

Food Bank of the Southern Tier

CEO Report- Year in Review

December 2019

Strategy

This year has been dubbed “the year of STRENGTHEN” because we embarked upon a major reorganization and recognized the importance of ensuring that our focus was directed internally on change management rather than externally in 2019.

The integration of Programs, Agency Services and Advocacy & Education into Community Impact led us to take a critical look at our program standards, communications, and evaluation methods. Randi Quackenbush, Director of Community Impact, and her team have spent most of the year building a strong foundation with revised policies and procedures, membership agreements, and program evaluations.

As we move into 2020, we plan to revisit our original strategic priorities: FEED, LEAD & STRENGTHEN and create a two-year workplan that focuses on those three areas. Dick Shafer has agreed to consult with me on this work which will happen throughout Q1 with the goal of having a completed two-year plan in place by April 1, 2020.

Operations

Despite the staffing challenges facing our Operations team, we have had an incredible year in terms of distribution, thanks in large part to record amounts of TEFAP Trade Mitigation Food. We anticipate ending the year with 11.4M lbs from our facility and 12.7M lbs total including CHOW.

We wrapped up our successful \$1M truck campaign and held a Blessing of the Fleet event on November 14 in our warehouse to celebrate the acquisition of all five trucks. Currently, we are still waiting on ESD matching funds from Feeding NYS and once those are received, we will be over our original goal.

The Operations Department experienced some restructuring with the transition of Food Sourcing to Business Services and Production to the Warehouse. Caroline Tolbert moved from the Receptionist position to Food Sourcing Coordinator and we are currently staffing the front desk with volunteers. Dave Patterson, Director of Warehouse Operations, now has oversight of the Production function which we believe will increase efficiency in that area.

Personnel/Culture

This was a challenging year from a culture perspective because of all the changes due to the restructure. We moved people into new positions and new spaces throughout the building. It took some time to get everyone acclimated to their new roles and responsibilities, but I believe that we are now well positioned for future growth.

Employees participated in our annual Engagement Survey in August and quite frankly we were surprised that engagement levels only took a slight dip compared to 2018, especially in light of all the changes. We have retained Missy Rittenhouse to conduct feedback sessions with each department, as well as supervisors & directors, and provide recommendations for improvement in 2020.

Development/Fundraising

The Development & Community Engagement Department has made tremendous progress in 2019 thanks in large part to a major restructure that included the addition of 1.5 FTEs and the formalization of a Major Gifts Program under the direction of Mary Jane Bray, our Major Gifts Officer.

We used the Matrix Mapping process to evaluate our Special Events and Campaigns and identify opportunities for improved donor stewardship and cultivation. We are also close to completing our annual cases for support which will be ready to deploy in Q1 of 2020. We had originally identified four main themes or “fundable bundles” including Health & Nutrition, Children & Families, Data & Technology and Advocacy & Education. However, as internal conversations progressed, we determined the need for a fifth theme: Increasing Access.

We are currently on track to meet our annual fundraising goal of \$2.9M.

BOD Management

I'm pleased to share that the Nominating & Corporate Governance Committee successfully recruited two new BOD members in 2020 and plans to focus on increasing BOD engagement next year.

External Activities

- Completed LEAD NY in June 2019 & led fundraising training with Class 18 in November 2019
- Joined Finger Lakes Regional Prosperity Network (FLRPNet) BOD in May 2019
- Joined Feeding America's Executive Director Forum (EDF) a group of 12 innovative & visionary food bank executive directors in October 2019
- Joined Feeding America's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Advisory Committee in Dec 2019
- Recruited to join the Community Foundation of Tompkins County BOD to start January 2020

Respectfully submitted by,

Natasha Thompson,
President & CEO