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MCC
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New Creation Baptist Church Food Programs Manager
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Oromo Resource Center of MN
People Serving People
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RiverBanks Food Shelf
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Watch for information about matching gifts and prizes. You can even create your own peer-to-peer fundraiser. Give to the Max Day 2020 raised $30.4 million for 6,114 nonprofits and schools.

Thank you, Luther Automotive, for your many years of support and for inspiring others to give!

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“We could not live out our crucial mission without The Food Group — and your supporters!” says Stuart Iseminger, Food Programs Manager.

A long-time participant named Bonnie appreciates the quality of food. “I’m vegetarian so it’s harder to find affordable foods that meet my nutritional needs. I can eat poorly on a limited budget. Just surviving is tough. The produce I get here is lifechanging.”

The pandemic led to a new home delivery program, ensuring food gets to their most isolated neighbors. Stuart tells us they identified an unmet need in their community. “We were struggling with how to get food to our clients who couldn’t safely come to the food shelf. We would tell people they could send a neighbor or a friend but that was a challenge for many. It’s a reflection of the isolation so many people have experienced during the pandemic. NorthPoint secured funding, procured a delivery vehicle, and hired additional staff to ensure home delivery will remain a permanent program.

In addition to the food shelf, NorthPoint also hosts a popular free wellness market called Free Fresh Food Friday. Stuart describes how their partnership with The Food Group lends to the success. "We love it when the Big River Farms truck arrives. They always bring the highest quality stuff, we’re so excited. They bring onions, radishes, beets, herbs, kale, green onions, tomatoes. It’s the best and highest quality produce we’ve ever been able to offer our participants. I’ve been in this field for a long time, and this year it’s been the best I’ve ever seen.”

The Food Group is proud to contribute to the wellness mission of the NorthPoint community and the holistic approach they lead with. You make this long-term partnership possible in a way that contributes to health and wellness for all 250 partners in our network. Thank you!
The fall of 2021 includes many of the mile markers we come to expect of the season—leaves turning, kids back to school, pumpkin-spiced everything. But this fall has several aspects unique to this moment in time—dramatically rising food costs, heightened community need, and uncertainty around COVID variants. All this puts additional strain on so many in our community who are already wondering where their next meal is coming from.

We have said it many times, but food needs in our neighborhoods remain at high levels. This has been true for the past eighteen months and, unfortunately, changes at the federal level mean that supports are decreasing. Enhanced unemployment benefits have expired, shrinking many household incomes. Rising food costs at the grocery store mean that the benefits folks do receive don’t stretch as far. This often leaves healthy, culturally relevant foods out of reach.

Fortunately, thanks to you, The Food Group remains ready to continue meeting the challenges of the moment. We prioritize nutrition—ensuring that the food we carry includes many fresh produce and lean protein options. We emphasize local foods when possible, deepening partnerships with farmers who play an important role in a thriving local economy, and paying them fair prices for food. With your support, we work hard to get healthy, culturally connected foods to those who need them most.

The stories in this newsletter show how you are delivering high quality, nutritious, and culturally connected foods to partners like NorthPoint Wellness Center and how those foods not only relieve hunger, but also create better physical and mental health and build a stronger community.

With gratitude,
Sophia Lenarz-Coy
Executive Director

KaZoua Berry’s life mission is to resolve hunger by doing more than just filling people with calories. As a certified health coach, she taught people how to prepare and cook nutritious food. As a community organizer, she helped people start community gardens. As a collaborator with Frogtown Farms in St. Paul, she began the practice of seed saving. Now, as the Program Manager at Big River Farms, she educates urban farmers how to grow food and manage farm businesses.

To resolve hunger, we need to center the conversation around food access. KaZoua explains, “Food is at the center of who we all are. I don’t want to just end hunger, I want people to eat nutrient dense food that nourishes their bodies and minds. It should be culturally relevant to them. Food should also heal the land rather than cause further damage.”

KaZoua believes hunger is a food justice issue. “Food justice is when people can walk less than one mile and access affordable, nutrient dense, healthy fresh foods. It means that people can grow foods that are relevant to them and their community. It means farmers don’t have to compromise the food that they grow based on the income they will make.”

Providing food that is a culturally connected and nutritious is a crucial step towards strengthening and empowering our communities. KaZoua reminds us, “When people can connect to their culture through food it moves away from processed food and a conventional, commercial way of eating.”

By supporting local farmers, growers, and producers, together, we are closing the gap on food inequities and creating better health outcomes for all.

Marsha Gilie has a long history of contributing to The Food Group and for the last several years, she has inspired others to give, too. Marsha feels strongly about providing hunger relief in her community. And she says The Food Group, “does such a great job!”

Marsha became a regular donor more than thirty years ago. The later she became a Monthly Nourisher to provide a steady stream of support through an automatic gift each month.

When she and her husband wrote their wills, they each chose a favorite charity to receive part of their estate. Marsha chose The Food Group to receive her legacy.

In addition, Marsha has a group of friends from her teaching career who continue to socialize. They get together a few times a year to catch up and to celebrate birthdays. Several years ago, they decided to make charitable gifts in honor of each other’s birthdays. “We didn’t need any more ‘stuff,’” Marsha says. “So, they each chose a favorite cause and Marsha of course, chose The Food Group, where she has had a long relationship.

Thank you, Marsha, for your dedication to hunger relief!
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Your response relieves the strain on families
A Message from the Executive Director

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GIVING FOR TODAY AND THE FUTURE.

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Many new families and faces

Another recent change is the mix of neighbors they serve.

• First time visitors increased from 10% to 25%
• Number of seniors served doubled
• Average household size for home delivery participants increased from 2-3 to five or six because of families doubling up on housing in the economic crunch.

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