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## **100 Local Volunteers to Assemble 4,000 Essential Food Boxes in One Day for Local Hunger**

*The Food Group, a local nonprofit, hosts its first ever outdoor food packing event to meet the growing need*

*New Hope, MN* – On September 12, The Food Group will be hosting its very first outdoor food packing event. Approximately 100 volunteers will be packing 4,000 boxes of essential food items to be distributed to The Food Group’s network of 150-plus food shelf partners across Minnesota.

The pandemic has had many ripple effects, including increased hunger for so many. Expanded volunteer support is needed and this event seeks to boost volunteerism to meet the growing need in the community.

“The need for emergency food continues at historically high levels. Lost jobs, reduced access to free meals for kids, store closures, fear of shopping because of health concerns, and the loss of support networks all contribute to the increased need,” said Sophia Lenarz-Coy, Executive Director of The Food Group.

“The Food Group is working harder than ever to get essential, nutritious, culturally connected foods to our neighbors who need it most right now. Thanks to community support, we have doubled the amount of food we are distributing and have created new responses for food distribution in the community, which includes this event that we have never tried before.”

Since March, The Food Group has provided 3,600,988 meals to communities that need it most. This is an 80% increase in outgoing deliveries to food shelves than in years past. More than 2,700 volunteer hours have gone into preparing food for distribution.

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### **About the Event**

The Food Group will be hosting an outdoor volunteer packing event on Saturday, September 12<sup>th</sup> with three shifts from 9am-5pm (9am-11am, 12pm-2pm, 3pm-5pm) with 35 volunteers per shift. The event will take place in The Food Group’s parking lot at 8501 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue North, New Hope, MN, 55428. In the case of poor weather we will be creating and communicating a back-up plan by Friday, September 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **About The Food Group ([www.thefoodgroupmn.org](http://www.thefoodgroupmn.org))**

The Food Group is a local nonprofit focused on using nutritious food to strengthen community. The organization works at the intersection of food access, equity, and nutrition issues related to food and hunger in 30 counties in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Its programs include food shelf and meal program support, a healthy and affordable grocery sales program called Fare for All, and Big River Farms, an organic farmer education program in Marine on St. Croix for people historically underrepresented in farm ownership. The Food Group believes nutritious food strengthens our community by creating better health outcomes and providing the foundation needed to thrive.