



COMMUNITY FOOD NEWS

A newsletter for Rhode Island Community Food Bank Member Agencies.

Winter 2012

Agency Advisory Committee

Board of Directors Liaisons
Bob McDonough
Susan Santos

Agency Advisory Members

The following attended meetings
Fall 2011:

Lorraine Burns
St. Teresa of Avila Food Center

Elizabeth O'Dea
The Poverello Center

Bob MacDonald
East Bay CAP Food Pantry

Susan Gustaitis
Jonnycake Center of Peace Dale

Michele Baker
Bridges, Inc. GHFC

Diana Litterick
So. Providence Ministries Food Pantry

Diana Burdett
PICA

George Gaffet
PICA Food Pantry

Joshua-Michael Corrente
Westbay CAP Marketplace

Liz Pasqualini
Jonnycake Center of Westerly

David Carpenter
SVDP Emergency Food Center

Ransom Widmer
Epiphany Meal Site at St. George

AAC Listens to the Network



The Agency Advisory Committee (AAC) has been very busy this season! We kicked off the fall with our first Annual Labor Day Recognition Event to honor all of our Member Agencies for the hard work they do. In October, the AAC developed goals for the coming year. We aim to tackle some really big issues over the next few months, which include, but aren't limited to:

- Developing and implementing a network-wide communication strategy.
- Supporting the Food Bank's efforts to ensuring that not only the Food Bank, but each Member Agency achieves cultural competency as a means to meet our clients' needs.
- Providing training and other supports to Member Agencies around resource development and sustainability.

We have taken some steps towards those goals already. Elizabeth O'Dea, Director of the Poverello Center and Michele Baker from Bridges, Inc. Group Home Food Center, have volunteered to co-chair a sub-committee on cultural awareness. They will work with other interested AAC participants, Member Agencies representatives, and Food Bank staff to collect information and they will help design strategies that will allow the Food Bank and Member Agencies to effectively work with whatever population crosses their paths.

The AAC also agreed that the primary message that needs to be communicated statewide is that there are hungry families *in every community* in Rhode Island. "The hungry" are our neighbors. Around that main idea, the group has created a strong list of activities and talking points that will be developed into a Communication Tool Kit. Cindy Elder, Director of Communications at the Food Bank, is excited to be working with the AAC on this important work.

We have even begun planning the annual Agency Conference, which will be in the spring of 2012! More information will be coming soon!

The Agency Advisory Committee meetings are open to anyone who works or volunteers at one of the RI Community Food Bank's Member Agencies. Together with Food Bank staff and Board members, we share best practices, problem solve, and celebrate one another's successes. At this point in time, the AAC meets on the second Tuesday of each month from 3:30 – 5:00 PM. This winter, we will be meeting on January 10th, February 14th, and March 13th. For more information contact Kristen Allen, Agency Services Coordinator, at 942-6325 ext 225 or at kallen@rifoodbank.org.

Food Bank Closed:

December 26, January 2,
& 16 and February 20.

New Food Bank Members

The Food Bank welcomes three new agencies to our network since last season! In October we opened the **Central Falls Food Pantry at Progreso Latino** membership. They are open Monday, Wednesday, & Friday from 1:30 to 3:30, by appointment. The **Salvation Army of Providence Corps' Mobile Community Response** is our first mobile meal site! You can call Kevin Thomas at 575-2227 to find out where the truck stops. **Tannerhill, Inc.** has opened a group home food center in Pascoag. Welcome All!

It's Membership Recertification Time...

We will mail out our membership recertification packages to ALL Food Bank agency program Executive Directors soon. Membership renewals are an important requirement for your agency, and they keep us up to date on your program's basic information.

Your agency's Food Bank membership cards will expire on February 28, 2012.

Please complete and return all enclosed documents in the mailing. Incomplete applications will result in postponement of your renewal.

The recertification package includes the following:

- Agency Information Sheet
- Basic Agreement (**must be reviewed and signed by your agency's Executive Director or the President of your agency's Board**).

Please remember that renewals are for **existing sites only**. To discuss adding a new program you must contact Agency Services directly at 942-6325.

SNAP Outreach

The countdown to Winter Break is on!

Some families are preparing for warm weather vacations and others have plans to visit friends and relatives, but as our Member Agencies know, winter break doesn't provide the same reprieve for nearly 60,000 Rhode Islanders we collectively serve each month. Rather than thinking about what to pack for a vacation get-away, thousands of people in our communities are burdened by how they are going to feed their children three healthy meals a day.

It's hard to make ends meet – especially with additional expenses this season, like the rise in heating and oil prices and coming up with money to buy holiday gifts. Food pantries help by providing groceries, and it's up to families to work to stretch that food throughout the week or month - but at times it's just not enough for some of our neighbors.

The Food Bank encourages our food assistance programs to "go that extra step" and tell their clients about SNAP. SNAP helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health – thus, helping their food resources go even farther. No one receives just \$10 anymore. The minimum benefit each month is \$16, but the average benefit is \$142 per month. Also, the funds can be carried on the EBT cards for up to 12 months.

For more information about our SNAP Outreach program and how they can help you reach out to your clients about SNAP, contact one of our bi-lingual SNAP Outreach Coordinators:

Jamie St. Laurent (bi-lingual in Spanish & English)
Phone: 942-6325 ext 237
Email: jstlaurent@rifoodbank.org

Marie Cayard (bi-lingual in Haitian Creole, French, English)
Phone: 942-6325 ext 262
Email: mcayard@rifoodbank.org

Keep Warm with Vegetable Soup!



Black Bean Soup with Lime and Cumin

Prep time: 30 minutes Servings: 6

Ingredients:

4 cups cooked black beans
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 Tbsp cumin
1 cup chopped onions
1 cup sliced carrots
2 cloves garlic
1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
4 cups low-sodium vegetable stock
1/4 cup chopped chipotle chiles (or green chiles)
1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp lime juice

Directions:

- Heat olive oil in a nonstick or heavy-bottomed frying pan over medium heat.
- Add cumin, chopped onions, carrots, garlic and bell pepper and cook slowly until browned.
- Puree the beans with 4 cups stock in a blender or food processor.
- Add the vegetable mixture, 1/2 canned chipotle chiles, 1/4 cup plus 2 Tbsp lime juice, and salt to taste.
- Process until velvety smooth. If the soup is too thick, thin it with more stock.

Healthy Hints:

- Canned soups can be high in sodium.
- By making soup *from scratch* you can control the amount of salt that is in the recipe.
- Choose low-sodium stocks and lots of herbs and spices to add flavor instead of salt.

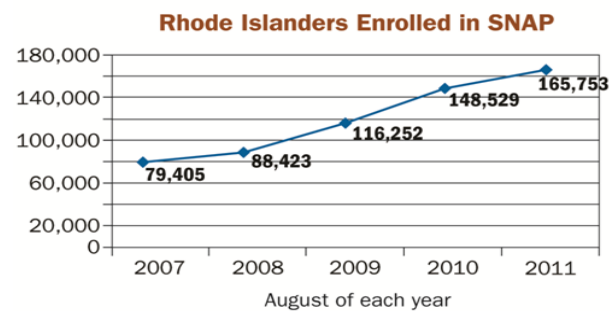
Find more recipes just like this one by going to www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov
Click on recipes where you can search by type of fruit or vegetable, and you can make your very own custom cookbooks for free!

2011 Status Report on Hunger

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank produces a Status Report each year to document the extent of hunger and food insecurity in the state. This 2011 Status Report presents stark statistics depicting the growing demand for food assistance. It also examines the “meal gap” in Rhode Island that leaves many families without adequate food. Along with demonstrating the urgency of the problem, the Status Report details the steps necessary to close the meal gap and help everyone in need.

Some of the major findings of the report include:

- 59,000 Rhode Island households are unable to meet their basic food needs.
- Low-income Rhode Islanders miss out on 34 million meals each year.
- Demand at emergency food programs has grown by 58 percent since the start of the economic recession.
- SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, once known as the Food Stamp Program) is now the primary source of meals for low-income families and individuals.



In the report you will also find a map of Food Bank members by city/town, a description showing how we calculated those 34 million missed meals, and our recommendations for closing the meal gap in Rhode Island.

We plan to mail out to each Member Agency Executive Director a copy of this report with our annual membership recertification soon. In the meantime, you may view the report online at www.rifoodbank.org.

Watch for an Upcoming Conversation!

During the week of **January 9-13** the Agency Services team will be asking our members about cultural awareness at their agencies. We would like to know how our members address issues around people of different backgrounds and what some of the challenges are for serving a diverse community. This could be someone from another country, or someone who is homeless, or has a mental health challenge or disability. We are gathering information to inform our new strategic plan, which will, in turn, include programming to help our members address some of these barriers. Watch for us in the Customer Service area...we have just a few questions we'd like to talk with you about. Thanks in advance for your help!

Too early to think about Spring?

It's not too early for us! We are already thinking about our **spring community gardening workshop**. This year the focus will be **on urban gardening in Providence!**

Call Loni for more information at 942-6325 ext 253.

Agency Orientations

Orientations are required for any new staff or volunteers who will be ordering, shopping, or picking up food from the Food Bank. Orientations are also a good reference for anyone who would like to brush up on their Food Bank knowledge.

SCHEDULE:

Wednesday, January 4 from 3 – 5:30 PM
Friday, January 20 from 9:30 AM – 12 noon
Monday, February 6 from 9:30 AM – 12 noon
Thursday, February 16 from 3 – 5:30 PM

To register, or to find out when more orientations are being held, call Agency Services at 942-6325.

Regional Meetings for Agencies

Newport County Agency Forum:

Thursday, January 12: 12 noon - 2:00 PM
NCCMH Anita Jackson House, 316 Green Lane, Middletown
RSVP to Loni McGrath at lmcgrath@rifoodbank.org, or call her at 942-6325 ext 253.

Woonsocket Agency Forum:

Monday, January 30: 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM
SVDP Bryan's Pantry, 190 North Main Street, Woonsocket
RSVP to Kelly LeBeau at klebeau@rifoodbank.org, or call her at 942-6325 ext 241.

Central Falls & Pawtucket Area Agency Forum:

Thursday, February 2: 12:30 PM - 2:00 PM
Central Falls Food Pantry @ Progreso Latino, 626 Broad Street, Central Falls
RSVP to Kristen Allen at kallen@rifoodbank.org, or call her at 942-6325 ext 225.

Mission Statement

The Rhode Island Community Food Bank provides food to people in need and promotes long-term solutions to the problem of hunger.