

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ROCHESTER – Foodlink, the regional food hub and Feeding America food bank that serves a 10-county region in western and central New York, announced this week it is launching the final phase of a fundraising campaign for its \$4.9 million Community Kitchen.

The kitchen, which prepares and delivers thousands of meals each day to low-income Rochester children, is relocating from Joseph Avenue to Foodlink’s operational headquarters at Mt. Read Boulevard. The state-of-the-art facility, which is being constructed adjacent to Foodlink’s distribution center, is slated to be completed by late fall. What was once a cavernous, 28,000-square-foot space is rapidly transforming into a one-of-a-kind, community-focused commercial kitchen, fulfilling a longtime vision of the staff, board of directors, and late Foodlink founder Tom Ferraro.

“The new kitchen will help us to reduce waste, optimize our physical space and staffing, and build a stronger culture,” Executive Director Julia Tedesco said in a letter to community members and supporters. “But more importantly, it will dramatically expand Foodlink’s capacity to invest in this region and provide healthy food to those who need it the most.”

The campaign has been incredibly successful to date, with more than 85 percent of the necessary funding raised. Various grants and generous support from local foundations and organizations helped raise \$4.3 million during the first phase of fundraising. Now, Foodlink is asking for the public’s support to raise the final \$600,000. Every gift matters – and brings Foodlink closer to its goal and vision of a hunger-free community.

“The Community Kitchen will be such a valuable resource for Rochester – and really our entire region,” said Foodlink Board Chair Matthew Ray. “It’s critical that we raise this final amount so that we can complete construction and get started on preparing more meals and providing more food to this community.”

Once the kitchen is completed, Foodlink will focus on three critical program areas: (1) Tripling the production capacity of healthy meals served to local, low-income children to 12,000 fresh, nutritious meals per shift; (2) Enhancing the Value-Added Processing line, which allows Foodlink to purchase and slice local apples and other produce, and distribute them to schools and institutions throughout the region, all while investing in our regional agriculture; and (3) developing a culinary workforce training

program that will provide hard-to-place workers with the skills they need for a career in the regional food industry.

“Our entire staff cannot wait to move into this remarkable facility and begin the process of expanding our services within the Rochester community and beyond,” said Chrys Baldwin, Foodlink’s Director of Kitchen Operations. “It’s a thrilling time to be at Foodlink and we look forward to cutting the ribbon on our new kitchen and getting to work.”

Visit www.foodlinkny.org to learn more about the project and how the community can contribute to its success.

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MEDIA TOURS: Foodlink is extending an invite to all local media organizations interested in seeing the progress made since construction began in May. To arrange an appointment, please contact:

Mark Dwyer, Communications Specialist

Phone: (585) 413-5056

Email: mdwyer@foodlinkny.org

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About Foodlink

Foodlink is a regional food hub and the Feeding America food bank serving Allegany, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates counties. Our operations target the root causes of hunger by distributing food to a network of human service agencies, serving meals through our commercial kitchen, and offering more than 30 food-related programs. In 2015, Foodlink distributed nearly 19 million pounds of food – including 4.6 million pounds of produce – offered more than 200 nutrition education courses, and created new access points for healthy foods in underserved communities. Our innovative approach directly addresses health disparities related to food insecurity. Learn more about our mission to end hunger and to leverage the power of food to build a healthier community at www.foodlinkny.org.