



The Spirit of Appreciation Trickles Down to Others

Every car that approaches the pick-up line at the Mobile Food Pantry in Watkins Glen gets the same warm greeting — a wave, a smile, and a thank you.

The greeter is Watkins Glen Community Center site coordinator Beverly Mello. And that greeting fits Bev to a T. From her small army of volunteers to the clients she cheerfully serves, to Bev, everyone is family.

“I think it’s our attitude,” Bev says. “You have to show your appreciation. We try to make it a family. We have a luau every year and a Christmas party.”

That attitude does not go unnoticed by the 30 to 40 volunteers who turn up monthly, no matter the weather, to help serve their community and to work with Bev and her husband, Dominic.

“We have fun doing this,” says Lou Cicconi, who regularly volunteers along with his

wife, Pam. “It’s a great group of people. It makes it easier to come when you know you’re going to have a good time. It’s nice giving back to the community. Bev and Dominic are sweethearts.”

Pam Cicconi agrees. “Bev always asks, are you okay? Are you going to be here? She’s just so genuine.”

That caring comes from an early age and a difficult upbringing, says Bev, who grew up as one of 17 kids.

“We had no electricity, no running water,” she says. “We didn’t have this kind of help. That’s one of the reasons I do this.”

What she did have was a keen sense for helping others, which Bev credits to her generous spirit.

“We lived on a farm, and my dad was a butcher, so we had meat,” she says. “And

(continued on page 3)



Food Bank of the Southern Tier
 388 Upper Oakwood Ave
 Elmira, NY 14903
 607-796-6061
foodbankst.org



Board of Directors

OFFICERS

Mary Pat Dolan, Chairperson
 Steve Hoyt, Vice Chairperson
 Shannon Matteson, Treasurer
 Erin Summerlee, Secretary

MEMBERS

John Bayne
 Elizabeth Brando
 Anis Fadul
 Andy Fagan
 Marty Heysham
 Jamie Kaffenbarger
 Tricia S. Kahn
 Karl Krebs
 Jamila Michener
 Kathleen Rasmussen
 Fred Van Sickle
 Alison M. Wolfe

Our tax ID number
 is 20-8808059.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After 25 years in food banking and 22 years at the Food Bank, I have accepted the President & CEO position at WSKG in Binghamton.

I know that I am leaving the Food Bank in a good place, and I deeply appreciate all the ways you have helped us become the organization we are now.

I'm proud to have been involved with one of the strongest community food banks in the country. Among our accomplishments are being named Food Bank of the Year in 2017 by Feeding America, the nation's food banking network, and completing a successful \$5.75M capital campaign that helped grow the organization's operations and services across the region.

Today, we have strong Senior Leadership Team members and staff, healthy financial standing, and strategic programming.

I'm proud of everything I've been able to contribute during my time as President & CEO of the Food Bank, and I will continue to support this amazing organization.

In partnership,

Natasha R. Thompson
 President & CEO



Continued Learning Empowers Advocate

Catherine Rogers has a mission.

And it's one that the Food Bank of the Southern Tier Community Advocate Training program is helping her achieve.

Catherine, who lives in Smithboro, was part of the charter group of trainees back in 2016 when the program was called the Speakers Bureau. She completed an eight-week refresher on how to effectively communicate her lived experiences and advocate for those things that are important to her.

In Catherine's case, "I have a plan to bring attention to the lack of food nutrition in the county jails and New York State prisons," she says.

"When people get out, the state has to pay for their medical care, and it seems like it would be cheaper to fix it before it becomes a problem."

It's a personal issue for Catherine, who has direct experience, and one that the Community Advocate's training has helped bring into better focus.

"I wanted to learn how to structure my thoughts so others could follow what I was saying," she says. "It's about getting the point across quickly and concisely to make an immediate impact."

Equally important is developing the skill of active listening, which is a big key for Catherine.

"They stressed the importance of active listening. It's very important, especially when you're a talker like I am. To actively listen is different from just being in the room and hearing what's being said. It's a focus on what they're saying and how they're saying it."

Getting the chance to complete the refresher was helpful in the process.

"I found it useful and, after the fact, necessary," Catherine adds. "Sometimes you don't know how much you need something until you get it."

“ Sometimes you don't know how much you need something until you get it. ”



The Spirit of Appreciation Trickles Down to Others

(continued from page 1)

my mother and father would store turnips and potatoes. Friends would come, and they'd always tell us to go get some for them. I asked my dad, why are we giving away all the food? He told me when you help others, help will come to you."

For volunteer Mary Miller, it's all about helping others.

"It's giving back to the community," she says. "The clients are so very appreciative, and that's the biggest reason why I continue to do this ... their gratitude and appreciation."



Importance of Community Drives Giving



When you walk into any large space at Williams Toyota in Elmira, it is hard to miss what Vice President Dalton Williams calls “the guiding light we revisit daily.”

It’s a poster-sized list of what Dalton refers to as the Playbook — a set of rules the company, as well as other businesses run by the Williams family, use as a guide for how they work and live.

And it is not a coincidence that the list is topped by community.

Community is what informs the philanthropic spirit. Dalton says it comes from his grandparents and continues through the family and its business operations.

“Giving is always within us and our spirit, dating back to when the companies were started by my grandparents in 1956,” Dalton adds. “As a collective in the family and the businesses, we think about what we can do.”

“Part of doing business is to inspire others. And part of being a leader is to see what the community needs to be better as a whole.”

That generosity extends to approximately 250 groups and organizations, including the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. Through Williams Toyota and Dandy Mini-Marts, Williams-owned businesses are helping to fund two of the Food Bank’s strategic projects.

Dalton sees the missions of the companies as perfectly aligned with those of the Food Bank.

“The Food Bank does a fantastic job of supporting a huge need,” he says. “During COVID, we got inspired around hearing about the millions of pounds of food distributed and thought, we’ve got to get behind this.”

One program, in particular, fits Williams’ mission as well.

“The BackPack Program strikes a chord,” Dalton says. “Fundamentally, we support a lot of youth initiatives. Our mission is to inspire the next generation, and it’s a lot harder to be inspired when you’re worried about your next meal.”

Dalton is mainly inspired by the giving spirit of his employees.

“We hear people who could work anywhere say they want to work for us to be part of a giving organization,” he adds. “We love that. We give without an expectation to receive. So many of our people volunteer and give in other ways.”

“For all of us, it’s not just cutting checks but also inspiring the community. It’s powerful when you know that anything you give will help so much.”



Working together to build and sustain hunger-free communities throughout the Southern Tier.

foodbankst.org

This newsletter is sponsored by:

