



The mission of the **Merrimack Valley Food Bank** is to help meet a person's most profound need for adequate nutrition and freedom from hunger. The **MVFB** was created in 1991 under the umbrella of the Middlesex shelter of Lowell, Massachusetts. In October 1993, we became an independent entity with its own board of directors and by-laws.

The **MVFB** distributes food through 120 emergency feeding programs that serve the low-income population throughout the Merrimack Valley, North Shore, Worcester, and Southern New Hampshire area. Clients include the elderly and disabled, children, families, physically handicapped, veterans, recovering addicts and the working poor.

We are proud to offer several diverse feeding programs to serve people in need in our region, in nearly 30 cities and towns in MA and NH. We distribute between 2.5 - 3 million pounds of food per year to over 50,000 individuals a month!

Our Programs

Our operating philosophy is that only through cooperative efforts can society initiate change and develop strategies to alleviate hunger to ensure a quality life for all of our neighbors.

Food Distribution allows member agencies to shop on Tuesdays & Wednesdays each week to select nutritious, ethnically appropriate foods for the individuals and families in the communities we serve.

Massachusetts Emergency Food Assistance Program (MEFAP) distributes food available through the Commonwealth of Massachusetts free of charge to member agencies serving low-income individuals and families.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (USDA/TEFAP) distributes food available through the federal government and is available to qualified member agencies.

Guy Franceschelli Food Rescue Program provides prepared and perishable foods donated by Hannaford Supermarket three days a week. We deliver it directly to pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters in Lowell, Lawrence, and Chelmsford free of charge.

Nutrition and Safe Food Handling Education provides valuable information regarding safe transportation, storage and handling to ensure the maintenance of wholesome food to offer to the population served.

Mobile Pantry is a community based program providing food and nutrition to home-bound elderly or disabled low-income individuals in the Greater Lowell Area.

Summer Lunch Program provides nutritional lunches for low-income children in Lowell through sponsored sites throughout the summer.

Community Market is a seasonal program (summer - fall) offering fresh, locally grown produce to low-income Lowell residents, as well as nutrition education and demonstrations.

Plant A Row For the Hungry (PAR) is a partnership between MVFB and farmers, gardeners and member agencies that encourages healthy eating for all members of our community, and accepts donations of fresh local produce for all of our programs.

“New” Operation Nourish – This program will be piloted at an elementary school in the City of Lowell beginning in September 2011. Children in this school are chosen because there is a need demonstrated by rates of free/reduced lunch program participation, or they are located in neighborhoods with limited access to charitable services such as food pantries or soup kitchens. We will provide take-home-bags of nutritious, ready-to-eat, shelf-stable food on Friday’s and school vacations. It is clear that providing schoolchildren who are at risk of hunger with backpacks filled with nutritious food plays an important role in reducing childhood hunger.

**How Can You
Help Us Help
Others?**

Volunteers are crucial to the operation of the Foodbank. Without volunteers, it would not be possible to collect, sort and repack all the food that comes through our warehouse every day. But that's not all. Foodbank volunteers also help with administrative tasks, special events, and serve on committees.

Monetary Donation—we rely on individual and corporate donations to continue operating our feeding programs. A \$25 donation would help feed a family of 4 for 2 weeks!

Food & Fund Drives—A company, school, or organization sponsored Food and Fund Drive is a great way to build team spirit and goodwill within the community. Host a raffle, car wash, bake sale, or cook off!

Virtual Food Drive – To meet the increasing demand for food assistance, the MVFB supplements the donated food we receive with purchases of many needed food items. With the click of a mouse, the Virtual Food Drive allows you to get food to those who are facing hunger in our community in a more efficient manner. Go to our website at www.mvfb.org to learn more.

Donate Time—whether you are interested in collecting or sorting food, staffing a special event or helping out in the office, we offer many opportunities for individuals, families, schools, corporate and church groups to volunteer.

Donate Food— Since 1993 the Merrimack Valley Foodbank has relied on people like you to help feed those who do not have the means to feed themselves. The MVFB solicits, warehouses, and distributes food to 80 food pantries, meals programs, and shelters throughout Greater Lowell, Merrimack Valley, North Shore, and Southern NH communities. These programs in turn distribute the food to the individuals most in need, children, elderly, veterans, disabled, and working families.

Advocate—Tell your family, friends, and co-workers about the MVFB, spread the word on our behalf! Only as a community can there be any true change!

Volunteer Opportunities are available at the many events that we host to fund our programs and continue to meet the needs of the individuals in need within our community. Here are some examples:

Community Market (A Farmers Market) – Thursday & Friday, June-October
Neighborhood Food Drives –September & March
Hitting Against Hunger – Home Run Derby Fundraiser
Grape Expectations Wine Tasting & Silent Auction – April 2012
Golf Tournament – September 2012

If you would like more information on how you can Help US....Help OTHERS please contact Debbie Callery at 978-454-7272, via email at dcallery@mvfb.org or visit our website at www.mvfb.org.