



40
YEARS.

40
STORIES.

Celebrating Foodlink's four decades
of service and social innovation.





In loving memory of
Tom Ferraro,
Founder of Foodlink
1946 – 2014

On his 66th birthday, Tom Ferraro received the honor of his lifetime when he was chosen as the inaugural recipient of the Farash Prize for Social Entrepreneurship. The award was unlike any other he had received because it recognized what he was most proud of: his discontent with the status quo, his innovative spirit, and his belief that food banks can be more than humble charities—they can be powerful engines of social and economic change.

In helping to write the formal award nomination for Tom, I was given the *gift* of a lifetime: the opportunity to interview my mentor, and to help tell his story.

At this point, I had already known Tom well, having worked alongside him for 4+ years. I also had a strong grasp on the origins of Foodlink, and the complexities of the local anti-hunger movement he started before I was even born. Still, as I sat with him that day, peppering him with questions about Foodlink, I learned so much. I feverishly took notes, which both captured the richness of Foodlink’s history, and Tom’s unique talent as a storyteller. He was one of a kind.

I recall this indelible moment to also remind myself that as much as I absorbed that day and despite many years of working with Tom, I alone cannot adequately tell Foodlink’s story — a story that has now grown beyond its founder.

In honor of our 40th anniversary, we thought it would be most fitting to tell the story of Foodlink’s incredible history and impact from 40 different points of view. We’ve asked friends, leaders, community partners, clients and staff to describe what Foodlink means to them.



I’m deeply humbled by the words on the subsequent pages, which honor four decades of service and social innovation. These stories make me proud of our history and excited about the future. Indeed, these 40 stories demonstrate that Foodlink has made significant progress toward our mission of leveraging the power of food to build healthier communities. This mission inspired our first 40 years and will fuel our future.

In celebration and gratitude,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Julia Tedesco".

Julia Tedesco
President and CEO



COMMUNITY
IMPACT
AWARD

Baden Street Settlement

Baden Street Settlement serves residents in northeast Rochester and addresses community needs through multiple programs that improve the education and health of local families, and reduce crime and violence in neighborhoods. Pam Jackson and Ron Thomas have helped connect Foodlink to its many programs and services through the years.

Baden is proud to have partnered with Foodlink to help educate the community about healthy eating and helping to reduce food insecurity. We look forward to a continued, collaborative relationship.

Foodlink has enabled me to fulfill the basic tenet of my faith, attend to the needs of the poor and feed those who are hungry. The organization is a highly respected nonprofit that is able to share its expertise and resources with hundreds of member agencies, all of which work collaboratively to end hunger, improve health and lift up our community.

Mort is a Foodlink Foundation Board Trustee. Through the donation of a facility (the former Kolko Paper Company) on Exchange Street in 1999, his family helped Foodlink expand to better serve the community.

Mort Kolko



Dan and Cassie Nice

Dan and Cassie met while volunteering — two of the more than 15,000 volunteers who walk through Foodlink's doors annually. They were so fond of how Foodlink brought them together, that they asked founder Tom Ferraro to be at their wedding!

A night spent volunteering at Foodlink has led to a decade (and counting) of happiness for us. We were honored to have the Foodlink Kitchen cater our wedding and special guest, Foodlink's founder, Tom Ferraro, present for our big day.



Red Jacket Orchards

Foodlink supports the local agricultural economy by purchasing produce from dozens of growers, and in recent years has fostered a strong partnership with Red Jacket Orchard's President and CEO Brian Nicholson in Geneva.

Our company's vision is to drive a culture that nurtures our land, our people and our community, and we couldn't ask for a better partner in fulfilling that mission. Together with Foodlink, we are able to combat hunger with fierce determination to make delicious and nutritious foods available to all.



The Dixon Family

Kamille Dixon is student at Renaissance Academy Charter School of the Arts. Her grandmother, Audrey Dixon, is appreciative of the school's connection to Foodlink through the Backpack Program.

We were helped greatly with the food sent home, especially at a time when I wasn't sure how to make ends meet with five grandchildren.



Dr. Steve Cook

Dr. Cook, MD, MPH, is dual trained in pediatric and adult-internal medicine, and has been with Golisano Children's Hospital at URMC since 2001. He is a leading expert in childhood and adolescent obesity.

Foodlink has always been an innovator and the relationship we have developed is no different. They went beyond just setting up mobile food markets and sought to work directly with our families. Our fax-to-food program was so insightful and led to greater collaborations with addressing food insecurity as a social determinant of health.



Tom and Annie Kane

Tom, who serves on Foodlink's Board of Directors, and his wife, Annie, have been generous donors for years through the Kane Family Foundation.

By working to eradicate hunger and food insecurity, Foodlink is a testament to the power of a caring community. We are proud to be involved.



We hate waste at Wegmans, so when Tom Ferraro approached me decades ago to discuss the pick-up of non-perishable food at our stores, I didn't hesitate. It was the right thing to do, and helped make a real difference in the community.

Mary Ellen was instrumental in bringing Foodlink and Wegmans together 40 years ago to share resources and combat hunger. The partnership has grown and flourished ever since.

Mary Ellen Burris



Yvonne Hopkins

Yvonne, known as “Peaches,” is a loyal customer of the Curbside Market, Foodlink’s mobile farmers market.

I love this truck. I can’t wait until Fridays. I always sit looking out my window waiting for the truck to come.



Mio Williams

Mio Williams, who came to Foodlink in 2008, is an accountant in the finance office.

Crossing paths with Tom Ferraro over 10 years ago was truly a blessing. I do not see Foodlink as my place of employment. I see Foodlink as my second family and my second home. I am extremely grateful to have the opportunity to be part of such an amazing organization.



Jaime Saunders

Jaime Saunders is the President and CEO of the United Way of Greater Rochester. Her professional life has been devoted to several local nonprofits, including seven years at Foodlink from 2000-2006.

Working at Foodlink early in my career expanded my thinking about social innovation, the power of using community resources and organizational assets in new ways ... It is this forward-thinking approach and resistance against the status quo that makes Foodlink a true standout and key United Way partner making a tremendous impact in our community.



Rosa Wims

Rosa met Tom Ferraro while she ran the Rosa Wims Family Wellness Center, and the two quickly became friends — and later colleagues. Rosa eventually joined Foodlink’s board until she retired in 2007. Assisting with Rosa’s Thanksgiving Dinner is an annual favorite for Foodlink’s staff and the community.

Foodlink’s greatest gift is helping others and over the years they have expanded their reach like great branches on a tree. One such branch was Tom’s offer that Foodlink’s kitchen help with my yearly pre-Thanksgiving Dinners. The dinners began at my Health Center years before but Foodlink’s help ensured those dinners will continue to serve healthy food every year to those in need in the community.



Kevin Lopez

Kevin participated in a Foodlink Summer Youth internship twice – in 2017 and 2018. He'll graduate from All City High in June, has a job lined up at Wegmans, and has aspirations to join the Marines.

When I first started working at Foodlink, I thought it was a place where people in need came to grab a meal and get food — but it was much more than that. I was surprised with all the work that they do — from Curbside to Summer Meals — for the community.

Five days a week, Patty Lorenzen and her team serve hot meals at St. Peter's Kitchen, a long-time member agency and daily gathering spot for hundreds in southwest Rochester.

St. Peter's Kitchen

Foodlink has been an amazing support and a true inspiration to our nonprofit lunch program. Our collaboration for grants, food subsidies and operational expenses is a true gift — but the other support such as food safety certification, Mobile Pantry distributions, and nutrition education for the community are so valuable. Happy 40th Anniversary, Foodlink! Tom Ferraro would be so proud!



Mayor Lovely Warren

Foodlink works in collaboration with the City of Rochester and Mayor Warren's administration to offer vital programs and services to its residents.

Foodlink is an essential resource for many children and families in Rochester, as well as an active partner in innovative efforts around urban gardens, nutrition education, meal preparation, mobile pantries and even job training. Foodlink has developed and nurtured collaborations with hundreds of organizations, deepening our collective commitment to eradicating hunger and poverty in this city.



Gary Larsen

Gary has spent years assisting our Curbside Market drivers on various routes — primarily in our rural communities.

As a volunteer I am a primary interface to many of Foodlink's customers. Curbside's mobile farm market allows me to give back to local communities in a way that's both fun and rewarding.



Jim Farr

Jim oversees the City of Rochester's Public Market, which is the host site for Foodlink's annual fundraiser, the Festival of Food, and its weekly nutrition education demonstrations.

I have contacts across the country in farmers markets and food banks. Foodlink is nationally recognized, cited and admired for its programs that not only focus on eliminating hunger but also seeking solutions to its underlying causes. I'm proud and very fortunate to have counted Tom as a friend and ally and continue to marvel at the legacy of talented folks he developed and inspired to carry his mission forward.



Congressman Joseph Morelle

United States Congressman Joe Morelle represents the 25th District, which covers Rochester and Monroe County.

Foodlink and its network of organizations are essential to our ongoing efforts to curb hunger and uplift those most in need in our community. They provide invaluable resources for vulnerable families here in Rochester and throughout New York State, and I am truly grateful for their 40 years of dedicated service.





Eleonor Payton and her daughter, Maya (pictured), along with Eleonor's mother, Elsa, all participated in Foodlink's Cooking Matters for Families course at School 12 in Rochester.

“We’re now spending a lot more time together cooking. It used to just be ‘Dada’ ... Now, we do a lot more cooking together, and I feel a lot more confident with my knife skills. It really empowers you and builds confidence.”

The Payton Family

Constellation Brands

Constellation Brands employees have donated thousands of volunteer hours to Foodlink through their ongoing Nourishing Neighbors initiative, which launched in 2014.

“We are delighted to support Foodlink through our Nourishing Neighbors program, in which 200+ volunteers help at Foodlink’s distribution center and community gardens during the month of September. This has allowed our employees to give back in a meaningful way and has opened their eyes to the food insecurity that exists in the Greater Rochester area.”



The Wiedemer Family

The Wiedemer Family has supported Foodlink for many years. George has served on Foodlink's board, while Chris and his Cooks' World family business has held fundraisers and helped support Foodlink's Nutrition Education programs.

Cooks' World is proud to be a partner with Foodlink over the years, raising funds and awareness about serving those in need throughout Rochester and beyond. We celebrate their milestone and wish them another 40 years of great service!

Chris Wiedemer
Owner, Cooks' World



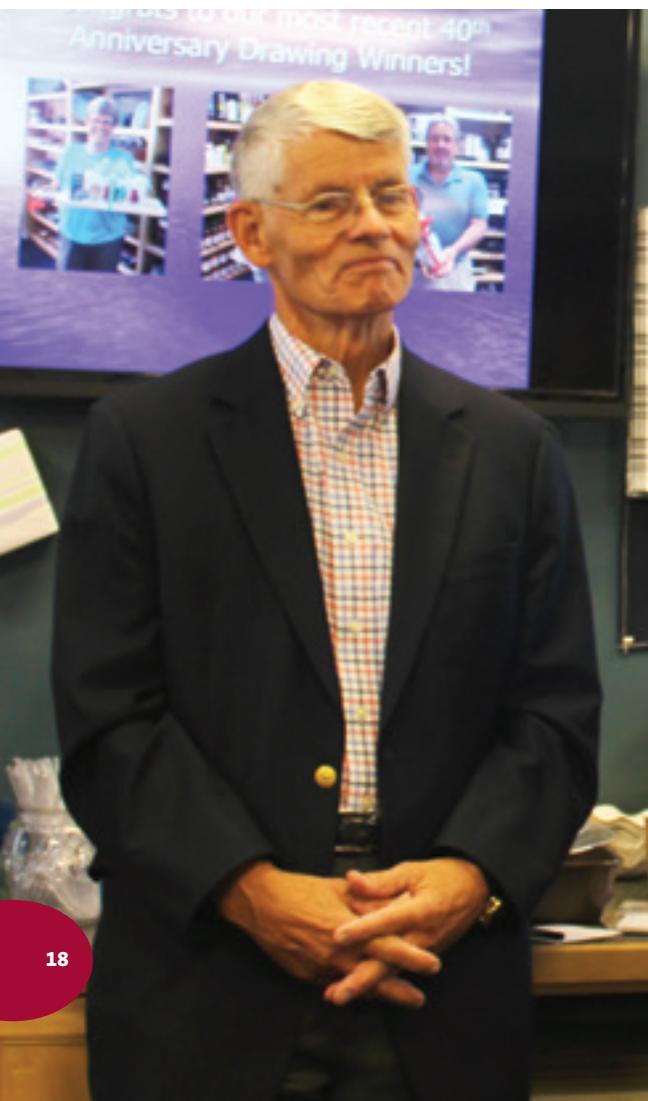
Foodlink was instrumental in helping us set up an onsite Food and Resource Pantry for the purpose of alleviating our scholars' and their family's food insecurity. Foodlink continues to be a key partner by providing professional guidance and material support for this important resource for our school community.

Under Superintendent Shaun Nelms' leadership, East High School established one of the first school pantries in Foodlink's network.

East High School

It has been my privilege for over 35 years to serve Foodlink and their clients in providing the basics in life: food. My wife and I look forward to continuing with this outstanding organization.

George Wiedemer
Foodlink Foundation Board Chair



Cuba Cultural Center

Suzanne Krull is the executive director of the Cuba Cultural Center — a member agency of Foodlink that serves residents in Allegany County.

Cuba Cultural Center, Inc. has touched thousands of lives throughout its nine-year tenure serving Southern Tier communities. Through three monthly food distributions, weekly community meals, and a backpack program, many residents receive critical assistance, with the help of Foodlink, through the center's basic survival programming.



Mitch Gruber

Chief Programs Officer Mitch Gruber, PhD, joined Foodlink in 2008 and has helped develop and implement some of the region's most innovative community health programming.

I came to work for Tom Ferraro because he made it clear that Foodlink had both a focused mission and a culture of yes. That remains true today, as we work with hundreds of community partners who are striving to use food as a tool to empower people and build community health.



American Fruit and Vegetable Company, Inc.

Justin Fields works at American Fruit and Vegetable, which has been distributing Foodlink's sliced apples to schools and other institutions since 2012.

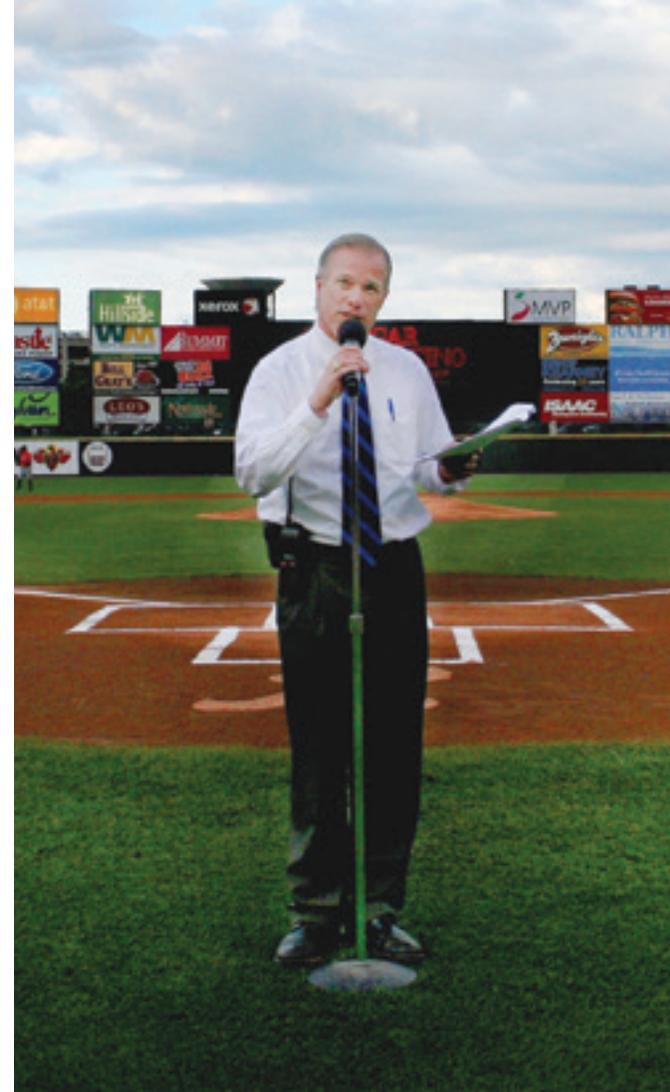
We value our partnership with Foodlink because we were their very first sliced apple customer. We've been working with them since the beginning at Joseph Avenue so it's been great to watch them move and transition into their state-of-art facility on Mt. Read, where they continue to make a delicious brand of apple slices that kids love.



Rochester Red Wings

The Red Wings, led by owner Dan Mason, have been long-time community partners, and host the annual Summer Meals Fest to help promote the program to Rochester families.

The Red Wings and Foodlink have been working together for years, and it's always great having them at the ballpark, helping them send their messages of good nutrition and building healthier communities. They're ahead of the curve in so many ways and we salute them for 40 years of making a huge difference in our community!



Gloria Ramos and Daquan Quick

Gloria and Daquan are members of the inaugural class of the Foodlink Career Fellowship, Foodlink's newly launched culinary training program. They will graduate along with their classmates on June 27.

If you really love to be in the kitchen, you're going to love to be here at Foodlink. You're going to learn, and have fun. I really want to be a Sous Chef and have to learn a lot so I can get there. One day, I hope to open a restaurant that serves Puerto Rican food.

Gloria Ramos



I'm more open-minded about working as a team with different personalities. This program brings the best out of people. I appreciate Foodlink's staff for helping me grow in a number of ways.

Daquan Quick

Robert Egger is the founder the D.C. Central Kitchen, the Campus Kitchen Project, and the L.A. Kitchen — and the author of the award-winning book, *Begging for Change*.

Robert Egger

Foodlink, through dear, dynamic Tom ... and now via Julia and Mitch, has been a beacon of honesty, empowerment, and brazen love of community, which has impressed me since the day I first traveled to Rochester to see how I could be supportive of their mission. Many groups talk about change, but few are as dedicated to the experiment as Foodlink.





With its thoughtfulness and vision, Foodlink has managed to make our community a better place since its very beginning. Its passionate staff, entrepreneurial spirit and focus on process improvement – all to the benefit of those in need, make it a truly unique institution. We are proud to have devoted time alongside of the great team at Foodlink for 20 years.

Arline is the Chair of the Foodlink Board of Directors, and Senior VP, General Counsel at ESL. Fernando serves on the Foodlink Foundation Board of Trustees and is a founding partner of Santiago Burger LLP.

Arline and Fernando Santiago

Open Door Mission

The Open Door Mission, led by Anna Valeria-Iseman, has been a member agency of Foodlink for decades.

The Mission has been privileged to partner with Foodlink for over 20 years. Their support has contributed to our ability to provide thousands of emergency meals to our neighbors and guests. We are thrilled to celebrate with Foodlink as they mark 40 years of dedicated service and commitment to the health of our community.



Greater Rochester Health Foundation

A significant grant from GRHF helped fund the construction of the Foodlink Community Kitchen in 2016. The foundation, with guidance from Chief Program Officer Heidi Burke, also has supported other Foodlink programs, such as the Curbside Market and Summer Meals.

The Greater Rochester Health Foundation is grateful for the vital role Foodlink has played in elevating the importance of, and access to, healthy, nutritious meals. We have been truly fortunate to partner with Foodlink to improve access to summer meals for children and increase access to fresh, affordable, and local produce through the Curbside Market.



Terra Keller

Chief Operating Officer Terra Keller has a decade of experience at Foodlink. She led the growth of the Development Department, and now oversees an operations team responsible for the distribution of millions of pounds of meals.

For nearly a decade, Tom Ferraro envisioned extending the shelf life of local produce to provide fresh, healthy foods all year long through a true social enterprise. It's been gratifying helping to fulfill Tom's vision with our apple-slicing operation, which washes, slices and bags New York apples and sends them to schools across the state.



Loretta Scott

Loretta Scott is the President of Rochester City Council and a former colleague of Tom Ferraro at Action for a Better Community.

I was working at ABC and partnered with Tom Ferraro who was the invigorating force running what was then the Genesee Valley Food Bank, now Foodlink. I remember those early years seeing the seed he planted and the government regulations he navigated that brought issues of food insecurity and childhood hunger out of tiny food pantries in churches.



Jack Montague

Jack Montague first crossed paths with Tom Ferraro in 1993, while working as a Postmaster in Rochester. For the following 23 years (until 2016) he served Foodlink as a Board member, and close advisor and friend to Ferraro.

Foodlink's innovative approaches to solving the age-old problem of hunger is truly remarkable. I am frequently amazed as I think back to "waste not, want not" to now creating markets for local farmers and preparing meals! All in addition to Foodlink's ongoing role as a food bank. Tom would be proud!



The Farash Foundation has long supported Foodlink, and honored founder Tom Ferraro with the inaugural Farash Prize for Social Entrepreneurship in 2012.

Max and Marian Farash Charitable Foundation

The Farash Foundation was proud to have inaugurated the Farash Prize for Social Entrepreneurship in 2012 by honoring Tom Ferraro, the pioneering founder of Foodlink. The Foundation continues to partner with Foodlink as it addresses the needs of Rochester (and surrounding communities) in myriad, meaningful ways.

Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

United States Senator Gillibrand has long been an advocate for federal nutrition programs. In 2009, she was appointed to the Senate Agriculture Committee — the first New Yorker to hold the position in over 40 years.

For 40 years, Foodlink has served the Greater Rochester region, supporting families and children, expanding nutritional opportunities with fresh fruits and vegetables, and now an innovative job-training program teaching first-class culinary skills. I have had the pleasure to see firsthand their dedication not just to addressing hunger, but to changing our community for the better.



Debbie Leipold

Debbie lends a hand with various volunteer administrative tasks — and always greets Foodlinkers with a warm smile (and some home-cooked treats) as she works diligently in the break room. Debbie and her late sister, Karen, began volunteering together in 2014, up until Karen's passing in 2018.

Foodlink does more for me than I do for them. It's been hard since my sister passed away. We volunteered together. They came to the funeral, they check in on me. Everyone goes out of their way to be understanding and caring. I feel my volunteer work leaves time for the staff to do the good work that Foodlink does.



Miriam Rosa

Miriam joined Foodlink in 2001. She oversees our inventory — the millions of pounds of food that enter and leave our facility.

Foodlink was my first job in Rochester since arriving from Puerto Rico in 2000. Suffering from hunger, this job was a blessing. My first language was Spanish, but I told Tom (Ferraro) that I was pretty good with numbers and he said, 'That's what I need!' He put his trust in me, I didn't fail him — and I've been here for 18 years.



Wade Norwood

Wade is the Chief Executive Officer at Common Ground Health. He is a former City Council member and currently the senior pastor at the Holy Jerusalem Spiritual Church.

Foodlink is critical to the health of our region. Sound nutrition is the foundation of good health and because of Foodlink, our most vulnerable families have help putting a healthy meal on the table.



Phil Daniel

Phil, who was hired in 2001 and joined his father as a fellow employee of Foodlink, is now the Distribution Center Manager.

Tom introduced me to community service 15 years ago. I have been servicing my community ever since through my employment with Foodlink, as well as developing multiple youth programs servicing our city.



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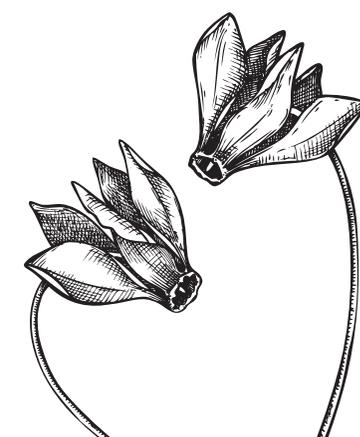
Tom and Annie Kane

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Thank you to all of the community partners who sponsored our inaugural spring event, The Get Together, on May 18, 2019. We appreciate your support and commitment to our mission to ending hunger and building healthier communities!



Constellation Brands

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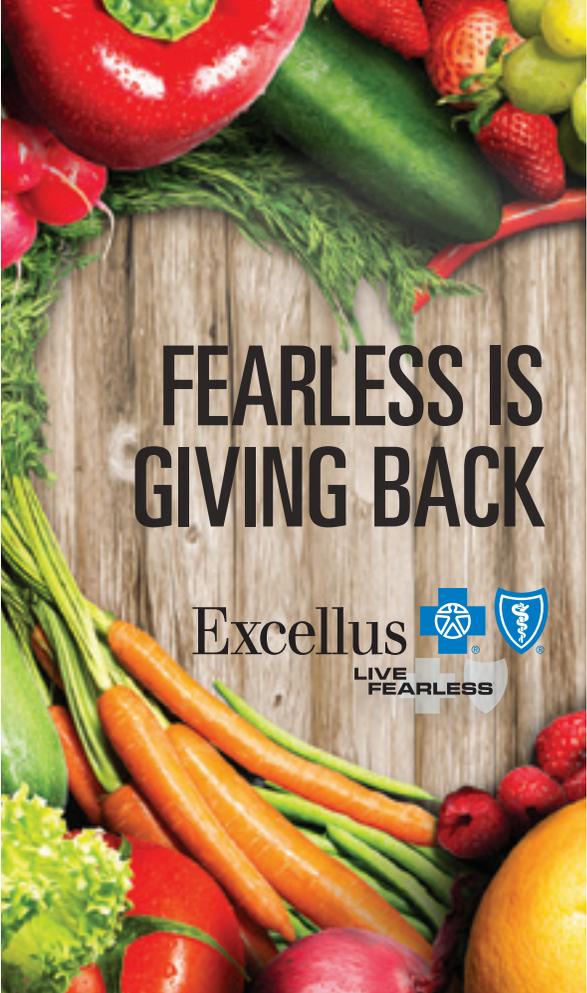
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Helping create healthier, better neighborhoods

As a family-owned company, we're committed to helping our customers and employees live healthier, better lives through food. That commitment includes sharing food and enriching our neighborhoods in every way we can. We believe communities thrive when we all work together.

Wegmans



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We are happy to support Foodlink and other local businesses with their transportation needs.

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We believe that the fight against hunger and the fight against poverty are one and the same. We envision a future in which food is recognized as a human right and every person is able to feed themselves and their families in dignity. Together, we work to create a more nourished, prosperous region.