

FULL PLATES

Gratitude Report
2020



You helped when we needed it the most...

We could not have made it through the last 14 months without YOU! We are so grateful. While the trend of reduced numbers of COVID cases in Vermont has allowed us to feel a cautious optimism for a future free from the threat of the pandemic, the road to recovery for those experiencing poverty and hunger remains long and challenging. Those already struggling with food insecurity have felt the economic, social, and physical hardships of the past year deeply. Together, with support from you and our amazing community, we were able to keep our doors open despite the pandemic and pivot our programming to safely serve over 11,000 individuals in the last year.

I recall a conversation with a woman who was very shaken and upset because she had lost her job at a local department store; I tried to provide comfort saying, "this is why we are here". One of our volunteers who was with me that day said, "I knew we made a difference in our community, but I had no idea how important we really are."

Our work over the coming months will strive to make people feel heard and supported as we rebuild community connections that were lost through the pandemic. We envision a future where none of our neighbors go to bed hungry, and with your help we will get there.

I'm so proud of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers at Feeding Chittenden who have been truly heroic. Thank you to our community of supporters and partners!

Thank you!



Rob Meehan
Director



GET INVOLVED!

As a Feeding Chittenden volunteer, you'll experience opportunities to learn and grow through rewarding roles that fight hunger, such as:

- Unload food donations as they're delivered
- Create prepackaged food boxes for distribution
- Prep and serve food for the Hot Meal Program (currently to-go)
- Help clients get their groceries
- Deliver groceries to homebound clients
- Pick up donations
- And so much more!

To learn more and submit a volunteer application go to: www.feedingchittenden.org

"Good food and nutrition is a fundamental human right."



"Good food is like medicine. And I want to eat well despite not doing well with finances, so these deliveries make a big difference."



"(I'm grateful for) the volunteer who takes enough interest to call and ask what I need, and to check in and see how I'm doing."



March 2020 - March 2021

OUR IMPACT

stronger together



FOOD SHELF

25,507 GROCERY BOXES DISTRIBUTED

Feeding Chittenden's Food Shelf was converted into a to-go operation, distributing for pick-up pre-made boxes of groceries that contain fresh fruits and vegetables, meat, dairy, bread, and pantry essentials.



FOOD ACCESS CENTER

430 PARTICIPANTS

The Food Access Center order-ahead system is in the pilot phase and currently serving 63 families, totaling 430 people and 208 children. The majority of participants are New Americans and have access to culturally appropriate food through this program. 76 percent of these families are new to Feeding Chittenden and receiving help for the first time.



HOME DELIVERY

2,400+ DELIVERIES MADE

Feeding Chittenden's Delivery program brings groceries to over 200 households of seniors, those living with disabilities, sick or injured, and others who cannot leave their home. Additionally, a hotline for emergency deliveries is in place.



PREPARED MEALS

63,452 MEALS SERVED

Prepared meals are available onsite Monday through Friday for anyone in need. We also have served those struggling with homelessness throughout the pandemic by delivering meals to warming shelters and state-sponsored temporary residences.



FOOD RESCUE

450,000 POUNDS OF FOOD RECOVERED

Feeding Chittenden maintained food rescue during this phase, diverting 450,000 pounds of food from the landfill in order to continue to provide balanced grocery selection for those in need.

"I've learned the lingo of cooking. I've learned respect for the other people here. Working with these chefs is great."



"I want to make the world a better place in some way rather than just taking up space and consuming resources!"



"Food is a common ground. It brings people together."





Full Plates, Thanks to You!

— Gretchen's Story —

"I came here scared, angry, hurt... I had that typical survivor's range of emotions, and having to take care of kids on top of having to keep myself in check in order to keep going...it's a lot."

Gretchen, a single mother, first came to the Feeding Chittenden Food Shelf six years ago for help after escaping a domestic violence situation. She deeply appreciates the human connection amongst visitors, volunteers, and staff.

"Every time I've been here I've engaged in conversations with complete and total strangers, and it's been very enlightening because it really opens your eyes to what brings people here...you realize, we all come with a different set of circumstances, but we're all here to do the same exact thing - to feed ourselves and to feed our families."

The food and support Gretchen received helped her put food on the table, and through her creativity and love of cooking she was able to create healthy and delicious meals that her sons, who have food aversions and sensitivities, would happily eat.

"For me, personally, there is a lot of enjoyment in being able to put effort into a meal...I've learned to really tailor elements of the meal so that everybody is able to sit down and eat."

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the Feeding Chittenden Food Shelf operated in a market style. Visitors were greeted by staff and volunteers and were able to select the food items their families needed from a space that was designed to resemble a small grocery store.



Now, Gretchen and thousands of other households facing hardship in the face of COVID-19, come to Feeding Chittenden for pre-packaged grocery boxes containing a supply of fresh produce, dairy and meat products, pantry staples, prepared meals and household items such as diapers, paper products, and feminine products. Staff and volunteers do their best to help tailor these boxes to what individual households need, but it does not provide the same level of choice that visitors had when coming to the Food Shelf pre-COVID. This is why we are transitioning from Food Shelf to Food Access Center.



We firmly believe in people's ability to make choices that are right for themselves and their family. Through the Food Access Center, people like Gretchen will be able to order the food they need online, over the phone, or in person. Their order will be prepared and delivered to them, when and where they need.

This last year has been challenging for all of us, and for those who have faced food insecurity, job loss, and financial hardship in the past, this struggle is not new. In Gretchen's words:

"You're consistently reminded, when you're living at the poverty level that you have to prove your need. There's a perception that poor people are lazy, but in reality, we're so exhausted from the stress! And then trying to raise kids on top of that? I never thought I'd be in this position."

With your support we will advance our programming to best serve those experiencing food insecurity in Chittenden County. Thanks to you, and strong advocates like Gretchen, we will continue to fight against hunger until none of our neighbors struggle to put food on the table.



Your Gift in Action!

Passion, Energy, and Dedication



Meet Edi Abeneto, Feeding Chittenden's Grocery Distribution Coordinator. If you've ever been to Feeding Chittenden, you likely recognize him - he's been working at Feeding Chittenden for 13 years!

Edi works hard not only to make sure everyone has food, but also to make sure that it's the right food for their lifestyles, diets, and cultures. Since the start of COVID-19, he has been extra committed to getting visitors all the items they need in the pre-packed boxes we distribute. He also speaks five languages, which helps him effectively communicate with many visitors about the culturally-

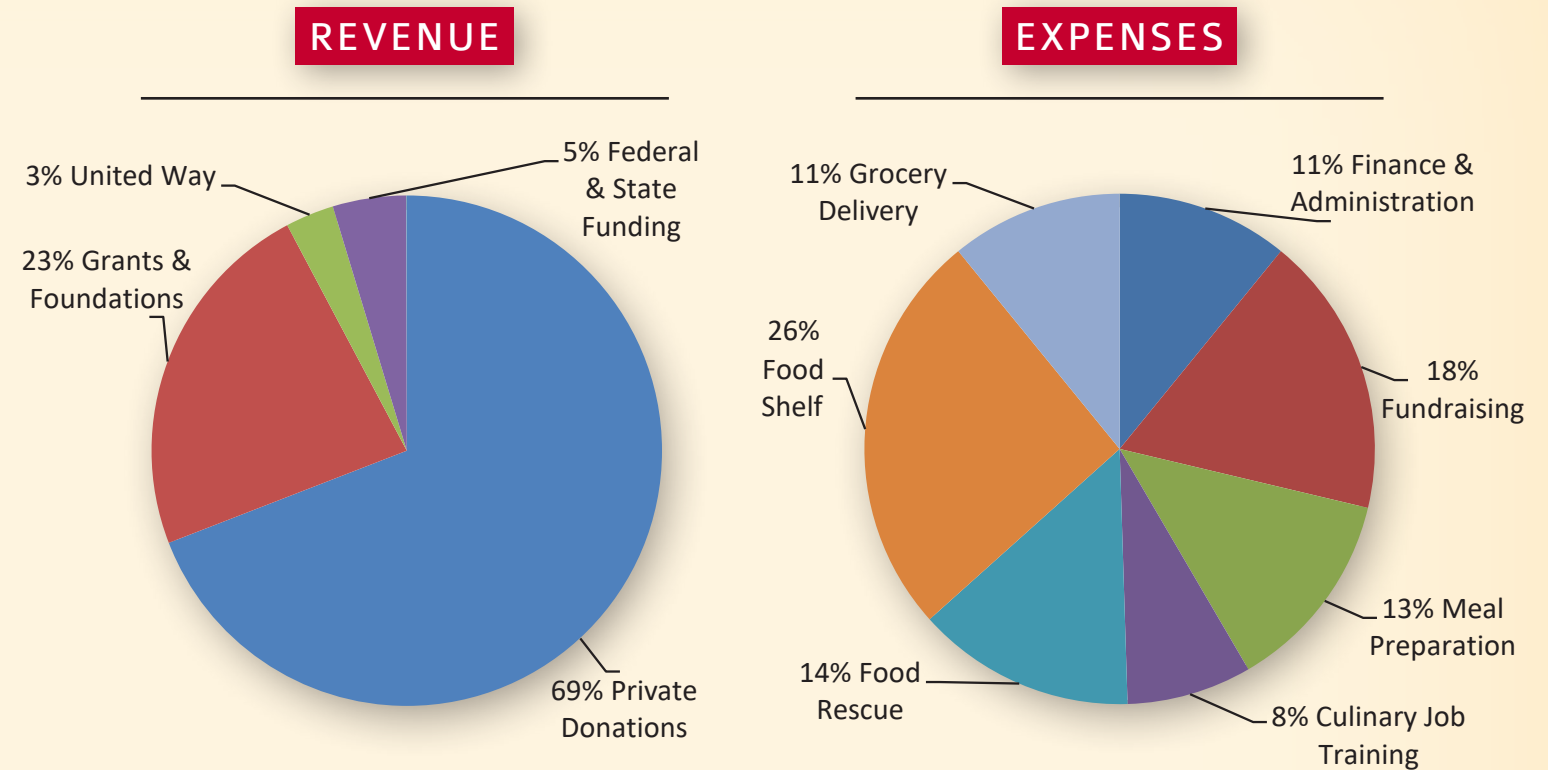
appropriate foods they need. Edi says, **"I know a lot of people I serve here, we have a connection. We'll have interactions when they come to Feeding Chittenden and they'll tell me, 'you may include this,' or 'we need this,' or 'we have a special diet.' And a lot of immigrants, they will suggest 'okay, we need some food from our culture.'"**

As the Food Shelf transitions into a Food Access Center, Edi supports this work by trying to empower choice in all of his interactions and get people food that is healthy and nourishing. He says, **"I think we should try to improve the food people are getting from us. We want people to get healthy foods. And people with health conditions, or who are on diets, it's very important to give people the chance to select for themselves the food they can eat."** Edi started working at Feeding Chittenden in 2004 as an interpreter shortly after his arrival in the US as a refugee from the Congo. Being a speaker of English, Swahili, French, Kirundi, and Lingala, Edi was perfect for the job of communicating with a diverse population about their food needs.

Edi has "a passion and energy for serving his community" that he found long before he started working at Feeding Chittenden. While living at a refugee camp in Tanzania he was a volunteer with a sector of the UN's World Food Programme. In this role, he helped to distribute food to students in need of assistance. **Edi says that he still thinks often of his life in the Congo and his time volunteering at the refugee camp when he distributes groceries at Feeding Chittenden. His memories of food insecurity in his home country give him the "passion and energy" to fight the same issue here, in Chittenden county.**

We couldn't have done this without YOU!

FINANCIALS FY21



LOOKING FORWARD

Transition from Food Shelf to Food Access Center

WHY A FOOD ACCESS CENTER?

FC's Food Access Center initiative will expand access to our food shelf, grocery delivery, and support services, ensuring anyone in need will be able to safely access healthy, nutritious food. The transition from Food Shelf to Food Access Center is focused on increasing access to healthy food by creating choice with an order-ahead system that allows food insecure families to choose the grocery items that they need. This, in concert with a growth in our grocery delivery capacity throughout Chittenden County will minimize stigma, reduce waste, and increase accessibility.

WHO WILL THE FOOD ACCESS CENTER HELP?

The Food Access Center is specifically designed to serve those who have the most barriers to leaving their home and picking up food from our location. Lack of transportation or childcare, limited physical mobility, health concerns, post-traumatic stress, and fear of being stigmatized or experiencing stereotypes, prejudice, or violence are just some of the challenges that our visitors face on a daily basis. With your help, we can act in order to ensure that our food is truly accessible to all.

Ways to Give:

FULL PLATE CLUB:



As a monthly donor you become a member of Feeding Chittenden's Full Plate Club! This is a group of invested community members who prioritize and sustain our work fighting hunger within Chittenden County and the state of Vermont. These consistent gifts provide reliable funding to our programs year round, meaning our recipients can count on access to the food they need, whenever they may need it.

When you join the Full Plate Club you are making a promise to fight hunger in your community and stand by your neighbors in need. Your generosity each month helps to expand access, create choice, minimize stigma, and reduce waste. Thank you for your commitment!

To join the Full Plate Club, please go to our website, www.feedingchittenden.org!

DONATE BY CHECK: Please make checks payable to "Feeding Chittenden"

You can mail your donation to: Feeding Chittenden, PO Box 1594, Burlington, VT 05402

Please contact us if you are interested in donating stock or leaving a legacy gift!

GIVE FOOD:

VIRTUAL FOOD DRIVE: Fill a virtual shopping care with the items we need most without leaving home! We will use the funds to purchase these items wholesale, getting better rate than retail prices. Your donation will stretch farther and will help community members in need while leaving extra food on grocery store shelves for our neighbors!

Give today at www.feedingchittenden.org

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO SEE ALL THE WORK YOUR SUPPORT IS MAKING POSSIBLE!



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Visit feedingchittenden.org to read our blog, news stories, and updates!