

Overview

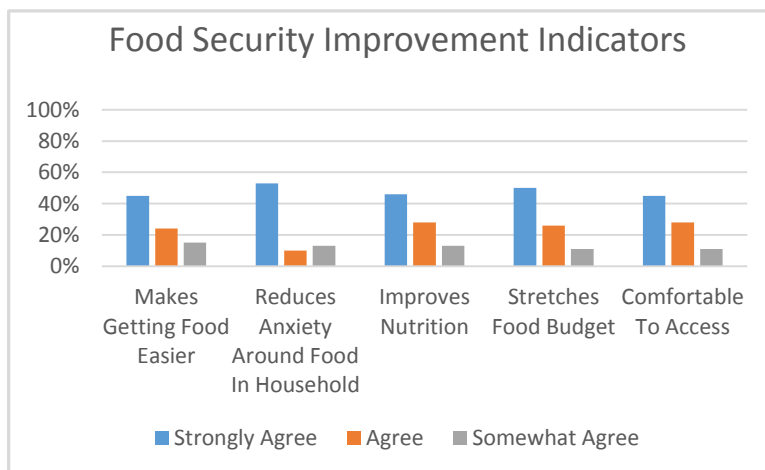
One in 4 Maine children face food insecurity, meaning they don't always know where their next meal will come from or if it will be enough. Many of these children rely on free and reduced-priced meals through the National School Lunch Program to get them through the school day hunger-free. Good Shepherd Food Bank's Child Hunger Programs focus on meeting nutritional needs during the times children are most likely to experience hunger: weekends, vacations, after school, and in the summer.

To that end, we partner with schools, after-school programs, and Summer Food Service sites statewide to connect these children with the healthy food they need to grow and thrive in places they already frequent with adults they already trust. Our Child Hunger Programs reached over 5,000 children with more than 600,000 meals during the 2015 – 2016 school year, exceeding our goals by 25 percent.



Increasing Food Security & Stabilizing Families

The mission of Good Shepherd Food Bank's Child Hunger Programs is to increase food security and help stabilize lives by making nutritious food available, at the right place at the right time, through trusted adults. At the end of 2016, we sent out nearly 2,000 surveys to program participants statewide to measure how well we are achieving that mission. Our response rate was just over 10 percent.



We asked participants if our school-based programs make getting food easier for their families, reduce anxiety/worry around food in their households, help their families eat more nutritiously, are comfortable to participate in, and stretch their food budgets. Over 75 percent of all participants agreed with each of those statements, from “somewhat agree” to “strongly agree.” Additionally, 57 percent of families accessing a School Pantry felt that it was a probability that without the School Pantry program, they would have needed to skip or reduce the size of meals throughout the school year.

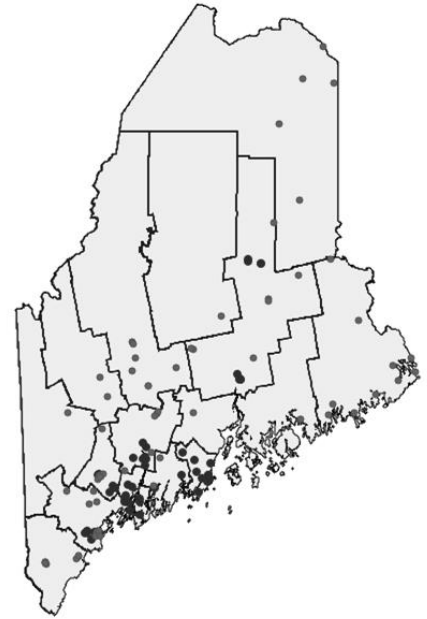
Other responses showed a strong indication that there is a small but significant population of School Pantry participants who used to regularly use other food pantries, but are now able to conserve and repurpose time and transportation expenses by relying on the more convenient for them school resource. While 55 percent of respondents had used pantries in the past, only 39 percent had used one since coming to the School Pantry.

“Last week, one of our social workers told me that the difference among the students accessing the pantry this year is so real. She said that even though technically they are still ‘food insecure’ because they are relying on a pantry program, it’s like they aren’t food insecure because they know they have a hardy, reliable source for food – and it shows in their confidence and other behaviors.” – Katie Brown, The Locker Project

Growing Community Partnerships

Since their inception 6 years ago, Good Shepherd Food Bank's Child Hunger Programs have grown from reaching 40 students at one Backpack Program pilot school to serving over 5,000 children through 130 community partnerships. During the 2016 school year, we not only grew the number of partners we work with by 14 percent, but also helped existing partners expand their reach, resulting in an increase in families served of more than 30 percent.

This growth has been driven by a Statewide Needs Assessment completed in 2013, which highlighted school partnerships as a best practice for reaching children and families facing food insecurity in the most rural and underserved areas of our state. A list of high priority schools for partnership was created based on free and reduced-price lunch rates, food desert data, and local pantry accessibility information. So far, we have partnered with 67 percent of the schools identified for program interventions and continue to update the list based on the latest data available.



2016 List of Partners by County***

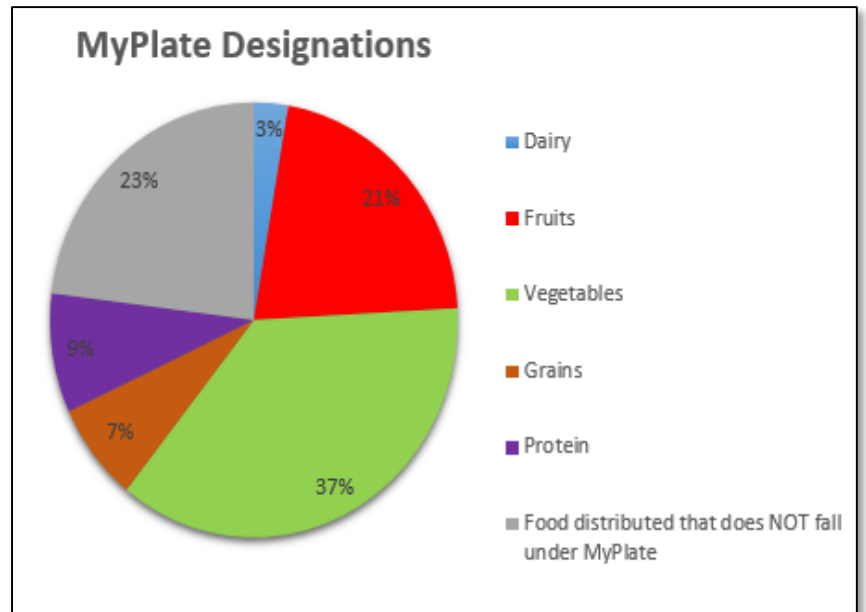
<p>Androscoggin Durham Elementary (BP) Edward Little High (SP) Franklin Alternative (SP) Governor James B. Longley Elementary (SP) Lisbon Community (BP) Livermore Elementary (SP) Margaret Murphy Center For Children (SP) Montello Elementary (SP) Park Avenue (BP) PW Sugg Middle (BP) Tree Street Youth (KC) Walton Elementary (SP) Washburn Elementary (BP)</p> <p>Aroostook Ashland District (SP) Katahdin Elementary (SP) Limestone Community (SP) New Sweden Consolidated (SP) (SG) Southern Aroostook Community (SP) Van Buren District (SP)</p> <p>Cumberland Bayside Learning Community (SP) Canal Elementary (BP) Coffin Elementary (BP) Congin Elementary (BP) Crooked River Alternative (SP) East End Community (SP) Harpswell Community (BP) Harriet Beecher Stowe Elementary (BP) Kaler Elementary (SP) MSAD 15 (SP) (SG) My Place Teen Center (KC) Ocean Avenue (BP) Portland High (SP) Presumpscot Elementary (SP) REAL School (SP) Reiche Elementary (SP) Sacarappa Elementary (BP) Seeds of Independence (BP) Skillin Elementary (BP) Southern Maine Community College (SP)</p>	<p>Franklin Strong Elementary (SP) WG Mallet Elementary (SP)</p> <p>Hancock Sumner Memorial High (SP)</p> <p>Kennebec Albert S. Hall Elementary (SP) AOS 92 (SG) Carrie Ricker Elementary (SP) Chelsea Elementary (SP) Farrington Elementary (BP) George J. Mitchell Elementary (SP) Helen Thompson Elementary (BP) Laura E. Richards Elementary (BP) Pittstton Consolidated Elementary (BP) Riverview Community Elementary (BP) Sylvio J. Gilbert Elementary (BP) Teresa C. Hamlin Elementary (BP) Waterville Jr. High (SP)</p> <p>Knox Camden Rockport Elementary (BP) Gilford Butler (BP) Lura Libby (BP) Owls Head Central (BP) Prescott Memorial (BP) RSU 3 Pre K (BP) Salvation Army Supper Club (KC) South School (BP) St. George (BP) Union Elementary (BP) Warren Community (BP)</p> <p>Lincoln Miller School (BP) Whitefield Elementary (SP) Wiscasset Elementary (BP) Wiscasset Middle & High (SP)</p> <p>Oxford Guy E Rowe (SP) MSAD 55 (SG) MSAD 72 (SG) Oxford School Age Child Care (KC) Rumford Elementary (SP)</p>	<p>Penobscot Bangor Boys & Girls Club (SL) Bangor Public Library (SL) Brewer Housing Authority (SL) Downeast (BP) Ella P. Burr Elementary (SP) Fairmount (BP) (SL) Granite Street Elementary (BP) Indian Island (SP) James F. Doughty (BP) Kingman Elementary (SP) Mattanawcook Jr High (SP) Opal Myrick Elementary (BP) Ridge View Community (SP) Schenck High (BP) Stearns Jr/Sr High (BP) Vine Street (BP)</p> <p>Piscataquis Milo Elementary (SP)</p> <p>Sagadahoc Bowdoin Central (BP) Bowdoinham Community (BP) Dike-Newell Elementary (BP) Fisher-Mitchell Elementary (BP) Mt. Ararat Middle (BP) Phippsburg Elementary (BP) Williams-Cone (BP) Woodside Elementary (BP)</p> <p>Somerset Carrabec Community (SP) Hartland Consolidated (SP) Moscow Elementary (SP) Quimby Middle (SP) Skowhegan Area Middle (SP) Skowhegan High (SP) Solon Elementary (SP)</p> <p>Waldo Mt. View High (SP) Searsport Elementary (SP) RSU 3 (SG)</p>	<p>Washington Beatrice Rafferty (SP) East Grand (SP) Edmunds Consolidated (SP) Fort Obrien Elementary (SP) Indian Township (SP) Jonesport Elementary (SP) Lubec Community Outreach (SG) Lubec Elementary (SP) Narraguagus High (SP) Whiting Village (SP)</p> <p>York County Fairfield Elementary (SP) John F. Kennedy Kindergarten (SP) Sanford School District (SP) Thornton Academy (SP)</p>
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*** SP – School Pantry Site, BP – Backpack Site, KC – Kids Café Site, SL – Summer Lunch Site, SG – Summer Mini Grant Partner

Increasing Access to Nutritious Food through School Partnerships

During the 2016 school year Good Shepherd Food Bank and our school partners:

- Distributed more than 600,000 meals to food insecure students and their families throughout Maine
- Provided over 220,000 lbs. of fresh fruits and vegetables through school-sponsored community events
- Succeeded in ensuring that over 75 percent of all foods distributed met Feeding America's highest nutrition ranking of 'Foods To Encourage'
- 70 percent of School Pantry partners now use the program to meet other needs of low income families including help with school supplies, clothing, and connection to nutrition and cooking resources



"Thank you for the food... It helps my family... I especially like the fruit because my family doesn't buy a lot of fruit... I hope you help a lot of kids and I hope you have fun doing it."

"Thank you for the food. I love the oranges... I think it is very generous of you to give us the food we need... It's great how you realized that a lot of families don't get enough food and decided to help and give us what we weren't getting."

- Milo Elementary School Students

"It has been exciting to have kids come down the hallway eager to grab their tote bag of food to take home. They have been eager to tell us stories of making meals with their families, and very appreciative of the help."

- Edmund Consolidated School Coordinator

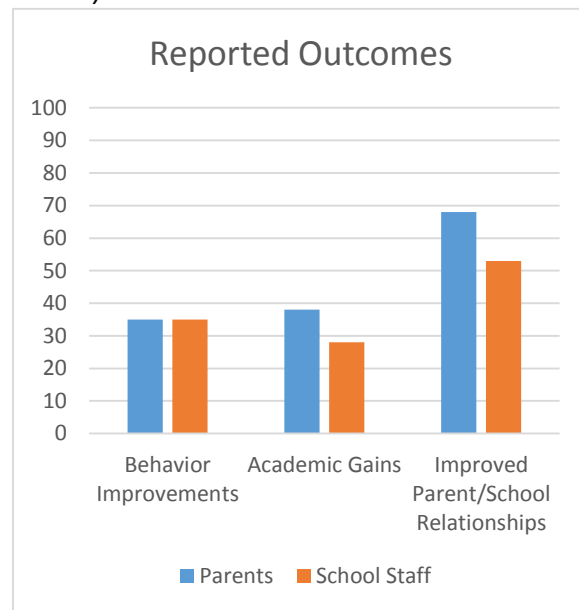
"Thank you so much! The School Pantry has made such a wonderful impact on our lives, it always seems to be open when we need it most!"

- School Pantry Parent Participant

Meaningful Gains in Academic Preparedness

Children who are food insecure face serious challenges that make it hard to thrive in the classroom. Food insecurity among children increases the likelihood of hospitalization, vulnerability for poor health, and instances of oral health problems that make steady school attendance a challenge for many. In addition to tardiness and truancy interrupting their education, food-insecure children are also at increased odds for an array of behavioral challenges including fighting and aggression, hyperactivity, anxiety, and mood swings. Being at school ready to learn can be a major challenge for food insecure youth. (*Feeding America*)

For many of the most highly vulnerable students accessing the School Pantry and BackPack Programs, the food they receive alleviates some of these impediments to academic preparedness. More than 45 percent of School Coordinators reported seeing improvements in the children's attendance, 40 percent saw improvements in ability to pay attention in the class room, and 35 percent witnessed reductions in disruptive behaviors. More than 25 percent attested that they had seen academic improvements they felt were associated with program participation. This was even higher when looking at School Pantry independently, with over 50-70 percent recognizing each of these positive changes. Overall, School Coordinators overwhelmingly expressed the value of these programs, with more than 90 percent rating them important to very important for their school community.



“THERE ARE TWO STUDENTS WHO SUFFER FROM CHRONIC MALNUTRITION... THEY ARE VERY UNDERWEIGHT AND HAVE CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND BEHAVIORAL ISSUES. THE STUDENTS PICK UP A BAG OF FOOD EVERY FRIDAY AND COME TO THE PANTRY ANYTIME THEY NEED... THEY HAVE HAD BETTER ATTENDANCE AND LESS BEHAVIOUR ISSUES. THERE ARE ALSO SIGNS OF WEIGHT GAIN IN BOTH STUDENTS.”

SCHOOL PANTRY COORIDNATOR

School staff were not the only stakeholders reporting back on the success of our school based initiatives. Over 35 percent of surveyed parents agreed or strongly agreed that they saw improvements in their children's behavior, and 38 percent felt they had seen improvements in their children's academic performance. When asked about the impact that the School Pantry Program had on their relationship and communication with school staff, 68 percent of parents and 53 percent of school coordinators identified improvements. Additionally, nearly 25 percent of school coordinators observed an increase in parent attendance at school events since the onset of the program.

Thirty percent of participating families have pre-school aged children in the home, so we are hopeful that younger siblings may experience similar benefits in academic preparedness upon entry to school, as 0 – 3 is the most critical period in brain development and the improved parent/school relationships should benefit them upon entry, as well.

Leveraging Federal Child Nutrition Programs in Closing the Meal Gap

There are several federal child nutrition programs available to schools, after school, and summer programs that are currently underutilized in efforts to end child hunger, including the Child & Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) At Risk and the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). Good Shepherd Food Bank aims to work with partners from the public and private sectors to increase the amount of reimbursable meals served in Maine, shrinking the meal gap that emergency food providers are faced with. The opportunity presented by federal child nutrition programs is significant – full participation by all eligible children in the after-school dinner component of CACFP At Risk alone would bring in over \$3 million in additional federal funds to our local economy, *per month*.



Throughout the school year, our Child Hunger Corps Member (a position sponsored through Feeding America) completed a Statewide Needs Assessment identifying opportunities and barriers to overcome in expanding after-school snacks and dinners using the CACFP At Risk program. To date, over 187 schools and nonprofits have received targeted marketing materials educating them on the program, eligibility criteria, and next steps to enroll. Our marketing campaign saw a 17 percent response rate and the Corps Member is currently in conversations with more than 30 programs to help them determine needs and complete the application process.

During summer 2015 we worked with five organizations in Bangor and Brewer to serve lunch daily as a sponsor for the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP). In total we served over 4,600 meals during summer break in the cities' most vulnerable communities – an increase of 25 percent over 2014. Additionally, we supported the growth of 10 SFSP Sponsors statewide through our mini grant program. Sponsors participating in the 2015 mini grant program collectively meals served by 23 percent over 2014, compared to the 15 percent growth rate across all Maine sponsors during the same time frame. This resulted in an additional 11,500 meals served and the launch of nine new meal sites in seven counties.



2017 Goals: Increasing Impact by Building on Success

Feeding America estimates that the average food insecure person requires 210 meals annually to be brought into food security. Currently, our Child Hunger Programs are distributing approximately 120 meals per participating family. We recognize a need to increase the number of meals families have access to and will work toward this in two ways during the 2016 – 2017 school year. First, we will increase capacity at our school pantry sites so that they are able to distribute more food, more frequently. When surveyed, Site Coordinators identified storage needs and staff time as their two biggest barriers to growth. Our team will be zeroing in to support these sites in sourcing more of the equipment they need and enhancing their volunteer outreach and engagement efforts. Second, we will invest in the expansion of CACFP At Risk & SFSP Sponsors to increase availability of after-school snacks and dinners and summer meals. If every child eligible received one afterschool meal each school day, it would decrease the meal gap by over 50 percent.

Child Hunger Heroes

Thank you to the following partners who have given \$10,000 or more to support our efforts to end child hunger in Maine.



Bath BackPack Program

**William Newkirk and Cheryl
Tschanz Family Foundation**

Hudson Foundation

**P.W. Sprague
Memorial Foundation**

“We like it when we get milk to drink. We love the fresh fruits and vegetables. It is better than what we usually buy. We normally don’t get enough fruits and veggies. Thanks for everything.”

- School Pantry Program Participant