

Helping Hands

MEMBER OF
FEEDING AMERICA

PARTNERING TO END HUNGER



Good Shepherd

FOOD BANK OF MAINE

Stories of hope from Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine

November 2016

Thank you for helping me put food on the table for my family

“Without the help, we wouldn’t have had a Thanksgiving.” –BILLY JO

Billy Jo loves to cook. But providing enough food for growing teenagers can be a struggle. To get help, Billy Jo comes to the food pantry where she gets meat, staples and a variety of seasonal produce. One year, she received the gift of a Thanksgiving meal basket. “Without it, we wouldn’t have had Thanksgiving,” remembers Billy Jo.

Read more of Billy Jo’s story on page 2.

Billy Jo, pictured at right, and her daughter are thankful for the generosity of friends like you.

INSIDE



A word of gratitude from Kristen

2



Fixings for a Thanksgiving dinner

3



The gift of volunteering

3

President's Report



Kristen Miale
President

A word of gratitude from Kristen

This season of gratitude and giving is such a good time for counting our blessings and remembering those who don't have as many blessings to count. During the holidays, families who are struggling become much more aware of what they don't have. Thanks to your support, we're committed to providing the healthy food neighbors need to improve their lives. During the holidays, that means providing enough to eat so every person who needs help will have the opportunity to enjoy a special meal with their loved ones.

We're sending you the first issue of our newsletter, *Helping Hands*, because we want to introduce you to the Mainers whose lives have been changed because of your generosity. You'll meet people like Billy Jo who struggles to put enough food on the table for her teens, young couples like Joey and Brittany who want to provide a better future for themselves, and volunteers like Cheryl who show up week after week because she sees the difference a basket of food makes to a family in need.

By reading these stories we hope you'll come to understand the deep gratitude those we serve have for the people in this community who care enough to help.

We also hear stories from you, our faithful friends who are partnering with us to end hunger in this state. What tugs at my heart are the notes we receive from those of you who support Good Shepherd Food Bank because you've been in need. You know how important even the smallest gift can be, because someone's gift once made a difference in your life. Whatever the size, every donation you send is recognition of how important it is to help others. Thank you for your generosity during this season of giving.

With gratitude,

Kristen Miale, President

Billy Jo's story, continued from page 1

I cook everything!



My name is Billy Jo and I've been coming to the food pantry in town for about two years. It's been a big help because my husband and I are feeding four teenagers.

During the school year, the kids get breakfast and lunch at school. Summers and holidays I have to provide all their meals, so it's harder to have enough food. At the food pantry I love getting the meats, because that's what we run out of most often. The kids also like to eat salads, so I appreciate getting vegetables, which are so expensive in the store.

My husband works at a processing plant, and I'm home with the kids. They depend on me a lot, and I cook for everyone, including their friends. I'm always helping the neighborhood kids, whether they have a problem or need a meal.

Cooking is my sanctuary. I'll try old recipes and learn how to make new things. After the time it takes to make a meal, it might be gone in 10 minutes, but at least everyone has full bellies.

A special Thanksgiving meal

With only one income in the family, it's hard to pay all the bills—especially the electric bill—and have enough to buy food. Sometimes my husband doesn't have as much work and one year he had to have back surgery. That was a tough time.

A couple of years ago we got a Thanksgiving meal box. That was a big help for our family. Money was tight because my husband had been laid off. Without the help, we wouldn't have had Thanksgiving.

I really appreciate all the help you give to this community. You're really helping others—many worse off than we are. This food makes a difference for our family too, especially in those times where we've had to live day-to-day and struggle to make ends meet. So thank you!

“This food makes a difference for our family...”

—BILLY JO

The food you help provide is bringing stability to our lives

Hi, I'm Brittany. We've been coming to this Food Bank because times are hard. The food we get here makes a big difference.

I've been diagnosed with Crohn's disease, and I'm having a hard time getting the health care I need to treat it. Right now I have to be careful what I eat. The Food Bank always has a variety of food—everything from produce to cereal and peanut butter and even gluten-free items. It all comes in handy.

Joey and I have been together for five years. We want our lives to be stable before we start a family because we don't want our kids to grow up like we did. Joey is working with a vocational rehabilitation

“Last year I got all the fixings for making a Thanksgiving dinner. It was a big help.”

—BRITTANY



Joey and Brittany come to their local food pantry while they work to get back on their feet.

center to try and get full-time work. In the meantime, he's doing odd jobs—painting in the summer, raking in the fall and shoveling in the winter.

Fixings for a Thanksgiving dinner

Before we got together Joey was homeless and living on the streets, so he knows what it's like to be hungry. My mom and dad taught me to make do with what I had. Nobody's going to go hungry in my house if I have a box of macaroni and a can of tomato soup! It's good, cheap and filling.

Last year, I got all the fixings for making a Thanksgiving dinner. It was a big help. I invited my family, and that's how we had a Thanksgiving dinner.

I want to say a big thank you to Good Shepherd Food Bank. Without them, I don't know how we would get the food we need to get through the month. It's a big help, and it shows that there are nice people out there.

Volunteer Spotlight

Experiencing the gratitude of serving others

Cheryl O'Donnell can't remember how she got started volunteering one day a week at the Waterville Food Bank, one of our partner agencies where Joey and Brittany go to get food. But she knows exactly why she stays.

“It's pretty amazing. You have people who come in and are so overwhelmed by the generosity of getting this,” says Cheryl. “I had one man with a family who when he left said, ‘Thank you for volunteering. It makes a difference.’ It really opens your eyes.”

The Food Bank provides a variety of food staples, meat and plenty of fresh produce, which often comes from a local farm.

Cheryl and her husband are often the primary caregivers to five grandchildren because her daughter is a single parent. Because of that

situation, Cheryl says she understands how unexpectedly and easily a family can need food assistance. “We don't know when any of us are going to need these services. For a lot of people, this is just such a help to them. I think it serves a lot of the underserved populations in Maine,” says Cheryl.

Doing something small to make a big difference

“It's not hard to do something simple to help someone else,” says Cheryl about why people should volunteer or support the Good Shepherd Food Bank. “We all get consumed with having to do something big in life. But if everyone did something small, look how much better the world would be. It's easy to do something small. We're not all equipped to do something big.”

“It's not hard to do something simple to help someone else.”

—CHERYL



Cheryl volunteers every week at one of our partner agencies.

For more information about how you can help fight hunger in our state, visit our website at gsfb.org and click on Get Involved. Whether you're donating time, food or funds, doing something small can make a big difference!

Thank you for helping provide healthy food this holiday season

For families who are struggling to make ends meet, the winter holidays bring the pressure of added expenses. Trying to provide a holiday celebration for their children, paying the heating bill during increasingly cold weather and dealing with the lack of employment from seasonal work can put a real strain on a family's already tight food budget. In those times, the real gift of the season is healthy food.



It's important for all families to have the opportunity to share a holiday meal with their loved ones. With your help, our partner agencies and mobile pantry will distribute the healthy food families need to celebrate the holidays without the fear of going hungry.

For the almost one in six Mainers who are food insecure, providing enough to eat is a daily struggle that lasts long after the leftovers from a holiday meal are gone. At Good Shepherd Food Bank, we're committed to providing the fresh fruits and vegetables, proteins and healthy grains that help families improve their health so they can work toward improving their lives.

It's work that can't be done without your generous support. As you sit down to your holiday table, will you take a moment to ensure that your neighbors in need also have a full plate of food? You can give online at gsfb.org or return the enclosed reply form. Thank you for giving the gift of food this holiday season.

Host a virtual food drive!

Looking for an easy and impactful way to give back? Start a Virtual Food Drive! Through this personalized, online fundraising page invite your friends and family to shop the virtual grocery aisles and pick out food. Participants "check out" by sending their financial donation to the Food Bank. Every \$1 donated through a Virtual Food Drive provides 4 meals for a family in need. Learn more at gsfb.org/get-involved/donate/virtual-food-drives

Stay connected to the work you support!



#GIVINGTUESDAY™

Black Friday and Cyber Monday may be about getting the best holiday shopping deals, but #GivingTuesday is the day that really matters—it's about giving hope. Every \$1 you donate will provide 4 meals for Mainers at risk of hunger. And don't forget to spread the word about the work you support on Facebook and Twitter!

Thank you

We're grateful to these organizations for their generosity

- Doree Taylor Charitable Foundation, \$100,000 for Food Mobiles
- Sam L. Cohen Foundation, \$50,000 for Mainers Feeding Mainers
- New Balance Foundation, \$25,000 for Mainers Feeding Mainers
- John T. Gorman Foundation, \$15,000 for general operations
- Elizabeth Ann Leach Charitable Trust, \$10,000 for Food Mobiles
- Kendal C. & Anna Ham Charitable Foundation, \$10,000 for Lakes Region hunger-relief efforts
- Emera Maine, \$50,000 for child-hunger programs in Northern ME
- The Herbert E. Tyler and Grace M. Tyler Foundation, \$10,000 for general operations
- Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation, \$10,000 for Cooking Matters
- Narragansett Number One Foundation, \$10,000 for York County hunger-relief efforts

YES, Kristen, I want to help provide healthy meals for hungry families this holiday season.

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$25 Other \$ _____

My first monthly gift of \$ _____ is enclosed.

I do not want a thank-you letter for my gift.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Please make your check payable to:

Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine
PO BOX 479, Lewiston, ME 04243-0479



Good Shepherd
FOOD BANK OF MAINE

MEMBER OF
FEEDING AMERICA

Please charge my gift on my credit card:

VISA MC AMEX DISC

CARD NUMBER _____

SIGNATURE _____

EXPIRATION DATE _____

May we email you periodically about the Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine?

Give online at gsfb.org/donate

Your donation is tax-deductible to the full extent of the law. We will send you a receipt for your records.

11N/16 30509-10

To end hunger in Maine by creating sustained access to nutritious food for all.