

## Your Support Provides a Lifeline to Families in Need

### When Times Are Tough, We're Lucky to Have People in Our Community Who Rise to the Occasion

The rising costs of groceries and gas have impacted all of our lives, but they are most keenly felt by those who were just getting by before. Now, they can't make ends meet ... and they're not alone. Families who never relied on assistance before must turn to food pantries to help get them through.

If they're lucky, they encounter someone like Pat Walp.

Pat is the Director of Bread of Life Food Pantry in Candor, Tioga County, New York. "I do my very best to make them understand it's OK, and someday they're not going to need us," she says.

Pat is on a mission to reach as many people as possible. As a retired nurse, she brings compassion and dedication to the pantry. In the three years she has been director, Bread of Life has redefined its mission and expanded the areas it serves.

The pantry serves 100-115 families every Wednesday afternoon. Although that may be the busiest day, Pat is always on the go.

She makes sure that everyone who needs food has it. Each week, more than 35 boxes are delivered to individuals who are elderly, ill, lacking transportation, or otherwise unable to come in.

In addition to Food Bank deliveries, Bread of Life receives support from local agencies, churches, businesses, and even gardeners who grow extra produce. This allows them to distribute staples plus other foods that might be new to their neighbors.

No matter what is contained in the boxes, Pat takes the time to offer recipes and instructions to ensure community members know how to use what they receive.

One home delivery recipient, an 86-year-old man Pat lovingly calls "Uncle Art," says he doesn't care what's in his weekly box — though he always hopes for donuts.

Pat gives credit to the 30 devoted volunteers who comprise Bread of Life's

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Food insecurity was a common topic in 2020 and 2021. News footage frequently depicted pantry lines or stories of those lending a helping hand. While hunger is not receiving the coverage it was, the need remains critical – in fact, it's rising.

Many pandemic-relief programs concluded at the same time inflation began to climb. These economic challenges affect both the Food Bank and those we serve.

Friends like you empower us to continue meeting the need without reducing services. Through collaboration with our generous supporters, network of hunger-relief partners, pantry leaders, and dedicated volunteers, the Food Bank is expanding its reach throughout the Southern Tier with strategic initiatives launched in late 2021.

For many, asking for help can be hard. These new initiatives are enabling us to reach more people and overcome the barriers that stand between them and the assistance they need.

Thank you for helping nourish our neighbors. Together, we are building a more just, caring society!

In partnership,

Natasha R. Thompson  
President & CEO



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## Hunger Action Month® | FEEDING AMERICA

### September is Hunger Action Month!

It's an opportunity for community members, businesses, civic organizations, elected officials, and congregations to get involved and take action in their local communities. What can you do? Whether it's advocating and raising awareness, making donations, or volunteering, you can find a way that's right for you. Learn more at [foodbankst.org/HAM](http://foodbankst.org/HAM)

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team and make it all possible. They fill boxes, load cars, make deliveries, answer questions, and spread the word.

“We tend to laugh a lot and get silly,” Pat says. “A lot of people who come in say, ‘I just enjoy coming here every week. I have a lot of fun.’”

After Wednesday’s food distribution, it’s time for Pat to think of Thursday’s Food Bank delivery. She would like you all to know: “We’re grateful. You help so much! The many people who come to our pantry are so grateful that they now can feed their families.”



## Increasing Access, Reaching New Communities

A variety of factors can prevent neighbors from accessing help: language barriers, cultural differences, anxiety, perceived stigma, or simply not knowing how to find resources.

A 2021 assessment revealed that these obstacles are greater for communities of color, immigrants, and refugees in our region, especially Broome County.

“We want our services available for everybody without exception,” says Randi Quackenbush, Director of Community Impact. Collaborating with supporters and hunger-relief partners, the Food Bank is making strides to accomplish just that.

Endwell United Methodist Church’s community meal program is connecting with immigrant families. Dave Alexander, Facilities Manager and Assistant for Outreach Ministries, says that approximately 30 Hispanic families receive meals. One volunteer, Lorena, translates for them and helps them register for other services. The associate pastor provides similar assistance to nearby Laotian families.

In addition to translation, they also make home deliveries as needed. “That’s just one of our missions to make sure everyone is fed and has what they need,” Dave says.

The Health Equity Award, a grant recently received from Excellus BCBS, will expand this important work throughout Broome County with three focuses: communication plans,

acquisition of culturally relevant foods, and a continued focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Expanded translation services will tackle several obstacles to reach underserved populations. Chinese and Spanish flyers will be completed first, as they are currently the most needed.

Focus groups, surveys, and trainings will provide information on the greatest needs and help drive solutions. “We are taking a deep dive into the experiences people have to make sure they feel welcome, know what to expect, and feel safe — and that we have the items they need,” Randi explains.

The grant will impact all meal sites, pantries, and shelters supported by the Food Bank in Broome County. Amber Granger, Community Investments and Partnerships Manager for Excellus BCBS, summarizes it this way: “It’s truthfully our mission to improve health, provide access to care, and support the needs of those in our communities. It’s really fantastic what the Food Bank of the Southern Tier is providing, and we are fortunate to help support them in their efforts.”





## You Help Provide Nourishment While People Heal

A person battling cancer faces many challenges. Preparing a meal shouldn't be one of them.

In Chemung County, the new *Meals While You Heal* program provides nutrition and comfort to those receiving treatment. As the Food Bank's Director of Health and Nutrition, Matthew Griffin, explained, prepared food for those receiving treatment can be a godsend.

"When you have a treatment, sometimes when you go home you just don't feel like cooking because you're so tired," says cancer patient Rosemary Pauchard. "It's so convenient to just reach in your freezer and take one of your meals out."

The Food Bank forged a perfect partnership: the Food Bank supplies items; Meals on Wheels prepares and delivers them; and Arnot Health's Falck Cancer Center provides a familiar, comfortable setting for distribution.



Patients take home 4-10 frozen containers per visit, depending on their treatment frequency, enabling them to heat up meals as needed.

Meals are as delicious as they are nutritious. Katie Boland, Executive Director of Chemung County Meals on Wheels, combines her passions for food and helping others. Along with Arnot Health's Registered Dietician, Catie Ball, Katie ensures everything is flavorful while meeting dietary needs.

The program is open to all patients. Some struggle to ask for help or worry that taking a meal means others may go without. Matthew and Katie assure patients that this is not the case.

Making deliveries and interacting with patients is the highlight of Katie's week. "It fills my soul," she says. After meeting Rosemary, Katie was overcome with emotion. "I was in tears but filled with pride and joy from her kind words."

*Meals While You Heal* meets more than physical needs. "We're looking at the whole person," Matthew explains. "It helps them remember they're not alone — the community is thinking about them."

**“ I appreciate it. It's just a wonderful, beautiful, thoughtful program. It takes a huge heart to do what they're doing for the community.”**

**— Rosemary**

