

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 8, 2018



Foodlink ‘Seed Grant’ awards celebrated in Rochester

\$115,000 in funding awarded to local agencies for projects addressing food insecurity, nutrition in our region

ROCHESTER – With winter fully (and finally) in the rearview in Rochester, Foodlink on Tuesday celebrated spring’s late arrival by recognizing innovative, start-up projects aimed to address food insecurity in our region.

Foodlink and food banks across the state helped coordinate the inaugural Seed Grant application process, aided by funding from the state Department of Health’s Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program (HPNAP). Seed Grants are start-up grants intended to help a non-profit or public entity begin a new or enhanced service that addresses the emergency food system and/or nutrition needs of low-income communities.

“We’re incredibly pleased with the quantity and quality of applications we received in the first year of this program,” said Foodlink Executive Director Julia Tedesco. “The Seed Grants we awarded demonstrate the level of commitment and innovative spirit of our partners addressing food insecurity in the Rochester region.”

Foodlink collected 30 applications this winter and awarded six start-up grants for innovative projects in three counties across its service area. Agencies receiving awards, which range from \$10,000 to \$30,000, include: Wyoming County Community Action / Warsaw Food Pantry (joint award), Barakah Muslim Charity, Victor Farmington Food Cupboard, St. Mark’s and St. John’s Episcopal Church, Greece Central School District and Taproot Collective.

Details of each project, and quotes from organization representatives are below:

Wyoming County Community Action, Inc. & The Warsaw Food Pantry (\$30,000) will conduct county-wide Family Development Credential trainings, and create a school garden and develop farm-to-school practices in the cafeteria and classroom.

Pat Standish, Community Action for Wyoming County:

“Community Action for Wyoming County is grateful for our longstanding partnership with Foodlink. In addition to the food provided by them through our Community Action Angels programming, the education and training this grant provides to volunteers and community partners working with children and families facing chronic hunger, will increase our ability to communicate and provide a more holistic form of service; assistance that not only meets their hunger needs but their financial, social and emotional needs as well. We appreciate Foodlink’s expanded focus on helping those we serve to be successful in school, the workplace and in life.”

Cindy Kiel, Warsaw Food Pantry:

“We are very excited about our Growing and Sharing Produce Project with Warsaw Elementary School. What a wonderful way to build community. We hope that by educating children on healthy eating during childhood will help them make healthier choices as they become adults.”

Barakah Muslim Charity (\$16,500) will operate a new community kitchen to address food-insecure individuals in the 14611 zip code of Rochester.

Irshad Altheimer, Barakah Muslim Charity:

“We are grateful for this Seed Grant and excited about its potential to help us better serve the community. The funds provided will enable us to expand our services and provide greater assistance to those in need.”

The **Victor Farmington Food Cupboard (\$10,000)** will digitize its record-keeping and strengthen community partnerships with the Victor Free Library and Victor's Farmer's Market.

Dawn Rockefeller, Victor Farmington Food Cupboard:

“The Victor-Farmington Food Cupboard is humbled and grateful to be a recipient of Seed Grant funds this year. We are excited to put these funds to work helping us to reach and feed hungry families in our service area and to partner with other community groups to offer additional service to these families!”

St. Mark's and St. John's Episcopal Church (\$24,500) will expand the hours of its food shelf, create a new training garden for area youth, and facilitate the development of 16 other urban gardens in Rochester.

The Rev. Cindy Rasmussen, St. Mark's and St. John's Episcopal Church:

“St. Mark's and St. John's is excited to be awarded a Seed Grant from Foodlink to expand our E.D.E.N. urban gardens, which provide healthy food, education and neighborhood gathering places that promote healing in the Beechwood and Emma neighborhoods.”

The **Greece Central School District (\$15,145)** will better connect families in need with their new network of food pantries within the district, and other resources from partner organizations such as the Greece Community Learning Center and Greece Family Support Center.

Kelly Sperduto, Greece Central School District:

"We are thrilled to receive the HPNAP Seed Grant through Foodlink. This grant has afforded us the chance to hire Community Connections Parent Liaisons to help connect families with food instability to the community resources available within the Greece Central School District. This is a great opportunity for our district to grow and develop our Community Schools initiative. As a Community School, we are focused on developing expanded learning opportunities, integrating health and social services, and enhancing parent and family engagement."

Taproot Collective (\$18,769) will establish the infrastructure for a community food production and education space and help increase the amount of healthy, locally grown food distributed through the emergency food system.

Lauren Caruso, TapRoot Collective:

"As an award recipient of a Foodlink Seed Grant, Taproot Collective is able to jumpstart installation and programming this season at First Market Farm. This collaborative urban agriculture project increases long-term access to urban food production, offers seed to table educational programs, and serves as a holistic model for neighborhood food systems with youth and families at the core. The Seed Grant allows us to more closely connect with our partners in the Marketview Heights neighborhood and throughout Foodlink's emergency food network."

###

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. We alleviate hunger by distributing food to a network of hundreds of human service agencies and target the root causes of food insecurity through dozens of food-related programs and our state-of-the-art commercial kitchen. Last year, Foodlink distributed 17.4 million pounds of food, including 4.9 million pounds of produce, and served more than 1.1 million meals and snacks to children in our community.

Foodlink delivers multiple nutrition education programs aimed to help improve food literacy and empower families to make healthy choices. A suite of food access programs provide new access points to nutritious food in underserved communities. The Foodlink Community Kitchen

prepares and delivers more than 4,500 meals daily to Rochester children, and supports our regional agricultural economy by minimally processing locally grown apples for distribution into schools and other institutions. Our innovative approach directly addresses diet-related 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.



For more information, contact:

Mark Dwyer
Communications Manager
(585) 413-5056
mdwyer@foodlinkny.org