



PROJECT BREAD.ORG

NEWS *feeding people, nourishing hope* Fall 2012

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More than a Meal

Spearheading Project Bread's new Chefs in Head Start program in Lynn, Chef Educator Vanessa LaBranche is capturing the imagination and taste buds of young children before they form preferences for foods high in sugar, fat, and sodium. And in the process, she's working with some of the most vulnerable children and their families to teach them the importance of good nutrition.

"I love teaching," says Chef Vanessa. "Especially young kids. I think it's important to start as early as possible to get them to try healthy foods that they might not otherwise be exposed to."

Taking the best practices developed through the Chefs in Schools Initiative, Project Bread is partnering with Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc. (LEO) to create a nutrition education component for the children attending its Head Start program. The ultimate goal is to create a model that can be implemented across the state. The Chefs in Head Start program is funded in part by a grant from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts.

Why a chef in Head Start? The answer is simple: in low-income areas, such as Lynn, children are two to three times as likely to struggle with hunger as children living in more affluent neighborhoods. Of the nearly 400 children and families served by



Photo © David Leifer

the Lynn program, 90 percent live below the poverty line — making these children among the most vulnerable populations Project Bread serves because they are both rapidly developing and not yet supported by school meals.

These children struggle with food insecurity as well as educational opportunity deficits and if they were to

enter kindergarten at age five without Head Start, they would start behind everyone else. Introducing a trained culinary professional into their daily "school" life will lift the food offering from a "meal" to a "model of healthy eating," bringing a rich education component to the already excellent Head Start offering.

"It starts with the parents," explains Chef Vanessa. "The way they feed their kids is the first lesson they pass on to their children. They may care a lot, but if they don't know what healthy eating is or how to cook or budget for it, what can they do? Our goal is to engage the parents, teachers, and kids in a process that teaches them what to eat and why it is important for their learning."

Using a three-pronged approach, Chef Vanessa is working with the kids, their parents, and the Head Start kitchen staff to demonstrate that kids can learn to eat healthy food when exposed to it. She allows the food to speak for itself in classroom activities that focus on the different tastes, textures, colors, and smells of fresh ingredients.

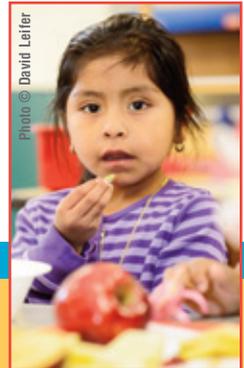


Photo © David Leifer

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This economy is particularly hard on low-income children, who need healthy food to learn and thrive.



Photo © David Leifer

For Holiday Cards, Call 617-723-5000

www.projectbread.org

More than a Meal

The “Fruit Rainbow” activity teaches students the names and colors of various fruits. Another activity, called “Veggie Surprise,” allows students to use their sense of touch to guess the vegetables hidden in paper bags.

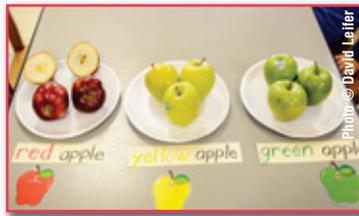


Photo © David Leifer

Working with Marilyn Perry, the nutrition director of LEO, Chef Vanessa expands on these lessons during monthly parent workshops that engage parents in cooking workshops using fresh foods, and shows them how healthy eating can be managed on a limited budget. The concept here is to reinforce what the kids are learning at school by encouraging their parents to try a similar healthy recipe at home.



Courtesy of Elizabeth Murray

“I think the most important lesson for these children is to try eating a new food even though they’ve never tried it before,” says Vanessa. “When I recently brought in plums, many of the young children thought they were apples. So I encouraged them to touch it, smell it, taste it! And when they do, I call tell them that this is how they become a food super hero!”

Chef Vanessa is a graduate of the Cambridge School of Culinary Arts and grew up in the inner city of Boston with southern roots from New Orleans and Mississippi. She learned all aspects of soul food cooking from family and friends, but her curiosity about how other cultures prepare food led her to explore other ethnic cuisines as well. Given that more than 75 percent of children attending Lynn Head Start are Latino, Chef Vanessa will specifically focus on culturally appropriate menu items such as roasted corn and yellow squash quesadillas, braised chicken tacos, and Mexican rice with black beans.



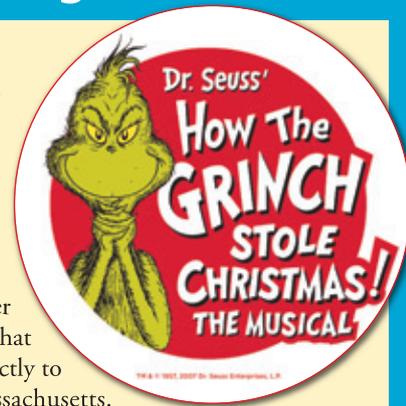
Photo © David Leifer

“We’re delighted to bring what we’ve learned over six years of Chefs in Schools to the pre-school children at the Lynn Economic Opportunity Head Start Program,” said Ellen Parker, executive director of Project Bread. “This collaboration takes a lot of trust and diligence, but the thought that we can influence the eating habits of 400 families, with at least 1,200 families members included, means a great deal to Project Bread. We’re able to work holistically with the child’s family and pre-school teachers to build healthy eating habits into the curriculum — and what parent wouldn’t want that?”

Happenings!

Mr. Grinch!

7NEWS and the Grinch partner to benefit Project Bread at a special performance of “Dr. Seuss’ How the Grinch Stole Christmas! The Musical.” The Grinch may be “a mean one,” but if you come to the showing on Wednesday, December 5, at the Citi Performing Arts Center in Boston, 7NEWS will make sure that a portion of the proceeds going directly to feeding hungry families in Massachusetts. Go to www.projectbread.org/7NEWS.



Strike Out Hunger!

Hurricane Sandy scored a strike on Project Bread’s fourth annual bowl-a-thon. The event is being rescheduled at Jillian’s/Lucky Strike Boston with details for all who want to have fun and help a good cause at www.projectbread.org/strikeouthunger. This event features JAM’N 94.5 DJs Ramiro and Pebbles who will emcee and show off their bowling skills along with their team’s. This event is sponsored for the third year by iBasis, a telecommunications provider. Raffles and awards will top off a great evening.



New Leadership

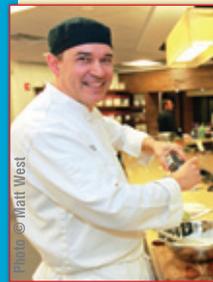
Project Bread welcomes Dr. Ronald E. Kleinman, Physician in Chief, MassGeneral Hospital for Children, as the chair of its board of directors. Glynn Lloyd, founder and CEO of City Fresh Foods was named vice chair and clerk. And, Timothy O’Brien, senior vice president of Blue Cross Blue Shield of Massachusetts, will act as board treasurer. All three leaders have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to ending hunger.



Dr. Ronald Kleinman

Cookbook Tasting Event

On October 23rd, Ellen Parker, Chef Guy Koppe, and Chef Didi Emmons, restaurateur and cookbook author, hosted donors at a tasting of recipes from Project Bread’s new Chefs in Schools Cookbook at The Rothwell GrainEssentials Center at Bay State Milling in Quincy. Guests tasted several of the delicious, healthy, and affordable recipes and voted for their favorites, which will be featured in the cookbook. The cookbook, underwritten by Bay State Milling, will be available to all schools once it is completed. It contains recipes that have been carefully tested to meet the new USDA standards for healthier school meals! For more photos, go to www.projectbread.org/events.



Project Bread’s Chef Guy Koppe

Homerun for Hunger

All season long, each time a Boston Red Sox player got a hit during a Friday night home game, Whole Food Market donated \$100 to Project Bread! At a Red Sox vs. Yankees game on September 12, Project Bread staff accepted a check for \$10,900 from Whole Foods. Thank you to Whole Foods Market, WEEI Sports Radio, and the Red Sox for helping us end hunger!



Photo courtesy of WEEI-FM Sports Radio
Front row are Lynay Smith and David Remillard from Whole Foods Market and Melinda Hallisey and Ryan Schrier from Project Bread. Back row includes Ian Carrera, Jeff Brown, Dana Panepinto and Mike Juliano from WEEI-FM Sports Radio.

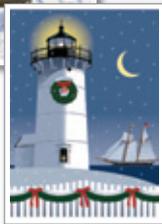
For the latest, go to www.projectbread.org.

PROJECT BREAD HOLIDAY CARDS

By sending beautiful Project Bread holiday cards this holiday season, you will be helping hungry children and families in Massachusetts. Each of our beautiful 5 x 7" holiday cards were designed by local artists and come in packs of ten. Cards are printed in Massachusetts on high-quality recycled paper using soy-based inks and are a pleasure to give and receive.

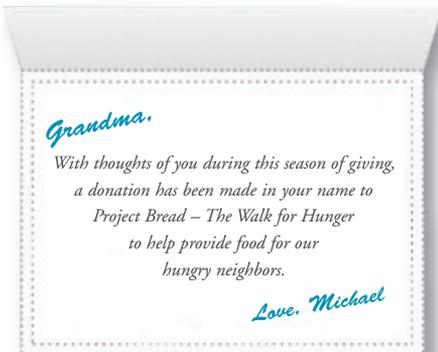
Want more options?

For more holiday card designs, or to send an e-card, please visit www.projectbread.org/holidaycards.



Tribute Gift Cards

Choose from a wide selection of e-cards or printed and personalized greeting cards to make a donation in honor of a friend, family member, colleague, or client. Your gift will help feed hungry children and families across Massachusetts, and we'll send a personalized greeting on your behalf to let your recipient know about your gift. Visit www.projectbread.org/holidaycards under "Tribute Gifts," or call 617-723-5000.



Love Peace Joy

Wishing you all the joys of the holiday season.



Be the Light

May the Festival of Lights bring blessings to you and your loved ones.



Boston Skyline

Celebrate the season in your own special way!



Cabin in Snow

May the spirit of the holidays warm your heart and home.

10 CARDS PER PACK

To place an order, call 617-723-5000 or email info@projectbread.org. Or order online at www.projectbread.org/holidaycards.

To receive holiday cards by December 24, please order by December 17. Additional designs shown at www.projectbread.org/holidaycards.

Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline counselors answer 49,000 calls a year from hungry people in Massachusetts. All six counselors agree that seniors are the group most reluctant to ask for help.

Instead, seniors struggle alone and choose between purchasing food or medicine rather than face the stigma of going to a food pantry or getting SNAP (formerly known as food stamps). "When I get a senior on the line, I try to be extra reassuring," says Emily Costa, who's been on the hotline for four years, "because I know they are the ones most likely to hang up."

Many seniors, who've done everything right by the rules of their generation, can't get past the stigma of asking the government for help. "When seniors say they don't want to take anything they haven't worked for," says Costa, "I tell them that it's their taxes that help pay for the program — and they need to stay healthy."

The current economy places significant pressure on older people who are struggling on fixed incomes to pay for food and fuel, turning down their thermostats and eating fewer meals, putting themselves at increased health risk. "Without a doubt," says Khara Burns, another hotline counselor who has answered calls for six years, "seniors have many misconceptions about SNAP benefits and this means that many go without."



Khara Burns, FoodSource Hotline Counselor

What we're doing to help

Of all FoodSource Hotline calls, ten percent come from seniors. Of the 4,900 seniors who call, 1,700 call about SNAP (food stamp) benefits. This is in part because Project Bread recruited Councils on Aging and senior centers across the state to educate elders about the benefits of enrolling in SNAP that can boost an elder's food buying power by an additional \$150 monthly on average.

It's also a result of a partnership with AARP which, through its "Create the Good" campaign, educated seniors about SNAP and how it can stretch their food budgets. This campaign included newsletters, emails, and advertisements, directing seniors to the Project Bread FoodSource Hotline, resulting in an additional 400 calls from a wide range of communities — 157 — across the state. "The number of calls from all across the state told us that the AARP program reached people who would not otherwise have known about SNAP," concluded Noreen Kelly, Director of Community Initiatives. "We were able to screen all of these callers and process the applications of those who were eligible. It was a great success."



Photo © Joshua Touster



Photo © Joshua Touster



Photo © Joshua Touster



Struggling Alone

Project Bread's FoodSource Hotline 1-800-645-8333



Photo © Joshua Touster



Photo © Joshua Touster



Photo © Joshua Touster



Photo © Joshua Touster

Senior are often eligible for \$150 in SNAP food benefits.

FoodSource Hotline Stories

Aging in Place

This elderly widower, living alone in a house too large for him, could only afford to heat one room and couldn't manage much-needed repairs to his house. In addition to managing a house in disrepair, he was struggling to put food on the table and frequently went without a proper meal. He called the Hotline looking for help.

Responding to 49,000 hungry callers a year



Our counselor gave him a referral to an emergency food program for immediate help and was able to screen him for SNAP benefits, which provided longer term assistance. She also directed him to fuel assistance and utility assistance programs to help ease the drain on his resources so he could get through the winter and afford a better diet. "He was thrilled to be able to fill his fridge," recalls FoodSource Hotline counselor Emily Costa.



Raising a Grandchild

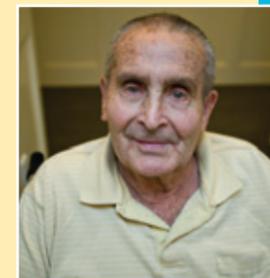
Living on a fixed income, this grandmother was unable to buy the foods needed to raise a healthy grandchild. She had been skipping meals so her grandchild would not have to.

She called the FoodSource Hotline and the counselor talked her through applying for SNAP online to supplement her food budget. "She was so excited that she could buy fresh produce. She had been living on crackers," says Costa. "She called back to tell me how happy she was to have her first strawberries in two years."



Medical Restrictions

With a chronic kidney disease and diabetes, a 70-year-old man from Cambridge was medically required to live on a restricted diet. His savings had gone to medical bills and medication, and he was struggling to buy foods that fit the nutritional guidelines his doctor had prescribed. The canned foods available at food pantries were often too high in sodium so a social worker at his local senior center suggested he call the Hotline to be screened for food stamps.



The Hotline counselor carefully reviewed all his out-of-pocket medical expenses, including hearing aides, durable medical equipment, medical visit co-payments, travel for doctor visits, and then screened him for SNAP and found he was eligible for \$148 a month to help put nutritious food on the table. Many seniors have no idea that they may deduct these types of medical expenses from their income to help them qualify for the maximum benefit amount.



Emily Costa, FoodSource Hotline Counselor

Hunger Relief Grants

Project Bread is excited to add New Lands Farm to its list of funded agencies, which is part of the Lutheran Social Services organization. The new program assists refugees and immigrants in Central and Western Massachusetts to access farming opportunities in their new home, while operating community gardens, an urban training farm, and incubator farm sites.



Using the money raised from the 2012 Walk for Hunger, Project Bread has awarded grants to over 430 food programs in 125 communities across Massachusetts. The funds support food pantries, meal programs, food banks, food salvage programs, and other community organizations providing hunger relief. The food programs funded by Project Bread reported serving 61 million meals to those in need in the last year. “As many people continue to face economic uncertainty,” said Ellen Parker, executive director of Project Bread, “it’s essential that we provide these programs with the food they need to help.”

M^oira Coffey, the business manager for the Plymouth Area Coalition for the Homeless explains how the grant from Project Bread benefits their food program: “Our organization will use our grant from Project Bread to purchase fresh produce and dairy. Low-income families and individuals have very limited access to fresh produce, dairy products, and other nutritious foods. The Project Bread funds will assist our organization in providing nutritious foods to all levels of struggling households in our community.”



Project Bread will present the latest data and findings about the state of hunger in Massachusetts in its 2012 *Status Report on Hunger*, due out this month. For a complete listing of funded agencies, please visit www.projectbread.org/fundedagencies.

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Ways to Help during the Holidays



7NEWS Holiday Helpings

Want to know what your favorite 7NEWS celebrities cook for their own holiday gatherings?

7NEWS kicks off its Holiday Recipe Campaign in time for Thanksgiving. Donate online at www.projectbread.org/7NEWS and you'll receive the favorite recipes of 7NEWS anchors, reporters, meteorologists, and sports personalities as a special thank you! Good food for a good cause.

Whole Foods Helps

During December, shoppers at participating Whole Foods Markets across the state can support Project Bread through the “Give Bread” program. Just add donation coupons in the amount of \$2 and \$5 to your grocery bill and you'll help feed the hungry! Check out our display of holiday cards as well.

Personalized Photo Holiday Cards

In addition to our regular holiday cards, Project Bread is partnering up with Look Love Send to offer holiday photo cards this year. Order personalized cards with your picture on a Project Bread holiday design. Go to www.looklovesend.com/projectbread to purchase a design, add your photo, and customize your message. Spread hope and holiday cheer while making a difference in the lives of hungry families in Massachusetts!



Holiday Spoons Project

Get your school, family, youth or religious group involved in our annual Holiday Spoons Project. Your group can decorate wooden spoons, enter a contest, and learn about the issue of hunger and how your efforts help those in need. Jordan's Furniture will match every dollar you raise up to \$10,000 — doubling your efforts to help hungry children and families in Massachusetts. For more information, visit www.projectbread.org/spoons.

