

NEWS



April 2026

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LETTER FROM THE CEO



As a valued supporter, you understand the critical nature of our work, and the generosity that fuels our day-to-day operations. **A gift today can quite literally help feed a family tomorrow.**

And while it's true that Foodlink acts as a first responder when various crises impact our most vulnerable

residents, it is *also* our responsibility to prepare for the future.

To ensure the work we do continues for years to come, we spent the past several years focused on building long-term sustainability. This has led to a strengthening of our programs, our people, and the infrastructure that supports it all. And none of this is possible without your support.

In this edition, we spotlight improvements both massive in scope (our rooftop solar array!) and harder to notice (the technology that drives our website). We also shine a light on the volunteers and supporters like you who make it all possible. Our collective efforts remain necessary, given the sustained, elevated need we experienced throughout 2025 after a sharp rise the year prior (see chart).

Your continued investment helps us plan responsibly, adapt to emerging challenges, and remain a steady force for good. Together, we can ensure that our mission not only endures, but grows stronger for future generations.

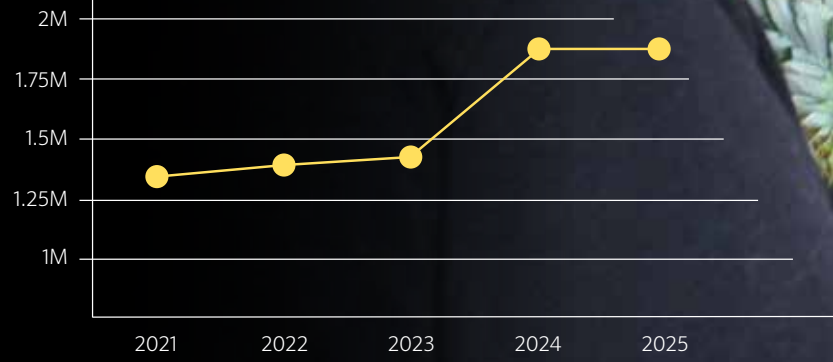
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julia Tedesco". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Julia Tedesco
President & CEO

*Foodlink's network of
food pantries and meal
programs recorded
1,858,076 requests for
food assistance in 2025.*



Requests for assistance



Mapping our future

There are many statistics that show the need that exists around us, including food insecurity data, and most notably, visits to food pantries. Those numbers, however, take time to collect, assemble and analyze.

For “real-time” data, we turn to our website’s Find Food page — a comprehensive resource that lists hundreds of food-related programs in our region.

Traffic to our Find Food page soars when *other* factors influence a household’s ability to put food on the table.

Take two examples this past year: (1) In July, we recorded 6,684 visits to the page — a 48% increase over our monthly average. The reason? When school lets out, free meals for kids disappear, and need rises. (2) In late October, with the government spiraling toward a shutdown and SNAP benefits in jeopardy for thousands of local residents, we recorded a staggering 27,000 visits to the page over the

span of a month—an increase of more than 500%.

As anxiety rose, people turned to our website.

To meet the rising demand for this vital resource, we sought help from **Vivory**. Using technology built by the **Thierer Family Foundation** and shared with food banks nationwide free of charge, our Find Food page relaunched with enhanced features to connect neighbors with the resources they need. Now, our food pantry partners can provide greater details about their services, such as languages spoken by staff, dietary restriction offerings, volunteer opportunities, and more.

The name Vivory is derived from the Latin word ‘vive,’ which means to thrive and live well. **Thanks to our new-and-improved map, we are helping our neighbors do just that.**



The number of families utilizing the York Central School Pantry has more than tripled since the pantry opened three years ago. One mother of 5, who earns a few too many dollars to qualify for SNAP assistance, told us that the school pantry is the only thing keeping her afloat!

—Molly, York Central School Pantry

In my 11 years at the Avon Food Pantry, I have never seen the pantry fuller than it was during the recent SNAP crisis. With the fear of a shutdown, it brought greater awareness in the community about the need to help one another. One day at the pantry, a client came in saying they didn't have shoelaces. Another client, who was waiting to receive food, stepped in and gave him his own. It's moments like this that warm the heart and make it all worthwhile.

—Alice, Avon Food Pantry



Powering hunger relief

Although visitors to Foodlink may notice some of the dramatic renovations to our building this past year, perhaps the biggest change is hidden out of sight — and high above their heads.

In partnership with GreenSpark Solar and local entrepreneur **Bob Bechtold**, 1,100 solar panels were installed on Foodlink's rooftop in 2025. The sophisticated solar array will provide Foodlink with more than **\$200,000 in energy savings** that will remain in place for the system's 25+ year lifespan. This stable source of long-term energy savings means that more of Foodlink's resources can be directed toward nourishing the community.

The project was funded by Bechtold, who, along with his wife, Jean, has been investing in renewable energy projects for decades.

"We wanted to invest in something meaningful — something that combines our passion for renewable energy with the value Foodlink provides to our community," he said. "That value is everlasting, and we simply don't see how this investment could fail."

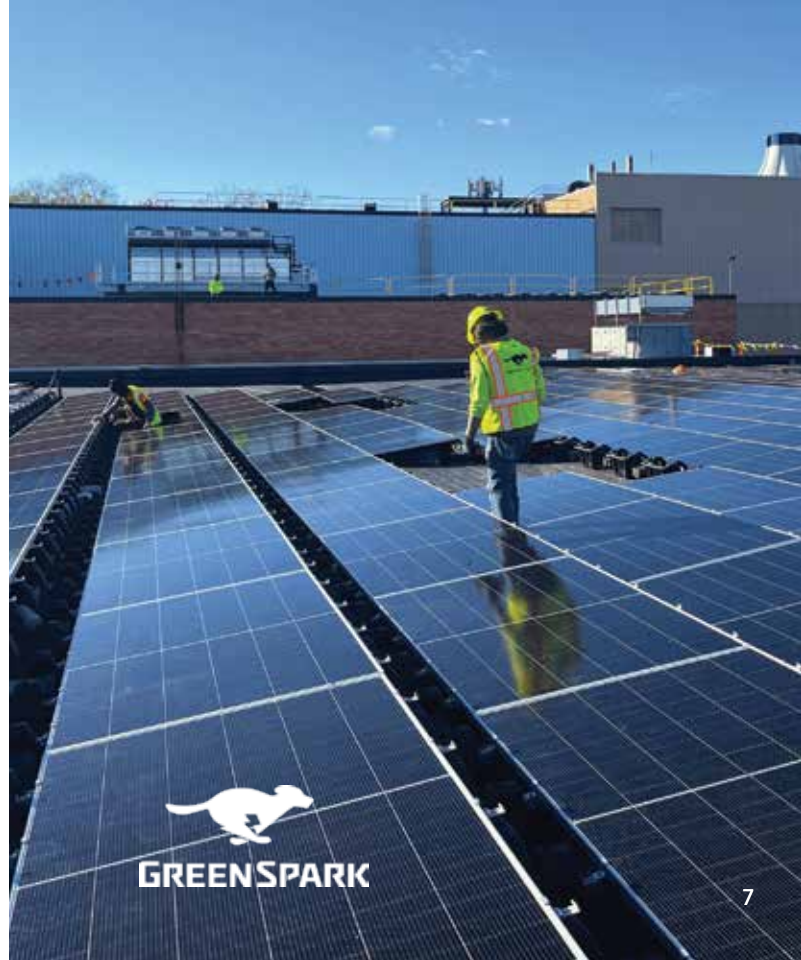
Taking an existing resource and maximizing it for the benefit of our community is not a new concept for Foodlink. Eight years ago, our Community Kitchen transformed into much more than a place to prepare



meals — it became a vehicle to launch careers, as the site for NY State's only cook apprenticeship, the Foodlink Career Fellowship. This solar project took our facility's rooftop and harnessed it into renewable, green energy that supports the environment and our bottom line.

"It's a privilege to be part of a story where a local entrepreneur is using the success of a mission-driven business to invest in clean energy for a food bank that serves our most vulnerable neighbors," said Kevin Schulte, CEO of GreenSpark Solar, which recently moved its headquarters to downtown Rochester.

Stewardship of community resources has always been a top priority for Foodlink. It was a point of pride for our founder, Tom Ferraro, and a mantra our current leaders live by to this day.



Community impact

For 30+ years, Wegmans Food Markets has partnered with Foodlink to transform simple moments at the checkout into powerful acts of community support. This year's **record-breaking Checkout Hunger campaign** once again demonstrated what's possible when generosity becomes part of the everyday—**raising an incredible \$820,000—over 2.4M meals!** Every dollar stays local, helping provide nutritious food to neighbors.

From dedicated store teams championing the campaign to generous shoppers saying “yes” to support, this effort reflects the power of community in action. **What feels like spare change in the moment became groceries for families, support for local pantries, and hope for our neighbors facing food insecurity.**

We are deeply grateful to Wegmans and to every customer who participated. Together, we're proving what is possible when a community steps up.



In partnership with Susan Holliday Riedman and family, **the Riedman Foundation is supporting Foodlink's Community Farm by bringing a new vision to life** — one that will take shape in summer of 2026.

Through the generosity of the Riedman Foundation and supporters like you, we are **building a pavilion** that will serve as an outdoor extension of our education center at the farm. Once complete, this new structure will become a vibrant classroom without walls, nurturing curiosity, strengthening relationships, and **inspiring the next generation to better understand food, farming, and community.**

The Riedman Foundation's partnership and investment will mean a future where nourishment, education, and opportunity grow side by side.



AWARDS

Leading by example

At Foodlink, **impact begins with people** and this year, we are proud to recognize several individuals and partners whose commitment strengthens our mission every day.

During our annual **Nourish Conference**, we presented our Volunteer Awards to two extraordinary champions. **These honorees embody the spirit of service — giving their time, talent and leadership to ensure our neighbors have access to nourishing food.** Whether sorting and packing in the warehouse, supporting special initiatives, or stepping up when help is needed most, their dedication strengthens every part of our work.

At **The Get Together**, we will also honor two outstanding awardees who show how generosity and advocacy continue to move our mission forward. **These individuals exemplify what it means to lead with purpose, investing not only resources but their innovation and commitment to ensure a more food-secure future for our region.**



Mark Greenstein, Individual Volunteer award



MVP Healthcare, Group Volunteer award



Greece Central School District, Rosa Wims Community Partner Award



Stuart Mitchell, Thomas C. Ferraro Legacy Award

EVENTS

Together we celebrate

Our 15th annual **Forks & Skis** event was an example of true partnership and purpose. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors and supporters, **we exceeded past sponsorship totals, making this milestone year our most successful.**

Looking ahead to **The Get Together on May 1, 2026**, we will gather to celebrate our mission, and share delicious food and drinks in our unique space. This evening will provide a special look at our transformation in progress — an investment that is strengthening our ability to serve the community.

If you haven't secured your tickets, we hope you'll join us to honor what we've accomplished, and the work still ahead.



The Get Together



Mission

To leverage the power of food to end hunger and build healthier communities.

Vision

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.



Foodlink
NOURISHING LIVES

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