



Bread & Roses

Community Kitchen and Pantry



IMPACT REPORT
FY23: JULY 2022 - JUNE 2023

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A Message from Our Executive Director

As we embark on this holiday season and our annual appeal, I am eternally grateful to have been chosen to fulfill the role of Executive Director at Bread & Roses and it's made me look back on what defining moments brought me here. I always envisioned a life of giving back and of service to my community. There were some formidable years that I may have lost that vision (I still feel bad about these years, sorry Mom). If you know me personally, you know that since I was child- this is all I ever wanted to be.

From an early age, I was so inspired by my mother's story. My mother met my biological father when she was 17 and eventually returned home a couple of months before her 22nd birthday and my birth. My mother's story is one of unimaginable struggle, gut wrenching trauma and eventually triumph. There were many folks that helped her through her darkest times and provided her with support after years of experiencing domestic abuse and addiction. My mother had the support of her parents and others that rallied around her when she arrived home including her therapist from Catholic Charities.

My mother's therapist whom I have never met has stuck with me throughout my career. This wonderful and caring woman helped my mother navigate what she would someday tell her unborn daughter about what she had experienced during her time with my biological father leading up to their separation a couple of months before I was born. She would help my mother process her own emotions during what was an extremely difficult and scary time in her life. My mom would eventually go on to have a 33-year career in the Post Office before retiring. Her only daughter would go on to be the first person in their family to graduate college.

You would think I would have learned from my mother's struggles, but I made some questionable decisions of my own during my youth.

When I was 19 years old, I got pregnant with my oldest son, Ameer who is now 18. I was young, unemployed, and living in South Lawrence. I lacked direction and I often wondered what I would end up doing with my life.

Having Ameer reignited my passion and reminded me of my purpose. Making Ameer proud and honoring my mother and her past struggles was enough to provide me with the clarity and motivation I needed to move forward. My mother would drive to Lawrence every Tuesday and Thursday night so I could attend college in the evenings. There would be many struggles, numerous disappointments, and more setbacks than I can count.

Death, divorce, and 10 years to finish a 6-year degree are just a few of the setbacks I have faced along the way.

Our stories define who we are. For me, being Michele's only child and the first granddaughter of Wally and Patricia have always been the two things that defined me. I think of the sacrifices, scrutiny and circumstances surrounding my birth and I feel so much gratitude. My grandmother died of cancer when I was 14, she was only 60 years old. Keeping her memory alive and living a life that would make her proud remains dear to my heart. I have fallen short of this many times but regardless of what has transpired, I have kept going. We only have two choices in this life, give up or keep fighting.

We are all a collection of our experiences that make up our story and thank you for letting me share mine. The theme of this year's annual appeal is "Our Shared Stories." We felt it was time to tell you a little bit about who we are, what struggles we have faced and why we are here doing the special work that we do.

There is nothing more beautiful than your story, don't ever be afraid to share it.

Peace and Love,
Jess



Jessica Perreault-Gordon
Executive Director

OUR TEAM



Jessica Perreault-Gordon, MPsy
Executive Director

Jessica holds a Master's Degree in Substance Abuse Counseling and has worked in the nonprofit field for over 13 years. She has lived in the Merrimack Valley since 2004 and has worked in the nonprofit arena within the region since 2010. Jessica has worked extensively with individuals facing addiction, incarceration, homelessness, and mental illness. She remains steadfast in her passion for social justice and economic equity for all.



Tamiaka Thomas
Assistant Executive Director



Michelle Ayotte
Kitchen Assistant



Angelo Boria
Food Rescue Program Coordinator



Elizabeth Bedard
Assistant Kitchen Manager



Helen Gabin
Executive Administrative Assistant



Rina Krah
Director of Programs



Victoria Schrow
Kitchen Manager



Ashleigh Shaw
Development & Communications Associate

2022-2023

BACK TO BASICS

For the first time in over 2 years, our Community Meals re-open for restaurant style dinners in our dining room.

GROWING TOGETHER

Following a guest survey, B&R adds the option for Grab & Go Meals nightly to give more flexibility to guests, especially working parents.

A SPACE TO LEARN

Our Guest Speaker Series launches. Experts from across fields to share their knowledge with our community.

MORE TO CELEBRATE

B&R is selected as the recipient of discretionary grant funding from Cummings Foundation.

NOURISHING OUR NEIGHBORS

Our first ever gala raises more than 2x any event in B&R history and brought together leaders and supporters from across New England.

SEPTEMBER
2022

NOVEMBER
2022

MARCH
2023

MAY
2023

JUNE
2023

HIGHLIGHTS

OUR MISSION



Bread & Roses' mission is to address the core necessities of the Merrimack Valley's community members with a holistic and welcoming approach focusing on food insecurity and promoting self empowerment.

We believe everyone has the right to a healthy and nutritious meal. We believe in helping everyone regardless of their circumstances. And we believe in approaching everyone with dignity, respect, and compassion.



2022 - 2023

BY THE NUMBERS

In one year, Bread & Roses provided:

232 TONS

of Rescued &
Donated Food

22,000+

Community
Meals

151,000+

Pantry Meals

3,400

Monthly Mobile
Meals

5,100

Hygiene
Supplies

1,060+

Laundry &
Grocery Cards

2022 - 2023

BY THE NUMBERS

Community Meals

Emergency Pantry

Food Rescued



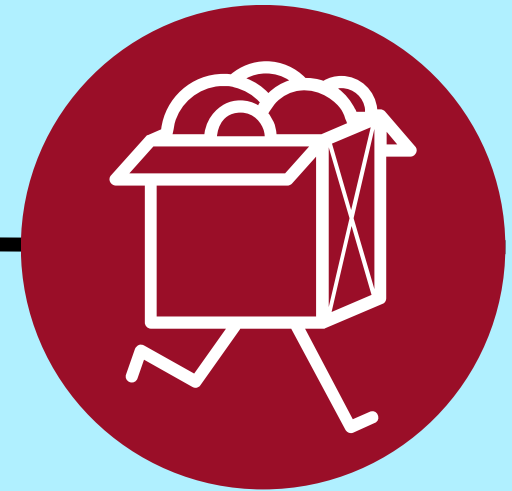
+12%

More Meals Served
Compared to FY22



58X

More Meals
Compared to FY22



+11%

Compared to FY22

THERE'S ALWAYS A SPACE AT OUR TABLE

A kitchen can be a home. Our mission makes sure we never eat alone.

For more than 43 years, we have ensured everyone has a safe and welcoming space to enjoy a nutritious meal.

This year, we reached out to our guests to ensure our meals are continuing to meet the needs of our community. In a survey, a little less than half shared with us the importance of having an indoor space to dine and connect with our staff. Our sit down meals are especially important to our unhoused citizens.

“I would rather eat inside because I live outside, and rarely have a warm/clean place to sit down and eat a good hot meal,” shared José, a guest who has been coming for 2 years.

For the rest of our community, having the option to take some of their meals Grab & Go style was necessary. Many of our guests work two or three jobs, and only have a short window of time to get their meal before going to work. Even more of our guests are working parents, and found it challenging to bring their children to meals in addition to their normal nightly activities and homework.

Based on what our guests shared with us, we adopted a hybrid model. Guests can choose every night whether they would prefer to sit down for a meal restaurant style or take their meal to go.

It is important that we always adapt to meet the needs of our community, and we are grateful to everyone who shared their thoughts with us to guide our Community Meals.



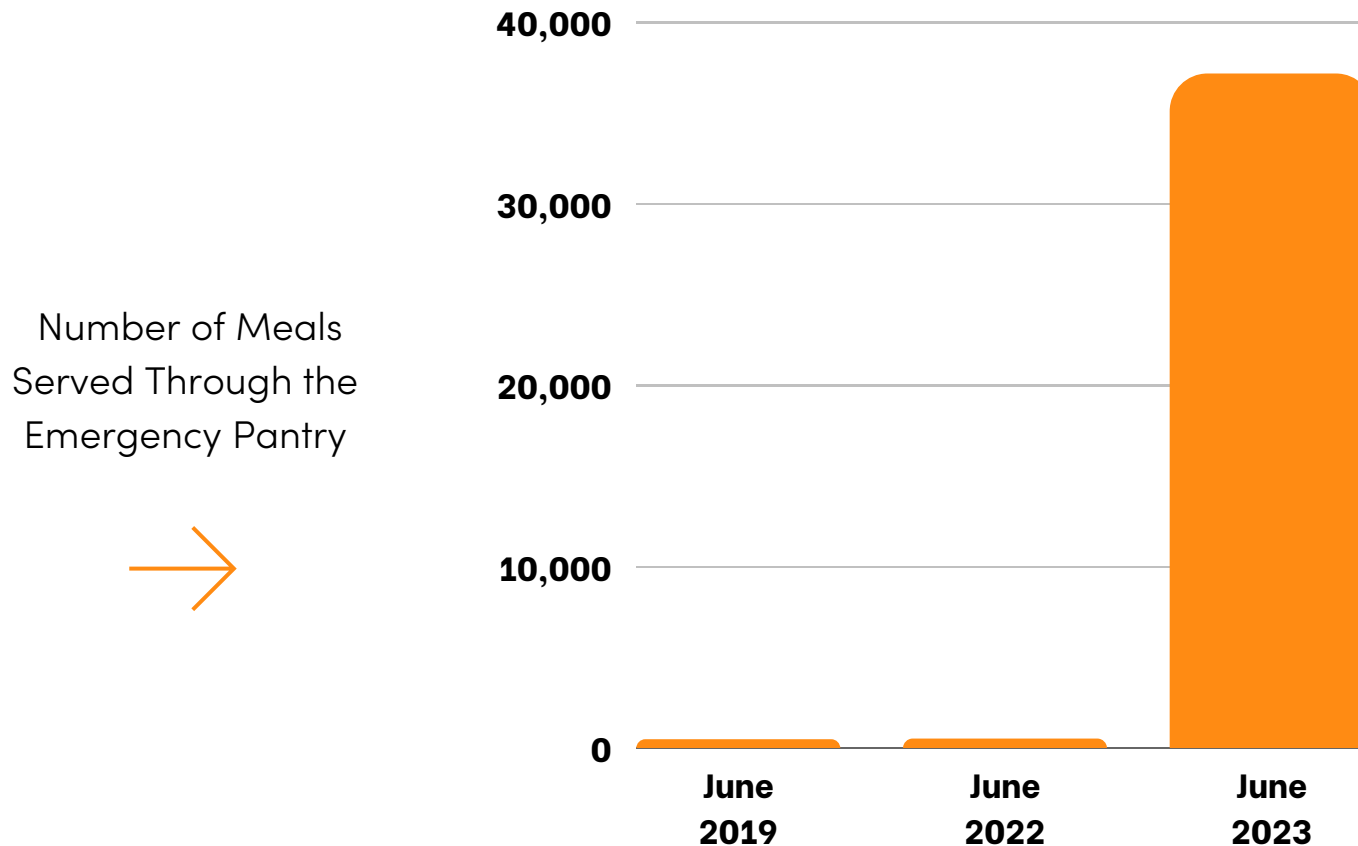
“I would rather eat inside because I live outside, and rarely have a warm/clean place to sit down and eat a good hot meal,” shared José, a guest.

A Little Help Goes a Long Way

The need for food assistance has risen astronomically this fiscal year. COVID related SNAP benefits ended in March 2023 and food rises have continued to be on the rise throughout the year.

Our Emergency Food Pantry supplies every member of a household three days worth of food, once per calendar month. The average pantry order for a family of four weighs in at about 30 pounds.

In the past, we distributed an average of 40 orders a month. Now, we typically see 50 to 80 orders a day. Hundreds of families rely on our pantry monthly. Our Emergency Pantry is open more often than most places in the Merrimack Valley and distributes over 30,000 pounds of food every month. In addition to food, we provide toiletries, diapers, and other critical items.



On the Road to Rescue

We travel across Greater Lawrence collects nearly 40,000 pounds of rescued food monthly from local restaurants and grocery stores. From there, our van brings the rescued food back to 58 Newbury Street, and it fills our pantry for Community Meals and Emergency Pantry orders.



A Fresh Start

Many members of our community are unable to keep up with the rising rent and food costs. The result: the inability to keep their clothes or bedding clean and dry - a critical factor in staying healthy, actively engaged in society, and for those who are homeless - alive. The Fresh Start Initiative strives to bridge the gap by providing access to laundry services with the distribution of \$20 prepaid cards to a local laundromat (plus: drying is free!).

Monthly Mobile Meals

Bread & Roses delivers an average of 18 meals each month to individuals living at partner residences or attending day programs at partner organizations, and are unable to take part in Community Meals. Deliveries include fresh protein and produce, and staples such as oil, sugar, eggs, coffee and milk.

Food. Dignity. Compassion.



Food is Medicine


In just over 7 square miles, there are more than 70,000 people without easy access to healthy and nutritious food.

Bread & Roses is located in the heart of North Lawrence and serves as the hub of food access to hundreds of individuals every day.

For individuals without car access, which is the case for many people in Lawrence, Bread & Roses is closer than any grocery store. Without grocery stores, the alternative is bodegas, which often supply less healthy, pre-packaged food items.

Food is medicine and access to healthy food helps to reduce the rates of many diseases, including heart attacks, high blood pressure, and diabetes.

By providing healthy food to everyone, regardless of their circumstances, Bread & Roses is helping to improve the health and wellness of thousands of people across our community.



80% of people in Lawrence are classified by the CDC as living in a Food Desert

What is a Food Desert?

A food desert is an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food. According to the USDA, at least 100 households must be located more than one-half mile from the nearest supermarket and have no vehicle access to be classified as a food desert.



Where would we be without our extensive network of volunteers, donors, and supporters who make every program possible. From food drives to flower centerpieces to meals and everything in between, we can always rely on our community to lend a hand!



70%

of the people we serve
are immigrants

29

the median age of
our guests

19%

of people live below the
poverty line in Lawrence

100%

of the people we serve have
Very Low Food Security

A HEALTHY ORGANIZATION



LOOKING FORWARD TO FY24, WE PLAN TO:

Locate a 5,000 sq. ft. building that can better accommodate our programs

Increase our Fresh Card Program in order to distribute 300 cards

Double the number of participants in our *Monthly Mobile Meals*

Increase our total amount of rescued food by 10%

BUT WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOUR SUPPORT!

Join us and make your support for Bread & Roses and the fight against food insecurity a part of your organization's legacy.

Since 1980, Bread & Roses has been fighting hunger and hardship in our community.




Bread & Roses is a 501(c)(3) non-profit community-based organization. Your generous gift is tax-deductible.

www.breadandroseskitchen.org/donate



Interested in learning about other ways to support Bread & Roses?
Email ashleigh@breadandroseskitchen.org



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