Aging, Medford Senior Center  
 Medford Family Life Education Center  
 Medford VFW  
 Stan Kaszanek House - Malden  
 Thompson Elementary School Snack Program - Arlington  
 Wayside Youth & Family Support Network - STEPS Young  
 Adult Resource Center - Arlington



### **Speaking with Christine Bongiorno, Director of Arlington Health and Human Services**

“There is a senior hunger issue across the country and especially in Arlington. We see lots of seniors struggling, living day-to-day, waiting for their Social Security check. When the Food Link volunteers show up, the people who are waiting for the food are not just the same people every day. The Food Link deliveries have a tremendous impact.... We see hundreds of people a day who come in and take some food. The Food Link items are available to anyone, at anytime. It’s available quietly, with dignity. No one has to feel ashamed - anyone can come at any time that the building is open.”

“Food Link deliveries at the Senior Center are easier for our seniors to access than the local grocery stores. One reason for this being that the Council on Aging van offers daily service to the Senior Center but only intermittent service to the various supermarkets in town.”

The co-founders came to talk to us about 6 years ago to find ways to reach a broader population. Their services to the senior center – not to mention all their other sites – have



*Fresh fruits and greens provided to the Senior Center.*

grown so significantly over these past 6 years. At the Senior Center, it’s gone from a box of bread a couple of times a week to a daily distribution of healthy food, from bread to fresh fruit to vegetables. And at other town-based distribution sites that have refrigeration available, Food Link has also made meat, dairy, and eggs accessible to those who need them.”

“There’s lots of unmet need in Arlington. What Food Link’s food achieves is that it bridges those gaps. It’s easy to swing by; it’s easy to access. Food Link’s deliveries serve a population outside the food pantry that we don’t always see.”