

# NOURISHING NEWS

FROM THE GREATER BERKS FOOD BANK

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## A Healthy Future

The past year saw many milestones in the Greater Berks Food Bank's efforts to get the freshest and healthiest of foods onto the plates of those we serve. Plans for this year promise to take those efforts to an even higher level to best serve our hungry neighbors.

In 2016, our perishable foods distributed (produce, dairy, frozen meats, breads and other items) made up nearly half of the almost 7 million pounds of food the GBFB supplied to its network of charitable food programs. In fact, from July through December, perishable donations for the first time ever accounted for more than half (51%) of the total food distributed.

There are several reasons for this increase. When the GBFB moved into our new home in late 2014, we tripled our fresh and frozen storage space. This allowed us to accept more donations from existing local food industry donors as well as pursue donations from new sources. In just the past two months, we accepted three trailer loads of melons and grapes that originated in

the ports around Philadelphia – something that would have been impossible to do in our former building.

We also established our Mobile Market program last year. Through four partner sites in Berks and Schuylkill counties, we were able to pass on more than 90,000 pounds of fresh and frozen items to more than 3,000 families. More than 10,500 low-income seniors also received healthy food items (more than 205,000 pounds!) through our new Mobile Direct deliveries to senior high-rises in our two counties. Plans for 2017 call for two more Mobile Market sites, one in northern Berks and one in northern Schuylkill, as well as more Mobile Direct deliveries.

Through our 2016 Board-initiated strategic planning process, a Foods to Encourage Committee was also established. The Committee consists of the GBFB Agency Services staff; four Board members; and four community members (a nurse, dietician, nutritionist, and child feeding program supervisor). The work of this Committee will establish a system to rate the nutritional value of food donated to the GBFB. These ratings will help our agencies in selecting healthier foods to order – especially important to their clients battling health issues such as diabetes and high blood pressure. In the future, these ratings can also help guide the GBFB's decisions on donated foods to accept.

These efforts are all made possible through the generosity of you, our supporters. On behalf of those we serve, thank you.



## Dunkin' Donuts "Roasts Hunger"

Through the holiday season, Dunkin' Donuts of Greater Philadelphia donated \$0.50 for each large coffee purchased using a DD Perks Card to fight hunger. In February, representatives from local Dunkin' Donuts franchises presented a check for \$13,000 to the GBFB as a result of the campaign! In total, the Roast Hunger Campaign raised \$257,000 for food banks in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. Thank you to Dunkin' Donuts and all those who love their coffee!

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If you have any comments or questions, please contact the editor.

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A copy of the official registration and financial information of the Greater Berks Food Bank may be obtained from the Pennsylvania Department of State by calling toll-free within Pennsylvania 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement.

## From the Executive Director



of foods to encourage. All of these initiatives are focused on improving the overall health of those in need of food assistance by distributing the healthiest food options available.

As you read this newsletter you will come to understand how serious we are in supplying the healthiest of foods to the people we serve. However, fresh and perishable foods are much more labor-intensive. They require special care to maintain correct temperatures, handle, store and quickly distribute. Add to this the fact that fresh foods are often donated within mere days of their usefulness. To continue on our great progress in acquiring and distributing the healthiest of foods requires additional costs for manpower, equipment, utilities, storage and delivery. This is where the above defined strategies, such as increasing our brand awareness and fundraising, come into play to provide the resources needed.

This spring, we are excited to move forward with our Strategic Plan, embedding it into our daily work plan. The results will be tremendous as we "Bring More, of the healthiest foods, to the Table." We thank you for your gifts already made, or soon to be made, giving us the resources needed so that we can not only provide food assistance for those in need but to do so by providing the healthiest foods for their diets and consumption.

## Worley Parson's Canstruction



To celebrate National Engineers Week, WorleyParsons' Reading office challenged teams of their engineers to design "canstructions" – structures built with donated cans of food. The five designs used a total of 1,500 cans of food, all of which were donated to the Greater Berks Food Bank to help feed our hungry neighbors!

## Pound Per Person Challenge

On a chilly, rainy March morning, our drivers picked up the collection from Reading Health System's 6th annual Pound Per Person Challenge - in which the RHS challenges its employees to collect at least one pound of food per employee (they have about 7,000 staff members). 11,460 pounds of non-perishable foods were collected to help the GBFB feed our hungry neighbors! This year's food drive beat the previous best collection total (9,681 pounds were collected in the first year of the Pound Per Person Challenge - 2012)!



## Agency Feature: Circle of Friends Drop-In Center

In the heart of Reading, is a special spot, called Circle of Friends Drop-In Center, where those struggling with mental health issues can come for companionship, socializing, and a meal – made with food provided by the Greater Berks Food Bank.

Circle of Friends (working in partnership with Service Access and Management; Community Prevention Partnership; and Supportive Concepts for Families) hosts on average 55 adults daily in their Center on North 5th Street. All those attending have been referred by Service Access and Management and are considered "members" of Circle of Friends. In total, there are about 180 members. On weekdays, all members can stop by the Center to socialize (play games, do crafts, watch tv, shoot pool); eat breakfast, lunch or a snack; or simply get out of the cold or heat. Many of the members are homeless.

All of the meals made for members are cooked with food provided by the GBFB. Circle of Friends has been a member agency of the GBFB for more than 15 years. In just the past year, Circle of Friends has received 28,000 pounds of food (valued at \$46,000) from the Food Bank. According to Program Manager, Grisel Torres, Circle of Friends is especially grateful for the "extras" they can pick up at the GBFB during our daily Free, Fresh and Nutritious agency perishable giveaways – produce, dairy, and bread items.

With your support, the Greater Berks Food Bank is in turn grateful to serve a program making such a huge difference in the lives of those struggling with mental health issues.



Member Adelaida receives her lunch

## We thank the following businesses, organizations and places of worship that recently hosted food and fund drives\*:

- 3's Company/P.J. Whelihan's
- Albright College
- Amanda Stout Elementary School
- Anytime Fitness
- Berks Ballet Theatre Conservatory
- Boscov's Department Stores
- C.E. Cole Intermediate School
- Colonial Fitness
- Cornwall Terrace Elementary School
- Daniel Boone Middle School
- Exeter Township High School
- Fleetwood Bank
- Fleetwood Middle School
- Green Valley Elementary School
- Hunters Sharing the Harvest
- Karate for Kids
- KKBS Facility Services LLC
- Liberty Environmental
- Madison Reed Farm
- Manor Care Health
- Morgan Corporation
- Muhlenberg Elementary Center
- Penn State Berks Athletics
- Reading Berks Assoc. of Realtors
- Reading Health Systems
- Reiffton School
- Retro Fitness
- Rittenhouse Senior Living
- Santander Arena
- Savage L&B Dodge, Chrysler, Jeep, Ram
- St. Mark's U.C.C.
- Union Lodge No. 479 F.&A.M.
- West Reading Elementary School
- Wilson West Middle School
- Worley Parsons
- Wyomissing Area Garden Club

\* Food drives of at least 100 lbs. and fund drives of at least \$100 from 11/21/16 to 3/18/17

## Volunteer Honor Roll

The following individuals volunteered at least 100 hours of their time in 2016.  
The listed groups had employees, students and members that volunteered at least a combined 100 hours.

- Barbara Bright
- Kathy Donahue
- Gerry Essick
- Kathy Grim
- Ken Heiser
- Gerry Helinek
- Ruby Jackson
- Tim Moyer
- John Prann
- Nancy Prann
- Mark Robinson
- Sherry Scholl
- Glen Trayer
- Teri Wagner
- Atonement Lutheran Church
- Berks Co. Assoc. of School Retirees
- Berks Co. Intermediate Unit Transition House
- Carpenter Technology
- The Highlands at Wyomissing
- Prospectus Berco
- River Rock Academy
- Wilson School District

**Thank You Volunteers!**

**WANT TO Volunteer?**

Please visit [berksfoodbank.org](http://berksfoodbank.org) to learn how!

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Email: [pbianca@feedingamerica.org](mailto:pbianca@feedingamerica.org)

[www.berksfoodbank.org](http://www.berksfoodbank.org)

About Our Organization . . .  
The Greater Berks Food Bank,  
established in 1983, collects,  
purchases, stores, and distributes  
over seven million pounds of food  
annually to the more than 300  
programs which feed the hungry  
in Berks & Schuylkill counties.



## Help us meet the match!

For the seventh year, a  
generous local couple  
(who wish to remain  
anonymous) has offered a  
donation match to support  
our mission.

This year they will match  
\$1 for every \$4 we  
receive from new donors  
– up to \$100,000 in new  
donations. This means  
they will personally donate  
\$25,000 to the GBFB if we  
raise \$100,000 from new  
donors!

If you have never donated,  
please consider doing so  
today. Your gift will multiply  
because of the match! If  
you are a loyal supporter,  
please encourage your  
friends and family to  
donate for the first time to  
help us meet the match!

**JOIN US SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 17**

1st Annual



**HUNGER RUN**

STARTS AT **CLASSIC** READING PA  
Harley-Davidson

**REGISTRATION AT 9:30AM • DEPARTS 11:30AM**

Ride will be about 1 hr (50 miles) and we'll return  
to Classic Harley for food & drinks.

 **FEE IS \$20 PER RIDER & PASSENGER**  
All Proceeds go the Greater Berks Food Bank  
CASH OR CHECKS MADE PAYABLE TO THE GREATER BERKS FOOD BANK

The ride is open to motorcycles, Jeeps & other four-wheel drive vehicles and  
custom/classic hot rod vehicles.

For more info about the Greater Berks Food Bank  
**BERKSFOODBANK.ORG**

   



Return Service Requested

Greater Berks Food Bank  
117 Morgan Drive  
Reading, PA 19608

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