



*When everyone eats, all are nourished*

Fall 2020

Dear Neighbor,

Last year when we wrote you, we were closing in on a goal to fully fund our new Food Center for its first year of operation and looking forward to the expanded programming that the new space would allow – health screenings, cooking classes, and community dinners.

**In March, everything changed.** Schools, businesses, restaurants, stores, and some nonprofits closed to stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Unemployment rose, the economy contracted, and supermarket shelves were emptied. We all faced uncertainty in our daily lives in large and small ways.

Our mission **to contribute to the health of our community through the inspirational power of good food** never felt more urgent than at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our programs were a lifeline that protected families from suffering the worst consequences of the pandemic. Our services remained critical to support their physical and emotional wellbeing precisely when they were needed most. Most importantly, good, healthy food remained available to all.

It had also never been more difficult to deliver on that mission. The health and safety precautions we had to implement - the contingency planning, the adaptations, and yes, the uncertainty - all added layers of stress, complexity, and expense that challenged us and will continue to challenge us.

Nevertheless, together we met the challenges:

- The Greenwich and Cossayuna pantry hours were maintained – we did not miss a single service.
- The Weekend Student Meals program continued deliveries every Friday during the school year and throughout the summer.
- The Food Farmacy program provided healthy food to at-risk patients using an outdoor set-up, and our Produce Prescription program connected low-income households to farm produce at the Glens Falls Farmers Market.
- The Comfort Food Community *YouTube* channel was launched, making it possible to continue the Edible Education program.
- The Community Garden was fully planted for the summer.
- Comfort Food Community helped provide a massive food distribution to over 1,784 individuals at the Washington County Fair Grounds.

**Over →**

As breakfasts and lunches for students were scheduled to end with the close of the school year, Comfort Food Community wanted to make student meals a certainty for students in need. With the support of Kick Covid funds and a Nourish NY Grant, Comfort Food Community, in partnership with Battenkill Community Services and the Greenwich Central School District, provided almost 30,000 meals to students over eleven weeks. Volunteers contributed over 2,500 hours to plan, prep, pack and deliver breakfasts and lunches to 250 students every week. Products were sourced from local farms and included milk, yogurt, smoothies, apples, applesauce, tomatoes, blueberries, peaches, plums, and more putting \$65,000 in grant funding back into our local agriculture economy.

**We believe that good food is the key to good health and that good health is the key to strong communities.**

We are committed to maintaining all our current programs in the face of expanded need. We are committed to continuing to respond to new challenges as they arise. We are committed to being there for our community by providing consistent access to good healthy food - to our seniors, our students, our families – to anyone in need in our community.

Although things may seem better now, we face the coming fall and winter with even more uncertainty. Will schools stay open? Will businesses and jobs return? What will ‘normal’ look like in 2021?

The key to getting through these difficult days is coming together to find some certainty as we create a path to recovery. You can help to make healthy food accessible to those in need. You can help provide the resources to meet emergency needs that arise in the future. If you can, please consider a gift to help us meet the challenges of these times.

Thank you for your support. Be well, stay healthy.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'DB', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Devin Bulger  
Executive Director