



Formerly Emergency
Foodshelf Network

Network News

FALL 2019

THE DIFFERENCE FRESH FOOD MAKES



Thanks to you, The Food Group is able to distribute more local produce to food shelves.

A father of three young children brought home a cucumber from one of our food shelf partners, not knowing if his kids would like the taste. They enjoyed the vegetable so much he came back for more.

Not everyone can afford to try new foods. The more The Food Group brings fruit and vegetables from farms to food shelves, the more stories like this we receive from our partners.

As we celebrate the harvest season and move into the holidays, we are grateful for our donors, who make these fresh-food moments possible. Your contributions support our food rescue and distribution efforts, as well as our farmer education program Big River Farms.

Your dollars help supply our partners with the nutritious products families want and deserve.

“For food shelves, produce is often the most difficult food to source,” said Anika Rychner, Community Action Center of Northfield program director. “It’s also the most difficult for farmers to grow. And so we rely on our partnership with The Food Group to make those connections.”

And without farms, there would be no food. Through education and access to land, Big River Farms helps the next generation of local growers feed our community today.

Watch Our Video: From Farm to Food Shelf

Your support brings more fresh food to local families, advancing our mission of fighting hunger and nourishing our community. See your donations at work at thefoodgroupmn.org/freshfoodvideo.



Faro Jones

“There is enough food... There is just a problem with getting it to the people and people being able to afford it.” -Faro Jones

A dietitian and Big River Farms farmer

1.4 million pounds of fresh produce distributed by The Food Group in 2018

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Announcing Our New Executive Director



Dear Friends of The Food Group,

We are pleased to announce that Sophia Lenarz-Coy has accepted the executive director position at The Food Group. Following a thorough search process, the board of directors of The Food Group selected Sophia, previously our director of programs and operations, as the new executive director. Partnering with an expert in nonprofit leadership searches, the board embarked on a full review of organizational needs, and gained input and insight from internal and external partners throughout the process.

Sophia brings a deep understanding of hunger and food insecurity, and a passion for finding solutions. She is dedicated to building a more just food system based on the values of equity and access for all. She has developed a strong network of relationships throughout the Twin Cities and is well-positioned to lead the organization as it continues to grow and evolve. Sophia is committed to working with the staff of The Food Group, as well as the board and community partners, to make meaningful change to the current hunger relief system.

In talking with Sophia, she is “energized to collaborate with The Food Group’s passionate staff, dedicated community partners, and generous supporters as we work to increase equitable food access in the Twin Cities and beyond.” Sophia looks forward to hearing from you as we continue to deepen our impact as an organization.

Sophia has served as director of programs and operations for The Food Group since November 2018. Prior to that, Sophia served in leadership roles as associate director at Hunger Solutions Minnesota (2015-2018) and on The Food Group’s programs team (2008-2015). She earned a bachelor’s degree at Smith College.

We are very excited to welcome Sophia into this leadership position. We are confident that she will add enormous value to the organization and will lead with energy, integrity and purpose.

Sincerely,
The Food Group Board of Directors

Hunger Bash 2019



Thank You for Supporting Our Work!

The eighth annual Hunger Bash on Sept. 13 was a huge success. We appreciate each event sponsor, table host and guest who joined with us to fight hunger and nourish our community. More than 325 guests contributed more than \$180,000 to provide food for local families. That helps provide more than 350,000 meals for neighbors in need, to help them grow and thrive—while also supporting local emerging farmers. Mark your calendars for the next Hunger Bash on Sept. 11, 2020, at the newly renovated Metropolitan Club and Ballroom in Golden Valley. Thank you to our 2019 sponsors: Ameriprise Financial, MidwestOne Bank, Dorsey, Allianz, Carfax, Meritain Health, Wells Fargo, Ryder, Western National Insurance, and Affiance.

Thank you to our 2019 presenting sponsor!



Hennepin County Cuts: We Need Your Help

Last fall, The Food Group learned Hennepin County is significantly decreasing our funding contracts after nearly 20 years. The first cuts came in 2019. The contracts could potentially end in 2021, cutting more than \$280,000 in funding for five hunger relief nonprofits, including The Food Group. If you live in Hennepin County, contact your commissioner and ask to keep funding for local hunger relief. These cuts are already affecting our programming and local food shelves. Your support is needed now more than ever.

give
TO THE
MAX
NOV. 14, 2019

Double Your Impact

**FRESH
PRODUCE
MATCH**

\$1 = \$1 + 1 lb. of produce
up to 70,000 lbs. from Metro Produce



Help Us Meet Our Match

Donate at givemn.org/thefoodgroupmn

**BREMER
WEALTH**

Legacy Survey Supported by Bremer Wealth

Thank you to everyone who completed and returned our Charitable Gift Planning Survey! We are honored to know that some of our donors have made plans for a legacy gift to The Food Group.

Our thanks also to Bremer Wealth for their support in developing, printing and mailing the survey. Their partnership made it possible.

Legacy gifts are one way you can help us meet the needs of neighbors experiencing hunger, offer innovative solutions and greater access to good food, and build a more just food system for tomorrow. A legacy gift is any planned future gift that designates some part of your estate as a donation to a nonprofit after your death. Such gifts allow you to create a powerful philanthropic legacy by making a direct impact on the causes important to you. **A single legacy gift can be transformative for an organization.**

If you received a survey and have not sent it in, please do so. We'd love to hear from you. If you did not receive a survey but would like to know more about legacy giving, please contact Gay Gonnerman, Development Officer for Individual Giving, at 763-450-4219 or ggonnerman@thefoodgroupmn.org.

Calendar of Events

Walk to End Hunger

Thursday, Nov. 28, 7-10 a.m.

Mall of America



Join us, along with nine other partner organizations, on Thanksgiving morning to give back before you give thanks. Each year, more than 5,000 walkers unite in the fight against hunger. This family-friendly event features a fun walk, a costume contest, a visit from Santa, four Fun Zones with activities and a performance by Kat Perkins! Registration fees and all dollars raised go directly to supporting people in your community. Register at thefoodgroupmn.org/events.

Emerging Farmers Conference

Friday, Jan. 24-Saturday, Jan. 25, 2020

University of MN Education & Conference Center
1890 Buford Ave, St. Paul, MN.



The annual Emerging Farmers Conference (formerly the Immigrant & Minority Farmers Conference) serves to advance the success and sustainability of farmers who traditionally face barriers to the education and resources necessary to build profitable agricultural businesses, including immigrant farmers and farmers of color. FREE to attend for farmers and volunteers. Learn more and register at bigriverfarms.org/about-efc.

Warehouse Tours at The Food Group

Nov. 12 & Dec. 5

Get a behind-the-scenes look at the work of The Food Group at our New Hope warehouse. Tours held at 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. RSVP to Emily at ewhite@thefoodgroupmn.org or 763-450-3868.

Thank You To Our Generous Sponsors:



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