

Bolstering the Food Supply



A neighborhood food pantry displays bounty of produce donated through the Connecticut Foodshare Retail Rescue Program.

Our Retail Rescue program is a direct connection between local food donors and pantries. Volunteers pick up donated food and then distribute it to guests of the pantry, typically the same day to ensure quality. Trader Joe's, one of our Retail Rescue donors, shares their commitment, *"Being a neighborhood grocery store is about more than just selling groceries. It's also about being good neighbors, every day, in every Trader Joe's neighborhood. We are grateful to our partners, like Connecticut Foodshare, as they strive to minimize hunger while engaging in this impactful work."*

Pantry partners deeply value these critical relationships with donors, "We have a very diverse population of clients. They are so pleased when they see food that is specific to their cultural needs. We have received many compliments and praise about the food we get from Trader Joes."



A family sorts donated food at Connecticut Foodshare's Wallingford headquarters.

Surveys at mobile food pantries show that neighbors highly value fresh fruits and vegetables and want foods that reflect their cultures and traditions. This feedback from our neighbors helps Connecticut Foodshare

source food more strategically and serve our communities with dignity and care. Even our own hydroponic Freight Farms are growing culturally connected produce like collard greens and bok choy that our neighbors truly appreciate.

Behind it all are thousands of volunteers sorting, packing, and helping get meals to our neighbors. And that means families, kids, and seniors feel supported.

That's the spirit behind Pillar B—neighbors showing up for each other, all summer and all year long.

Read our full strategic plan here:



I didn't know the struggle until I got sick. Fresh vegetables and stuff help. It's a blessing. The volunteers are wonderful. They make sure you get help.



Captain Alex of Trader Joe's with Don Anderson, Retail Donations Coordinator of Connecticut Foodshare

Reflections From Jason



Jason Jakubowski
President and CEO

We are almost a year into our new strategic plan, and one thing is clear: none of this work happens alone. Right now, food sources are shrinking while food costs keep climbing. **Bolstering our food supply** will take strong partnerships and a community that shows up for each other.

Thanks to generous food donors, our Retail Rescue program recovered **14 million pounds of food** last year and welcomed **49 new food donors**. That food is changing lives. As one pantry shared, "Retail [Rescue] is the backbone of the success of our pantry. Our clients are able to shop for fresh items that may be beyond their economic reach in the stores."

But it is not just about food—it is always about the people.

People like Nancy, a Retail Rescue volunteer who starts picking up donations before sunrise, 7 days a week. People like our warehouse volunteers—corporate teams, students, friends, and families, safely

and efficiently sorting millions of meals worth of food that fill our neighbors' plates. We are thankful for every one of our 6,000 volunteers, and more people than ever are stepping up to help fulfill our mission.

And the people at the heart of it all are neighbors like Eloise. Retired and living on an extremely limited income, Eloise relies on the mobile pantry to stay healthy after two open-heart surgeries. She shared, "Every little bit helps. It cuts down on my food bill a lot. The money I'd spend on vegetables—I can now use for meat and medicine."

We meet our neighbors where they are; and we learn from them. Many people living with food insecurity also face serious health challenges, and access to nutritious food is essential. When we surveyed mobile food pantry guests, 93% of respondents said they value the fresh produce we provide. In partnership with UConn and local food pantries, we also surveyed guests about culturally connected food preferences—this learning means more strategic food purchases, better inventory tracking, and serving our communities with dignity.

There's much work ahead. But with your support, we can keep vital programs strong and continue to provide **fresh, nutritious, and culturally connected food** to the neighbors who need it most.

**Thank you to our
400+ food donors!**



**108,000 plants
harvested in 1 year**



Watch more on our
hydroponic farm video



Connecticut Foodshare

Walk Against Hunger

Connecticut Foodshare would like to thank all of the incredible attendees, donors, volunteers, and staff who took part in, and supported, our annual Walk Against Hunger!

With every step taken and dollar raised, you helped move us closer to creating a hunger-free Connecticut.



A very special thank you to our generous sponsors this year:

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