



The Community Kitchen

thecommunitykitchen.org

A few words from Sarah Harpster ... the new Executive Director

I am humbled to take a leadership role in such a beloved community organization dedicated to strengthening food security for everyone in the Monadnock region. By the time I joined the TCK staff as the first Gleaning Coordinator in 2013, I had experienced a variety of employment and educational adventures in search of a fulfilling career. Little did I know that I had landed in the place that would nurture my personal and professional evolution and focus my energies on the vastly complex, important, and inspiring world of food systems.

My roots in food systems go back to my early years at a Waldorf farm school in the Hudson Valley, where my parents ran a market garden. By college, I had set my sights on adventure, majoring in Anthropology and spending three years in the Dominican Republic. Back in the US my search for vocation led me to seminary at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. In my seminary studies, I developed a deep concern for environmental stewardship, which led me toward further studies rather than the pulpit. I arrived in Keene with my wife and daughter in 2006 to study environmental advocacy at Antioch University New England.

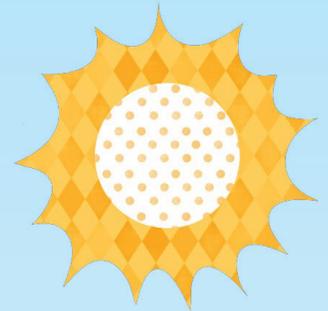
Prior to working at TCK, I began to develop my connections in the region through roles in nonprofits dedicated to climate resiliency and healthy aging, Clean Air-Cool Planet, and ServiceLink Aging and Disability Resource Center. As I undertook my gleaning role at TCK, I then developed my food system-focused network with farmers and gardeners, retailers, educators, and advocates. I was able to strengthen our organization's presence in these networks within the Monadnock region and beyond. I learned about the challenges and opportunities we face to ensure that we ourselves, and our whole communities, have access to good food, now, and into the future. In 2021, I helped develop a new role at TCK for the Advocacy Coordinator. I learned that around the same time that Mindy Cambiar and her friends were establishing TCK in the early 1980's, many soup kitchens and food pantries were popping up around the country to support people facing food insecurity. Over these 40 years, food security organizations have helped bridge temporary or chronic gaps in personal and family food supplies, millions of times over.

Food security organizations measure our impact in terms such as pounds of food or meals distributed. But our true impact is much deeper. It is cupboards filled and worries eased; nutrition supported, and health restored; filled bellies allowing restful sleep, productive days, and opportunities to attain greater life goals. Food security is a key component of public health and well-being, so taking up such an important role in this work is something I will never take for granted. Lasting food security for everyone is a project that requires all community members to ask ourselves deeper questions. Do all people in our community deserve good food? What would it take to make that happen? I am truly excited to explore these questions together in the years to come.



2022

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2



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Save the Date for our "new" Local Harvest Celebration

Want to volunteer? Here's how.

And a few final words from Phoebe ...

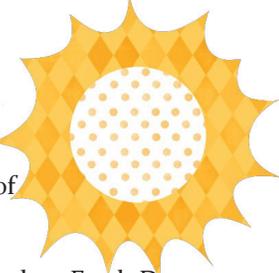
Gratefully supported by:

Monadnock



CONSTRUCTION DONE!

It is with great pride and excitement that we announce the second phase of our renovations is complete!



The solar panels were finally connected on Earth Day ~ which we took as a good sign of things to come. We were connected to the grid on May 5th and Phoebe was totally blown away when she received the Eversource bill later in May and saw that the solar panels had saved TCK **\$1,000!** This was for less than a month's connections ... we'll take it!

If anyone has completed a building project during the pandemic, you will appreciate the trials and tribulations we have been through over the past year and a bit. Prices were higher than when first planned (by a lot!) but we worked hard to get supporters to sponsor a solar panel and the funds raised through that project, helped enormously.

The building is looking great, the new HVAC system is a real boon to the staff, and the solar array will get Phoebe talking for an hour - minimum!

We could not have got here without the help, guidance, expertise, humour, and workforce of DEW Construction; with special thanks to Trevor MacLachlan and Bob Davis. They put together a team that ensured our pantry and hot meals service was disrupted as little as possible.

We also give endless and grateful thanks to Bob Furlone, former board member, and Charles Michal, of Weller & Michal Architects, without whom none of this would have happened.



BOARD CHANGES

Having an engaged Board of Directors is essential for any nonprofit. The many changes that are happening at The Community Kitchen include the Board. We are lucky we attract Board members who bring a wide range of skills to the organization.

2022 has brought more than a few challenges to the Board: the pandemic is still ongoing; in January the Executive Director informed the Board of her retirement planned for later in the year; the Board had to then launch a search for a replacement; the organization entered into a Strategic Plan process, the invasion of Ukraine raised all sorts of questions about the already stretched and troubled food supply; inflation reared its ugly and aggressive head, affecting every part of everyone's lives including the Community Kitchen and in particular the clients and guests who are already on very limited budgets.

The current Board of Directors:

CHAIR: Ellie Ryan

VICE CHAIR: Jason Wilder

TREASURER: Amanda Young

SECRETARY: Shelby Fitzgerald

BOARD MEMBERS:

Duane Towns Cheryl Kahn Donovan Fenton

Peter Rooney Marc Toyloy James Clark

John Danahy Jess Gerrior Ali Borden

Gina Burke Lily Christenson

If anyone is interested in joining the Board of Directors please just contact Peggy at 603 352 3200



Some board members (and Sarah) at a recent Board retreat

CHANGES COMING TO THE COMMUNITY KITCHEN

MONADNOCK MOBILE FOOD PANTRY “POP-UP” PROJECT

June 11th Results- 23 new clients & 11 participating

Our first mobile pantry was held on the grass outside Winchester Senior Housing on June 11, a beautiful, temperate Saturday, and attended by a host of new guests and enthusiastic volunteers. Shelf stable pantry staples and boxed cereals were available, along with meat, and a generous variety of fresh, vibrant produce locally sourced from Piccadilly Farm. Southwestern Community Services was on site with information about SNAP benefits and heating assistance, and the Monadnock Humane Society was also present offering free pet food and information on animal care.

Several more events are planned throughout the summer and fall in towns throughout the Monadnock Region, and guests are warmly encouraged to attend. Please check local publications and The Community Kitchen Facebook page for time and place. If you are interested in supporting future mobile pop-up events or would like to volunteer, please call the Kitchen's main line 603.352.3200 and ask for Kate. Thank you to our community for a very successful first event!



WELCOME KATE LEVERSEE

Katherine Leversee has joined The Community Kitchen as the Director of Pantry Operations. She will work in collaboration with Executive Director Sarah Harpster to co-design and realize the newly launched Mobile Food Pantry Program with an aim to spread awareness of food security systems, engage new pantry partners and networks, and better serve the population of the Monadnock Region. Additionally, she will oversee the staff and volunteers working within the brick and mortar pantry on Mechanic Street in Keene, the gleaning project, and the sourcing of food commodities for use in-house and redistribution to local partner pantries. A native of Keene, Ms. Leversee returned to the area in 2020 and worked most recently with Monadnock Food Co-op. Previously she had been employed in the produce industry in Boston, MA, in addition to filling several roles in the corporate sector. She is a graduate of Northfield Mount Hermon School and Ithaca College, holding a degree in Sociology.



Pantry Needs

Kid's Program

Pantry items

Single Serve oatmeal

Instant potato

Yogurt

Instant rice

String cheese

Baked beans

Canned meals

Sides

Gleaning Project- June is still a quiet month for gleaning. Time is spent reconnecting with farmers, which can be tough given just how busy they are. We are also reaching out to previous volunteers and establishing connections with new ones. All in all it is exciting to reconnect with everyone and start to feel the season approaching; not to mention an end to last year's potatoes and the beginning of fresh greens! For 2022, we hope to extend our connection to food pantries south of Keene; so we are ready to pass along produce that we cannot utilize. The Harvest Bridge food preservation program will continue this season. With the help of the Pantry and Hot Meal Programs, we decided to focus our efforts on preserving vegan and vegetarian meals, items that do not consistently find their way into our coffers. We hope to develop a delicious vegetable burger and marinara. Machina Arts will continue their support of this program with the addition of Orchard Hill Bakery; both have offered equipment and kitchen space! We are so thankful for this community support.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Pantry Program

Since the inception of COVID, we have adjusted our distribution to a take-out procedure. Twice a week, on Wednesdays from 12:30pm to 5:30pm and Thursdays from 11:30am to 4:00pm, bags of items including non-perishable food, produce, meat, bread and desserts are handed out. Our guests register at the front door and bags of food are delivered to their cars.

If you have a day available during the week we could use people to sort donated and salvaged food we collect from Hannaford, Target, Aldi's and the Monadnock Food Co-op. Help is also needed with filling food bags to hand out during Pantry.

Deliveries

Food Boxes are delivered to individuals registered with the Pantry who, for health reasons, are unable to pick up their own Pantry food. Our deliveries consist of two routes and households receive a box of food every other week. It is recommended that volunteers are able to lift at least 40 lbs. and are able to climb stairs. Deliveries are done every Thursday beginning at about 9:00am. Each route takes approximately one hour.

Hot Meals

Our Hot Meals Program distributes a prepared meal from 5:00pm to 6:20pm Monday through Friday and on Sunday's from 11:00am to 12:00pm. Meals including an entrée, salad, fruit salad, vegetable and dessert are packaged in clam shells, bagged and handed out at the door.

Food Prep:

Preparation of the meal begins at 10:30am. and volunteers typically stay until 1:00pm. Per direction of the Hot Meals Manager, volunteers help with peeling, chopping preparing salads, cutting up desserts, etc.

Weekday Serving/Clean-up:

Volunteers come in at 4:30pm. to help fill clamshells and bags with the evening meal and help with clean-up; which typically is done by 6:45pm.

Sunday Serving/Clean-up:

Volunteers come in at 10:30am. and help fill clamshells and bags with Sunday lunch and help with clean-up; which typically is done by 12:30pm.

The Community Kitchen is a great place to meet new people, have a few laughs and create a real sense of comradery. You will be working toward a common goal of helping those that need our help and it won't seem like work at all. We hope you will give us a call to see what might work for your schedule.

If you are interested in helping in the Pantry, please call Andrea Young at 603-352-3200 or in Hot Meals or with Deliveries, please call Peggy Higgins at 603-352-3200 to see if we have an opportunity that will work for you. Thank you!

Kindness is the key that opens the door of favour
and beautiful surprises.” ~Michael Bassey Johnson

STRATEGIC PLANNING

In the summer of 2021, TCK noticed that we were approaching a crossroads in our organizational life. Our second major renovation project was well underway, our feasibility study for the mobile food pantry was wrapping up, and, prompted by the pandemic, we were strengthening our relationships with community partners and advocating together for policies, programs, and investments to boost food security in our communities. We also found ourselves at the end of our prior strategic planning period. As we looked to undertake the next one, we realized that this one needed to be bigger – and deeper – than previous planning projects.

Other factors calling for attention as we undertake this strategic plan are our two new programs – advocacy and mobile food pantry – and our first leadership transition in a decade. We launched our request for proposals in December of 2021, garnering four excellent proposals from consultant teams representing an impressive array of skills and expertise. In the end, we chose to work with Chris Strong and Strong Resource Group as their proposal offered a systematic, comprehensive, and proven approach to developing and implementing effective strategic and operational plans.

Chris began working with a core team of two board and two staff members on a weekly basis in April, as well as meeting a larger Strategic Planning Committee monthly. She has conducted surveys of staff and board members, interviewed staff, board, community partners, and guests of The Community Kitchen, held a staff focus group, and conducted a comprehensive internal and external analysis of the organization's landscape. Chris facilitated the first of two board retreats at The Community Kitchen on June 25th to share the results of the research to date, revisit the organization's mission and vision, and identify priorities for further research and investments.

The strategic planning process is on track to produce a draft plan by the early fall, at which point, the board will reconvene to review the results. Once the strategic plan is finished, Chris will work with the staff of The Community Kitchen to develop an organizational plan that will help guide some reorganization of staffing roles needed to support new programs, to develop fundraising and marketing plans, and help the board clarify and strengthen their internal procedures.

CHRIS STRONG

Principal

Chris has more than 40 years of professional experience providing consulting services to nonprofits and associations. Chris helps individuals and organizations understand the complex issues they face, providing strategic counsel to define and develop capacity, and create long-term sustainable solutions.

Chris' expertise is in organizational assessments, strategic and operational planning, coaching, Board governance, management and operations, human resources, and fundraising.

Before establishing SRG, Chris was a vice president of a major medical center in Southern California and an executive with an international association. In 1992, after completing her MBA, Chris was compelled to broaden her work consulting to a greater array of industries. Her vision: to create a consulting practice founded on contemporary, forward-thinking, and practical approaches to helping leaders identify their values and strategic goals, synthesize information to attain those goals, and implement measurable action plans.

Chris is Chair of the Great Bay Community College Board of Advisors and past President of the Association for Fundraising Professionals, Northern New England and Orange County, CA. Chris has an MBA from the University of Southern California and a BA from the University of Colorado.



2022 EVENT RESULTS

30th ANNUAL
**FENTON FAMILY
DEALERSHIPS**
GOLF TOURNAMENT 
TO SUPPORT THE KEENE COMMUNITY KITCHEN

That 2022 found us organizing and celebrating the 30th Annual Fenton Family Dealerships Golf Tournament is remarkable.

That the tournament raised **\$58,504.22** is even more remarkable.

That one person has been at the helm of this event for those 30 years is the most remarkable thing of all.

Bill Fenton and his incredible wife JoAnn, have been the driving force behind this, the single largest fundraiser for The Community Kitchen, for the entire 30 years. This level of support for a small, donation funded charity is unusual but very indicative of the commitment to this community from the Fenton family. It's hard to find a nonprofit in this region that hasn't been touched in a positive way by the Fenton family, their business and employees.

The Community Kitchen is fortunate to have such a link to the Fenton family; the golf tournament started in 1992, and is lucky to have Donovan as a Board member. A great way to celebrate 2022.



Bill, Katy, JoAnn & Donovan



Phoebe presenting Bill with a commemorative plaque



We have had an amazing and successful NH Gives fundraiser day! Thanks to 57 generous donors, we raised \$6,303 on the official online platform, BUT, we also received \$7,500 in additional pledges! That's \$15,803 raised to boost kid's pantries across the Monadnock region, which will be added to the \$10,000 match from Monadnock Understands Childhood Hunger, for a very exciting grand total of \$25,803! We know that with over a dozen pantries across the region, we could use additional funds to meet this need. If anyone wants to make donations earmarked to this fund throughout the summer, we will continue to accept them. Checks or online donations to The Community Kitchen with "NH Gives" or "Kid's Pantries" in the memo or notes will be directed to this fund.



The photo shows outgoing Executive Director Phoebe Bray and incoming Executive Director Sarah Harpster enjoying a pie of a time! - their "reward" for us raising \$10,000!

UPCOMING EVENT



It's Official!
Local Harvest Celebration
Saturday, September 17th, 2022
5PM-8PM *Open House Style*

Guided tours by Sarah Harpster, Executive Director

Locally sourced hors d'oeuvre
(please note there will be no formal dinner this year)

Cash bar

Fantastic silent auction prizes

\$50 per person

For more information, questions or to RSVP
call 603.352.3200 or
ayoung@thecommunitykitchen.org

PARTING WORDS *from Phoebe Bray*

Working at The Community Kitchen has been a privilege and a pleasure. Early in my tenure I went to a conference. Everything was new to me - I had the business part of the job down, I just wasn't totally confident about the nonprofit bit. The lovely man leading the conference told us that at the end of every day he asked himself three questions of his nonprofit: 1. What did we do? 2. How well did we do it? 3. Is anyone better off? At the Kitchen at the end of the day the answer to question 1 is always ~ "we helped people". The answer to question 2, for me, is based on the word "well" ~ did we treat our guests and clients with respect, did we welcome them to the organization, did we listen to them? And the answer to question 3 is always yes ... and that makes me feel great. I saw a tattoo once that read "make yourself feel better ... do something for someone else" ... and it's true, helping others really does make you feel better.

Leaving The Community Kitchen will be hard - I readily admit I have control issues, don't delegate well and need to know what's going on in every square inch of the building ... but I was the right person for the job a decade ago (*and how can it be that long?*), but am now happy to step aside. I can truthfully say I will leave blood, sweat and tears in the fabric of the building, but can also stand back and be proud of what we have achieved over the last 10 years; the building is in great shape, the quality of the food has improved, the staff is an amazing bunch of people with myriad skills, who are stretched to the limit time and time again but come through with laughs and smiles (and the occasional word that cannot be printed here).

I am confident the organization is ready to lead the region in the fight against food insecurity and my successor, Sarah Harpster, has been totally involved since being hired as the gleaning coordinator in 2013. Her passion and commitment is evident the minute you meet her, as I hope you soon will.

One of the best things about the job is the amazing people I have met. I will take with me so many memories of the organization that has made the last 10 years so rich in every way. And I have to thank my already retired husband, Galen, who has patiently stood by and waited for me, *thank goodness!*



**My favourite kayaking
co-pilot, Cooper**

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUEST

We're all just walking each other home.
~Ram Dass

Local Hunger.
Local Need.
Local Support.

Dedicated to serving families and individuals for 39 years.

Thank you for joining us in making a difference in your
community. In the end, we are all neighbors!