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I continue to be amazed at not only the **dedication and compassion shown by Foodlink staff on a daily basis, but the hundreds of community partners on which we rely to feed our neighbors.**

Their energy for serving others is boundless and their enthusiasm for our mission is clear with every bag of groceries prepared, or hot meal served.

Each year, we take this opportunity to crack open the door to our operations and educate supporters about the latest happenings in our world. Stewardship is one of our core values, and it is incumbent upon us to tell our story with transparency. When you donate to Foodlink, where are your dollars going? We'll tell you ...

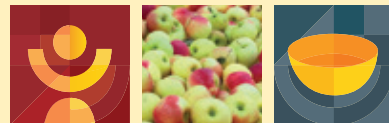
We're **growing partnerships in rural communities** through stronger outreach. We're **supporting food literacy**

and education through in-person and virtual nutrition education efforts. We're **responding to the urgent needs of families, in the face of rising food costs and reductions in SNAP benefits.** We're also **investing in safety and infrastructure** with the recent purchase of our Mt. Read Boulevard facility.

These stories are detailed in the pages that follow, and all of this would not be possible without your support. Thank you for all that you have done with us this past year and continue to do to prepare us for another busy year ahead.

In gratitude,

Julia Tedesco
President & CEO



How we educate



Community Health Educators, Lora Downie and Fatima Srayi partner with organizations in the community to customize programs for all audiences, including seniors, adults, teens, and children. Their goal is to **educate local residents about nutrition, menu planning, and food resources.**

These programs can be **in person or virtual** — an evolution that became a necessity during the pandemic, then remained as a more convenient option for participants. They help **bring people together to spark interest in cooking and healthy eating** by trying new recipes with more fruits and vegetables. Hands-on classes **empower participants to be more creative** and habit forming with the food they prepare.

Lora and Fatima love to come up with **new and fun ways to use fresh ingredients in everyday cooking.** They also each appreciate when roles are reversed in the classroom and they learn something new from participants. 🍴



Strengthening partnerships

Although it is easy to connect Foodlink to hundreds of touchpoints within the City of Rochester, **our work in rural communities continues to grow** — in part due to the creation of a new position in late 2022.

Elisha VanNorman began her Foodlink career in the fall as our new rural programs coordinator.

“My goal is to **form positive relationships with our rural partners, understand how their programs work, and learn how best Foodlink can support them,**” VanNorman said.

“I can’t say enough good things about so many of the people I’ve met along the way.”

In just over six months, VanNorman has visited 25+ Pop-up Pantry sites and attended regional meetings in Livingston,

Ontario, Wayne, Genesee and Wyoming counties. She’s heard first-hand about the challenges local pantries face — especially in recent years — and how to **promote collaboration and identify gaps within the network.**

VanNorman cited one example of a member in Genesee County that has shared its large cold-storage space with nearby members, increasing the amount of healthy perishables available to the entire region.

VanNorman said she is grateful that her position was created to **improve and expand services in rural areas.**

“They all do such amazing work and take such pride in their communities,” she said. “With transportation issues and a significant increase in need, it hasn’t been easy. But they are powering through and remain extremely motivated to support their neighbors, and our mission.” 🙌





Foodlink celebrated a major milestone in late 2022 with the purchase of its Mt. Read Boulevard facility, which increased our footprint by 60,000 square feet.

The investment allowed us to make some immediate improvements, such as repairs to our roof, the heating and cooling systems, and our fire suppression systems. Future grant-funded projects include a cooler expansion, which will allow us to accept, store, and distribute more perishables foods. Once installed, our anaerobic food digester will help us reduce food waste, while supplying compost for our Foodlink Community Farm. We look forward to keeping our supporters up-to-date on this critical and worthwhile investment in our infrastructure. 🍴



Nourishing lives



Foodlink once again partnered with WROC-TV Channel 8 to produce its “Nourishing Lives” fundraising special earlier this year. The program garnered public support for many Foodlink programs and services, and **spotlighted the Curbside Market, the Community Kitchen, our nutrition education demonstrations at the Public Market, and our advocacy efforts.** *Check out the videos below.* 🍴

SCAN ME



Impact of inflation



As food prices soar, Foodlink continues to see the rise in the number of people who rely on the emergency food system to make ends meet.

Across Foodlink's 10-county service area, 11.1% (or nearly 140,000 people) of the population is considered

food insecure, meaning they live in a household with inadequate or uncertain access to enough healthy food.

The rising cost of food has forced more people to visit their local food pantries for assistance — many for the first time in their lives. **In the past year, Foodlink's network of food pantries has seen a 30% increase in those seeking assistance — a staggering increase in need.** In the last six months of 2022, **our network of food pantries collectively**

recorded 706,810 clients' visits — up from 542,731 visits during the same time in 2021.

The recent surge of clients is expected to trend upward even further in the coming months. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) has eliminated the “extra” benefits it provided to households during the height of the pandemic. Most households will experience a loss of \$95-200 in benefits per month, further exacerbating their ability to put food on the table.

As food prices continue to soar and SNAP benefits decrease, **Foodlink continues to seek out public support and work with our member food pantries to keep them well-stocked, despite these challenging times.** 🍴

Top left photo by Viki Mohamad, Unsplash.com



Tastes good. Does good.

The Foodlink Community Café opened its doors in 2021 as a **training opportunity for the Foodlink Career Fellowship culinary apprenticeship** — while adopting a **pay-it-forward concept** to serve those in need of a healthy meal.

The café is located in the downtown Rochester Central Library within the Bausch & Lomb branch. Our **rotating menu features sandwiches, soups, salads and sides, and an array of drink options** for patrons who can pay the designated price on the menu or add extra to cover the cost of another customer's meal.

Visit [FoodlinkCommunityCafe.org](https://www.FoodlinkCommunityCafe.org) to see our menu!

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