

BERKSHIRE FOOD PROJECT

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Member, Northern Berkshire United Way

October/November 2019

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**The Berkshire
Food Project, Inc.
is a 501(c)(3)
corporation**

Dear Friends,

The Berkshire Food Project needs your help in order to continue to provide nutritious meals to those facing food insecurity in northern Berkshire County. We're facing two new challenges. One is an unprecedented surge in the number of people dining with us. The other is a costly upgrade to a bathroom at our facility, due in part to our influx of people.

The surge in diners has surprised and, frankly, challenged us. We always serve more people late in the month, but we have never seen anything like this. In July and August, on each of the last ten days we served over 100 meals (182 on July 30) as compared to a typical count of 80. This was apparently not due to the school year: in September, only on one day did we serve fewer than 100. We are on track to serve 20 percent more meals in 2019 than in 2018.

We see the evidence of the opioid epidemic every day: families and individuals experiencing real crisis, which can involve homelessness, hunger and a lack of health care, including mental health services. Families who rely on school-provided meals during the school year do not see a rise in SNAP benefits during the summer. With the opioid epidemic, grandparents and other extended family members have to feed children on limited incomes that were never intended to include these extra expenses.

Since 1987, the Berkshire Food Project has provided hot nutritious lunches to people in need from northern Berkshire County at the First Congregational Church in North Adams. We expanded from two meals a week in 1987 to three in 1991, then to five in 2004—because more people rely on us for their only meal of the day. We are a small and lean operation, heavily staffed by volunteers, with a labor-intensive mission that also incurs high utility costs.

We have been members of the Northern Berkshire United Way (NBUW) since 2002, but this funding covers less than ten percent of our annual budget.

Please support us. There are several ways to give. You can use the enclosed envelope, make your tax-deductible contribution online with a credit card or via PayPal at (<http://www.berkshirefoodproject.org/>), or join our **“Provide a Meal”** club by setting up a monthly donation to fund meals at that website. We can also advise you on how to contribute appreciated securities, or to make us the beneficiary of an IRA charitable rollover or a bequest through your will.

Come see us in action! Stop by the First Congregational Church any weekday after 10 a.m. **If you are interested in volunteering, call us at 664-7378 and we'll talk about days and times—or if you'd like, we could put you in touch with a current volunteer.** Thank you for your generous support.

Sincerely,

James Mahon, Board President

Kim McMann, Executive Director

The BFP acknowledges these contributors, without whom we would not be able to do what we do every year:

- ❖ The First Congregational Church of North Adams—OUR HOME
- ❖ Alice Shaver Foundation
- ❖ Northern Berkshire United Way
- ❖ Food Bank of Western Massachusetts, Hatfield
- ❖ Shirley Brownrigg Charitable Trust, Williamstown
- ❖ Mabel Horne Foundation
- ❖ Project Bread—The Walk for Hunger, Boston
- ❖ MountainOne Bank
- ❖ Ruth Proud Trust, North Adams
- ❖ Howard E. Stark Charitable Foundation
- ❖ Walmart, Inc., North Adams
- ❖ Cricket Creek Farm, Williamstown
- ❖ Caretaker Farm Community Supported Agriculture (CSA), Williamstown
- ❖ Share the Bounty CSA, Becket
- ❖ Square Roots CSA, Cheshire
- ❖ Many Forks Farm CSA, Clarksburg
- ❖ BerkSites Web Design, North Adams
- ❖ Adams Community Bank
- ❖ West Oil, North Adams
- ❖ Churches and Synagogues of Adams, North Adams, and Williamstown
- ❖ Elder Printing and Supply, Williamstown
- ❖ James and Robert Hardman Fund for North Adams at the Berkshire Taconic Community Foundation
- ❖ St. John's Episcopal, Williamstown
- ❖ The First Congregational Church, Williamstown, and the Makepeace Bequest
- ❖ Storey Publishing, North Adams
- ❖ Mt. Williams Greenhouses, Inc., North Adams
- ❖ Student Volunteers of Williams College, MCLA, Mt. Greylock Regional HS, Williamstown and North Adams Schools
- ❖ Wild Oats Co-op, Williamstown
- ❖ Williams College Dining Services
- ❖ Rotary Club of Williamstown
- ❖ And people of all ages from our community who volunteer their time, talents, and funds to help keep our mission alive!