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# Food for Thought from the Berkshire Food Project



www.facebook.com/  
berkshirefoodproject

We post our daily menu on Facebook – you can check to see what’s for lunch there every day!

## Volunteer Opportunity

Most of the time our volunteer opportunities are between 9 AM and 2 PM, weekdays but we do occasionally have special projects that we schedule for a time when we are not trying to prepare and serve a meal. On Saturday, June 30 we are going to do a deep clean of our kitchen and we need volunteers to help. If you have always wanted to help out, but your weekday schedule doesn’t permit you to, now is your chance! Call Darlene at (413) 664-7378 if you would like to be part of the crew on June 30.

This is the first edition of what we expect will be a quarterly newsletter. We will post the issues on our website, [www.berkshirefoodproject.org](http://www.berkshirefoodproject.org), and will use the newsletter as a way to keep our community aware of what’s going on at the BFP. If you would like a link to the latest newsletter e-mailed to you, you can sign up to be on the mailing list there too.

## Berkshire Nonprofit Awards

On May 22, BFP Kitchen Manager Darlene Ellis and BFP Board President Jim Mahon were honored at the first annual Berkshire Nonprofit Awards held at the Country Club of Pittsfield. Darlene was a finalist in the Super Staff category and Jim won in the Board Leadership category. They were among the 21 people selected from the dozens nominated from a wide array of nonprofits – congratulations to both of them!

## The BFP Garden

You may have noticed we have doubled the size of our garden this season! With funds from a grant from James and Robert Hardman Fund for North Adams and students from MCLA, Jen Munoz has been busy installing all new raised garden beds. Third graders from Brayton Elementary School recently visited and planted a variety of herbs and vegetables in the beds. We’ll use the harvest in our kitchen but also welcome those who dine with us to enjoy some of the produce by taking it home and using it in meals they prepare there.



## The Mayor’s Fitness Challenge



Did you know that eating a family style meal is good for your health? It can reduce your likelihood of developing depression and it helps to keep you from over eating! And you can get points for the Mayor’s Fitness Challenge by joining us for lunch! You can also increase your life expectancy, decrease your likelihood of getting heart disease and lower your cholesterol by volunteering as little as two hours a week! You can do that the BFP too! Volunteers can help prepare and/or serve food and/or help clean up after lunch any weekday between 9 AM and 2 PM. There is an application on our website, or you can also come in and fill it out on paper!

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Do you know about the Berkshire Food Project? We are located at 134 Main Street (inside the First Congregational Church) in North Adams, MA. Every weekday we serve lunch from noon to one right in downtown North Adams. All are welcome – we have no income guidelines or other criteria. Everybody is welcome and encouraged to join us. We cook from scratch using fresh ingredients – our food is delicious! We believe if you sit down and break bread with others from the community you will learn more about them and the issues our community is facing. It's much more likely that we can find solutions to the issues we face when we really understand those issues and how they impact the lives of our neighbors. Some of the people who dine with us would go hungry without the food we provide; others can stretch their food dollars further by having some meals with us. There are some people who dine with us because they live alone and might not engage with other people all day if not for our meal time. Others join us because they want to stay engaged in the community after retirement. Others want to build rapport with people who might be accessing services from the programs or organizations where they work. Delivery men who happen to be in the neighborhood join us, as do those who work nearby. All are welcome.

**Join us soon!**

## Volunteering at the BFP

Each month, about 750 volunteer hours are logged by a diverse group of people who help our small staff keep our program going. We prepare lunch from scratch for about 100 people each day.

We are currently creating a new certification process for our regular volunteers. While anybody is welcome to come in and volunteer, some people make a commitment to a regular schedule and participate in training and other opportunities, and we want to recognize that.

Volunteers who want to be the Volunteer Captain or take other leadership roles will have the opportunity to become certified this summer. We are developing workshops that focus on key areas: ServSafe and safety in the kitchen; the policies, philosophy and goals that guide our program; cooking for large groups; and communication. Other topics may be offered in the future. All of these workshops will be presented during regular volunteer hours to ensure everybody who is interested has the opportunity to participate. In the fall we will award the first BFP Volunteer Certificates and identify Volunteer Captains for each day we are open.

If you would like to participate, let us know!

We will continue to have opportunities for those who wish to simply come in and complete tasks as assigned – all volunteers will continue to be welcomed, appreciated and respected!

## Our Community Supporters

Recently we have received locally grown produce and eggs from Buxton School, Caretaker Farm and Square Roots Farm. We are very grateful to all of the local farmers, gardeners and programs that share their harvest with us! THANK YOU!

## BFP Staff

**Kim McMann, Executive Director**

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**Darlene Ellis, Kitchen Manager**

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**Eric Engel, Assistant Kitchen Manager**

**Barbara Worthington, SCSEP Outreach Assistant**