

more to
share

summer 2021



FeedMore
wny
Foundation



a message from the president

Dear Friends,

We've all had our share of adjustments over the past year: remote work, wearing masks, Zoom meetings. But for our community's children, there has been a never-ending list of changes and challenges.

Among them is that every time a child is away from school, they're at a greater risk of hunger if they typically rely on free or reduced-price school meals. Weekends, holidays and the long summer break are critical times for children in need.

But thanks to you, FeedMore WNY has mobilized to help in many ways we never have before. We set up emergency food distributions, purchased trucks for our new Farm Market, reached out to schools to provide emergency food boxes and much more.

All of this is only possible because of your ongoing generosity. It's what makes the difference for children like Zoey and Zander (page 7) and Western New Yorkers

of all ages. In short, we couldn't do it without you.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first began, we only had a year under our belt since the Food Bank of WNY and Meals on Wheels for WNY came together as FeedMore WNY. That partnership made a vast difference at a critical time — increasing staff size, volunteer resources and expanding our donor base while increasing productivity and reducing costs to better serve our insecure population.

But above all, it's YOUR partnership with us that helps put food on tables across our community. Thank you for partnering with us this summer, and all year long.

Warmly,

Tara A. Ellis
President & CEO

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carol thanks you

Carol, 76, has several favorite recipes she likes to cook up, from pork loins to Polish cheesecake. But now that she isn't able to cook for herself and her husband, she's grateful to count on home-delivered meals, thanks to your generosity.

"I'm so happy that I get meals," she says.

Carol and her husband of 55 years are long-time Western New York residents. Carol says she went to college later in life but received two bachelors' degrees and a masters' degree. She went on to a career in data processing and computer work.

Now, Carol says she has health problems that severely limit her ability to do things around the house, like cooking. She says she's also mindful of what she eats because of her health problems.

Healthy meals are made possible thanks to your gifts. Each day, Carol and her husband look forward to a well-balanced, home-delivered meal.

"I eat a lot of protein, like chicken, beef and some pork," she says.

**"FeedMore is
beneficial for
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in this area."**

The couple is especially grateful for the extra special meals they receive, like the one they had delivered to their home for Easter. "We really enjoyed it," she says enthusiastically.

Carol and her husband both want to share their thanks with you for making it possible for many

Western New Yorkers to count on healthy meals each day.

"FeedMore is beneficial for many, many people in the area," Carol says.

Thank you for feeding more people of all ages across our community this summer!



Carol

FeedMore's First RISE Program Graduates

"Now I have a skill that shows I know what I'm doing, which will always help."

Carl is one of the first graduates of the RISE program, which officially kicked off this spring. The program, Ready Individuals for Success and Employment, seeks to provide a pathway to sustainable employment for individuals with high barriers to employment through free workforce development training.

Through the program, Carl now has certificates in OSHA safety training, food safety and forklift operation, and as a Certified Logistics Technician. Not only that, but after searching in vain for a job before, Carl is especially grateful to now have employment.

"It was a wonderful experience," Carl says of the program.



In addition to warehouse experience through the program, students also learn soft skills such as resume writing and job interview preparation — all while receiving support such as transportation, childcare and food pantry access.

"Hunger does not exist in a vacuum, and we know that unemployment and underemployment are leading causes of chronic food insecurity," says Tara A. Ellis, President and CEO of FeedMore WNY. "We are pleased to offer our RISE program to set individuals with high barriers to employment on a path to career stability and self-sufficiency."

you give hope to your neighbors in need!



Our Farm Initiative is Expanding

After four months of growing kale using our pilot indoor, vertical growing, hydroponic container farm, we're excited to announce the expansion of the program, thanks to a generous grant awarded by the 21st Century Fund!

The addition of a second container farm will allow us to introduce new crop types to share with the community.

Every two years, the 21st Century Fund awards a \$100,000 grant to a non-profit in Western New York, as voted on by their members. This year's competition was held online, where representatives from the FeedMore team pitched the "Rooting for our Neighbors" container farm initiative to the group of community funders.

After four organizations shared their visions, the 21st Century Fund members voted on the proposal that could best serve the Western New York community and it was FeedMore's container farm initiative. We are honored to be selected as the recipient of this grant!





Students from the RISE program attend Bank of America's Financial Literacy class.

you help siblings thrive

Zoey, 8, enjoys art and music, while her older brother, Zander, 10, prefers math and science. Thanks to you, they'll have the energy they need this summer to play and discover before returning to a new year of learning in the fall.

generosity is making it possible to continue this vital program throughout the summer months when the need is even greater.

Zoey and Zander thrive this summer and into the fall. Your generosity is a lifeline across our community!

Thank you for helping kids like



Christine and Zoey

The children's mom, Christine, recalls when her family faced homelessness several years ago. It was then that she first learned about the Backpack Program through FeedMore WNY. Her oldest daughter, Kayla, was a participant back then.

"It was nice."

"It was between me, myself and the teacher, which was nice," she says of the confidentiality of utilizing the Backpack Program.

At the time, Kayla, now 17, was the recipient of the program while attending Niagara Charter School. Today Kayla is preparing for trade school, and Zoey and Zander are the ones who get to bring home the backpacks full of nutritious, easy-to-prepare food.

Consistent favorites are the cereal and breakfast bars, as well as the macaroni and cheese and peanut butter sandwiches, which they like to prepare themselves.

And even though the program was originally designed to give kids enough food to eat over weekends when they're away from school meals, your

partnering in hunger relief: bank of america

"There's so much need in this community, but if you can feed a child or feed a family, it helps them be successful in other aspects of their life."

Laura Dolan serves as Senior Vice President, Market Manager for the Buffalo branch of Bank of America, which has long contributed to hunger-relief both through grants and through community engagement and volunteer work.

"They made us very proud and confident that they make the most return on that investment in the community."

"It feels good to provide financial support, but it really feels good when we can be a part of that overall support to the organization and the people they serve," Laura says.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, volunteers from Bank of America helped in hands-on ways such as

sorting food and helping in FeedMore's community garden. Since the pandemic, there's been a shift to virtual volunteer opportunities.

Last year, Bank of America and State Farm also helped FeedMore fund our workforce development program and Bank of America is offering a class teaching money habits as a part of the program.

"COVID really increased the focus on what a wonderful job [FeedMore does] with their funds," Laura says. "They made us very proud and confident that they make the most return on that investment in the community."

Funding for the RISE Program is made possible in part through the generosity of Bank of America and State Farm.

Thank you, Laura, for the leadership you provide, and to all of the Bank of America volunteers for giving your time and efforts to feed more people in Western New York! It's an honor to serve alongside you.

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The Hunger Heroes Club is a monthly giving program that allows you to easily assist the FeedMore WNY Foundation year-round with regular monthly donations from your credit card, debit card, checking or savings account. Your ongoing support will help FeedMore WNY Foundation plan for the year ahead, budgeting and allocating resources to make sure our clients have consistent access to nutritious foods. To learn more about our Hunger Heroes Club, please contact Donor Engagement Director Pam Chrzanowski at (716) 822-2005 ext. 3051 or pchrzanowski@feedmorewny.org.

Paul is Grateful for You

Paul, 73, is especially grateful for two things in his life: his wife's good cooking...and your generosity!

A friend told Paul about Cattaraugus Community Action Organization (CAO), a FeedMore WNY partner agency, where Paul has been picking up groceries for himself and his wife ever since.

The couple, now retired, rely on Social Security and some SNAP benefits to pay all their bills and buy groceries. Your gifts help them stretch their fixed income to last through the month.

"We like going [to the food pantry]," Paul says. "They're nice and make us feel welcome."

"We are grateful."

The couple especially enjoys the fresh produce, meats and canned goods they get at the pantry.

"[My wife] cooks all the food," Paul says, noting hamburgers, chicken and pot roast as his favorites. "She's a good cook."



And while Paul says it's been a bit "boring" during COVID-19 isolation, they're happy to safely visit the pantry once a month where they can see some familiar, masked faces.

"We are grateful," Paul says, thanking donors like you for helping provide healthy food for him and his wife.

This summer, your generosity is hard at work helping put nutritious food on more tables across Western New York, just like Paul's. Thank you for sharing what you have with those in need!

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