

# FRESH IDEAS

**PROJECT  
BREAD**  
A FRESH APPROACH  
TO ENDING HUNGER<sup>SM</sup>



## Summer 2013 Newsletter

For our supporters, partners, and friends—  
the latest on our shared mission to end hunger

Photo © Michael Dwyer



## Healthy food & summer fun

For most schoolchildren, June marks an end to the school year, and the beginning of summer fun. It's a different story for children in families that struggle to put food on the table. From September to June, school meals—breakfast and lunch—provide them with a consistent and reliable protection against hunger. But hunger doesn't take a vacation when school is out.



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45<sup>th</sup> Walk for Hunger



# Letter from THE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends:

Project Bread is always evolving. Through research, listening, and creative thinking, we are discovering and developing new ways to address and prevent hunger in our state. And to better communicate our vision, goals, and passion to all of you, we've also been working behind the scenes to develop a new look and feel for Project Bread.

Our new graphic identity is inspired by our grassroots beginnings, highlights our focus on healthy solutions, and captures through the boldness of the type and the angle of the composition the energy and drive of our staff—and of all of you who propel our shared mission.

Project Bread's new tagline—"a fresh approach to ending hunger"—speaks to the range of our innovative programs: from emergency meal solutions, to early childhood health initiatives, to local and sustainable food resources.

That sound when you bite into a really crisp, fresh carrot, straight from the garden? That's what we want to bring to this work. Which is why...

**We bring a fresh understanding to the problem of hunger.** We view it as a complex problem, and recognize that one antihunger solution does not fit all. We listen carefully to the voices and insights of people who have experienced food insecurity, and go on to create solutions that are responsive to their sense of personal dignity, and reflective of their concerns.

**We take a fresh approach to partnerships.** We're passionate about including local producers and farmers in our initiatives because we understand that hunger is a problem that exists within the food system—not outside of it. We can support local business, reduce our environmental impact, promote sustainable activity, and give our families healthy food as a result of these partnerships.

**We stand up for fresh food, good cooking, and community life.** Good food connects us, gives us joy, and makes us healthy. We illustrate this in our lead article about summer meals and the importance of relationship-building and mentoring in this first edition of our newly expanded newsletter. The motto of the Cops N Kids program in Southbridge is "you have the right to a healthy and active life." We couldn't agree more.

**And we're taking a fresh approach to including you, our supporters, in our work and thinking.** Many of you know the Walk, of course, but you may not know as much about our newer programs, or some of the great partners we're working with now, or how you can become involved in our efforts, year-round. Through this expanded, re-designed newsletter and other communications, we want to make sure that you're up to date on all of our fresh approaches. We can't bring them to life without you!

Thank you for joining Project Bread in changing the lives of families and communities around the state.

Sincerely,

Ellen Parker  
Executive Director

## THE WALK FOR HUNGER

### Still have pledges outstanding?

Ask your sponsors for the funds and they will be impressed by your commitment.  
Or donate at [www.projectbread.org](http://www.projectbread.org).

**We still need your help!**

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# Shaping young philanthropists



*Some of the 90 students from the 2013 "We Have Pierce Pride" team from the John Pierce Middle School in Brookline. Cumulatively, they raised \$35,000, second only to Arbella Insurance Group, and 25 became members of Project Bread's Heart & Sole Circle. Photo courtesy of parent volunteer.*

When a middle school student discovers something is unfair, he or she will go the distance to fix that injustice, according to teacher Jamie Yadoff.

"Seventh and eighth graders are at an age where everything is about fairness," she explains from her seventh grade classroom at John Pierce Middle School in Brookline. "My students recognize it's not fair that kids their age are hungry—and that they can do something about it. All you have to do is present the problem and the kids want to find the solution."

One of those solutions was signing up for the 2013 Walk for Hunger, and raising more than \$35,000 for community food programs across Massachusetts. Now in her eighth year of leading the "We Have Pierce Pride" team of students, Yadoff has helped more than 500 students raise approximately \$150,000—a truly extraordinary amount of money!

Yadoff's unique teaching methods make civic responsibility and hunger a part of the classroom discussion year-round: she conveys the basic idea of social injustice, provides daily hunger facts, checks in on how her students feel before lunch to illustrate the reality of hunger, and gives all of her students talking points to use when asking others to support their Walk. Her holistic approach to teaching students about hunger is a model that Project Bread hopes to introduce to other schools around the state, in an effort to encourage philanthropy and community service in young people.


"Although I am a child, I have learned a lot about hunger," wrote Spencer Nusbaum on his Walk webpage. "I have so much food and I would like to give it away to those in need, but I don't know how. That is why I registered for The Walk for Hunger."

Armed with Yadoff's lessons, Nusbaum successfully raised \$360—and was so thrilled that he could do all 20 miles, he actually ran the last mile of the Walk. Like Nusbaum, his fellow students took what they'd learned out into the community, and enlisted the support of family and friends to work toward their fundraising goals. Between soliciting pledges, running bake sales, and launching a range of other crafty fundraisers, Jamie's students raised a significant amount of money for families in need.

One of the group's most notable fundraising methods involved shoveling snow for donations. Before February's big blizzard, they went door-to-door in their Brookline neighborhood asking for donations in return for shoveling—a pitch that resulted in more than a thousand dollars raised for Project Bread!

Although this is the first time many of these students have raised funds, their goals are becoming progressively more ambitious. This year, 25 students in Yadoff's 90-member Walk team made it to the Heart & Sole Circle, raising more than \$500! Five of her students went even further and raised more than \$1,000 to join the Leadership Circle, including the team's highest fundraiser, Tailo Chow, who exceeded his goal of \$3,000 by more than \$870.



"My students want to change the world, and the Walk is a way for them to have a voice—a beautiful thing for me to see as a teacher," says Yadoff. 

*You can still donate to the team at [www.projectbread.org/wehavepiercepride](http://www.projectbread.org/wehavepiercepride)*



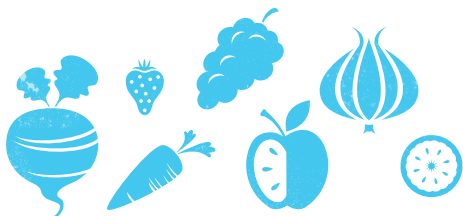
Photo courtesy of Summer UP

→ CONTINUED FROM FRONT COVER

# Healthy food & summer fun

**We know that every child needs healthy food every day to learn and thrive. That's why Project Bread works so hard with our community partners and state policy makers to boost, strengthen, and expand the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP), a federally supported child nutrition program, which was specifically designed to bridge the summer gap in school meals.**

The SFSP is a robust source of help for vulnerable Massachusetts schoolchildren. Last year, an average of 50,000 students enjoyed a healthy breakfast, lunch, snack, or dinner at one of the nearly 900 summer meal sites in schools, parks, public pools, neighborhood centers, and other program locations across the state. Over the course of last summer, nearly 2.6 million meals were served—providing schoolchildren with the boost in health and energy they need as they swing back to school in September.



According to Ellen Parker, the executive director of Project Bread, “The best summer meals programs lead with

great activities that attract children. Children want to attend programs that are fun and offer them dignity. If a meals program has the feel of a charity handout, it's not building the healthy self-esteem that children need to thrive and succeed.”

Project Bread provides funds at the community level to expand and enrich summer meals programs that get children engaged and keep them coming back for more. The basic program provides a healthy meal—but it's the extras like physical activity, arts, and educational lessons that create a holistic experience for vulnerable children, and, at the same time, generate social capital and build community.

We highlight two innovative and effective programs that illustrate this approach: Mount Wachusett

*Summer Up participants Prinya Sommala-Dobson, Caroline Marcelino, Jacqueline Vera, and Jeremias Sanchez sit on the summit of Wachusett Mountain in Princeton, Massachusetts, with staff member Victor Rojas (far right) while on a field trip with the program.*

Community College's Summer UP program, which operates at sites in Fitchburg, Gardner, and Leominster, and the Cops N Kids Nutrition Academy in Southbridge.

## Summer UP

Mount Wachusett Community College engages both older and younger students using two distinct strategies. Keeping the focus on very low-income communities, the program invites younger children to participate in meaningful community projects—and, at the same time, to enjoy healthy meals. The college brings in older students by offering them the opportunity to apply for paid summer camp counselor jobs. Once hired, the teens act as mentors to the younger children participating in the program.



Older teens are a key group at risk for hunger in the summer, and they can be hard to attract. Mount Wachusett shifts that narrative. Upon being hired for the summer, teens are highly motivated to stay—eating healthy meals as “staff,” rather than as “students.”

The teen counselors primarily lead culture-focused projects, such as engaging the students in an arts and crafts assignment to create a flag from their country of origin, sharing traditions the students practice at home, and exploring how food plays an important role in their cultural and family traditions.

“Being a part of Summer Up is a great experience,” Feven Merid tells us. She participated in one of the program sites in 2011 while attending Leominster High School. “We eat healthy food every day, and get paid to have fun. As a staff member,” continues Merid, “I’ve been able to build a lot of skills through my interaction with the kids, including effective communication and active listening. I have a great time with them—and it feels good to be a role model.”



Probation Officer Candido Diaz of the Worcester Juvenile Court, Dudley Session, cuts apple slices for students like Jorge Marrero at the “hydration center” of the Southbridge Cops N Kids summer meal site. Participants have access to cold water and fresh fruit throughout the day.

Last year, the Summer UP program brought its mentoring program to the Spanish American Center’s Summer Youth Program in Leominster, called “Verano Alegre” or “Summer Fun.” This multicultural program serves 100 low-income children and provides meals for another 200 students at sites in Gardner and Fitchburg.

## Cops N Kids

Cops N Kids in Southbridge is another great example of good food mixed with good fun. Cops N Kids first began in Southbridge as a way to forge relationships between law enforcement officers and local young people. However, the community’s families had other needs too: 70 percent of the students receive free or reduced-price meals during the school year.

Seven years ago, Project Bread made the match between Cops N Kids and the Summer Food Service Program, and now local young people have a great place to hang out—and a valuable food resource—all summer long.

Last year, this six-week program was expanded into the Cops N Kids Nutrition Academy—an initiative described not as a “Boot Camp,” but as a “Food Camp.” Students participate in physical activities such as basketball, hiking, and kayaking, as well as educational classes. Building on its athletic programming, and crime prevention, safety, and life skill classes, the Academy teaches healthy eating and exercising as part of its motto: “you have the right to a healthy and active life.”

Early on in the program, students get an introduction to growing vegetables at the community center, where they are responsible for nurturing peppers, tomatoes, and squash—ingredients that will later become a veggie pizza they will enjoy. The program incorporates ten different modules focusing on nutrition and physical activity, including Food Camp, Farm



Project Bread invests in Southbridge’s Cops N Kids summer program, which promotes healthy eating and physical activity.

Visit, and Food Crime Scene—a course that positions the students as detectives in charge of solving a food mystery. They use crime scene investigation and forensic techniques taught by the police officers to solve the case.

“I believe the Cops N Kids program will not only teach our children to eat healthier, but it will also instill healthier habits of drinking and playing too,” said Police Sergeant Jose Dingui.

“This is a win all around,” said Ellen Parker of Project Bread. “Each of these programs, Summer UP and Cops N Kids, draws on the strength and vibrancy of local communities. Project Bread invests in programs like these because we understand that healthy children and healthy communities are mutually reinforcing.”

By investing in these programs, Project Bread makes it possible for low-income children to eat well, stay active, build friendships, and return to school ready to do their best. 🍎

*If you would like to learn more about Summer Food Service Program sites near you, call Project Bread’s FoodSource Hotline at 1-800-645-8333.*

# Q & A



## Brandy Brooks

As the Greater Boston Regional Director of The Food Project, Brandy Brooks has directed community-based programs since 2011. She is a highly effective manager, a pioneering thinker, and an activist of great heart. Project Bread is an enthusiastic and long-time supporter of The Food Project.

### Tell us about The Food Project.

Our tagline is “youth, food, and community.” We bring young people from urban and suburban communities to work together and grow food on each of our four farms. This fresh food—over 250,000 pounds annually—goes out to the communities we work in through farmers’ markets, Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs, and local food pantries. The hallmark of our program is our focus on identifying and transforming a new generation of leaders by placing youth in highly responsible roles with deeply meaningful work.

### How is your work different from other antihunger programs?

One of the things that I love about working at The Food Project is that we help people get their hands in the dirt and actually produce and



Brandy H. M. Brooks, Greater Boston Regional Director of The Food Project, in the Dudley Greenhouse.

**“Hunger exists within our broader food system—the real question is how do we fix the system so it no longer produces hunger but instead it’s the foundation for fair and equal access to healthy food for everyone?”**

grow food. People who interact with us are not just recipients of services, they are active agents of community change.

The traditional antihunger model of food distribution can provide immediate and important help, but it doesn’t solve the problem. Hunger exists within our broader food system—the real question is how do we fix the system so it no longer produces hunger but instead it’s the foundation for fair and equal access to healthy food for everyone?

### What is the most inspiring part of working with youth?

The opportunity and responsibility to grow and distribute food, and address a very real and basic community need, is work that really changes people. Seeing young people step into the fullness of who they are, and feel comfortable doing that, is great and always lifts me up.

### Food, cooking, and community—how does this mix build social capital?

This is actually one of the reasons that I got involved with The Food Project. Food is so basic to humanity and it ends up touching every aspect of human life. Whole cultures are built around food traditions and food taboos.

Food is really a defining way that people relate to one another so it is an incredibly powerful tool for building social capital. One of the reasons we bring in youth around food is because it provides that common platform for them to be able to explore differences in race, culture, and geography. These are conversations that are incredibly difficult for people to have without that common ground. 🍷



# Happenings



## Chefs in Head Start

Chef Educator Vanessa LaBranche led a cooking demonstration for Lynn Mayor Judith Flanagan Kennedy (second right), Tim O'Brien, Sr. VP, from funder Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts (second left), Ellen Parker (right), and elected officials to highlight Project Bread's Chefs in Head Start program at Lynn Economic Opportunity Inc. (LEO). The initiative teaches very young children healthy eating habits, and promotes healthy cooking at school and home.



## Blue Ginger

In June, Project Bread held a cocktail reception for donors at Ming Tsai's Blue Ginger restaurant in Wellesley. Ellen Parker, executive director, and Scott Richardson, director of research and special initiatives, discussed innovative, local, and sustainable solutions to ending hunger in Massachusetts.



## Breakfast Winner

Why should YOU eat a healthy breakfast? Lyba Khan asked this question of fellow students at Revere High School. The resulting 30-second video won the third annual school breakfast video contest hosted by Project Bread and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and will be featured on WHDH-TV. Congratulations!



## Text 4 Food

Know a text-savvy teen looking for a free meal this summer? Direct him or her to Project Bread's Text 4 Food program starting July 1. The statewide outreach campaign, geared at reaching teens through their mobile phones, directs them to a free lunch at the nearest open Summer Food Service Program, complete with location and times. Just text 617-863-6325.



## School Cookbook

With inspiration from Project Bread's Chefs in Schools, and school food professionals from across the state, Project Bread is creating a cookbook that will help kitchen staff make healthy meals that kids like to eat. From turkey-pineapple stirfry to vegetarian chili, the new cookbook will make it easy and inexpensive to meet the new USDA nutrition requirements.



## Be a BreadWinner!

Calling all annual donors! BreadWinners—our monthly giving program—is a convenient way to make a big difference in the lives of hungry people. By pre-authorizing your bank or your credit card to send a gift each month, you help us serve families in need all year round. To enroll, please visit [www.projectbread.org/breadwinners](http://www.projectbread.org/breadwinners).

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## DONATE NOW

Please help us meet the needs of the increasing numbers of hungry families by giving the most generous gift you can today.

**Every dollar counts.**

You make our vital work possible, and you play a critical role in our mission to alleviate, prevent, and ultimately end hunger in Massachusetts.

**DONATE NOW AT [WWW.PROJECTBREAD.ORG](http://WWW.PROJECTBREAD.ORG)**



Photo © David Leifer

## 45<sup>th</sup> Walk for Hunger

"Thank you" to all of The Walk for Hunger's corporate sponsors for a great Walk! Not only were corporate sponsors successful with team organizing and fundraising, but they were also creative. For example, Freihofer's Baking Company organized a bowling night that netted \$3,500 and matched team fundraising, while Kettle Cuisine hosted parties at employees' homes and raised nearly \$1,600. Arbella Insurance Group double-matched their

employees' personal contributions in honor of the company's 25th anniversary, and for the first time, Bay State Milling matched employee fundraising and offered walking opportunities to staff during work hours. Citizens Bank more than doubled the size of its team, and Raytheon increased outreach via Twitter. We recognize and appreciate the effort that all of our corporate sponsors put in the Walk each year!