May 2020 News & Updates

Reflections from the Director

Seeing daffodils in bloom and trees putting out their leaves, I'm heartened to know that despite the COVID-19 crisis, Spring has come again to us, as every year. And with it, new life is taking form and emerging from what was hard, frozen earth. Marvelously, that's what Bread of Life is experiencing as well. New things, long awaited, are taking form and emerging. For several years we have been working, planning, promoting, waiting, for our Under One Roof project to come to fruition. Building our new facility at 54 Eastern Avenue in Malden will enable us to serve more people and do so far more efficiently through our multiple food programs and program expansion possibilities. We are also partnering with Metro North Housing Corp. (MNHC), which will own and operate 14 permanently affordable studio apartments for formerly homeless individuals and veterans, some of the same groups Bread of Life has always served. In the past several weeks we received fantastic news: Bread of Life was awarded a major grant from the City of Malden through the support of the Malden Redevelopment Authority, the City Council, and Mayor Christenson. We were also approved for a major award by the Malden Community Preservation Committee. And now we've learned that our partner, MNHC, was awarded the final grant needed for their housing portion of the project by the Massachusetts Dept. of Housing and Community Development. This means that construction can start this Fall, contingent on Bread of Life raising the remaining $1 million we need for the Bread of Life portion of the project.

The COVID-19 crisis has made it even more clear how much we need our new facility. Our food distribution is increased 50%. We need more space, professionally designed for ideal food distribution and meal preparation and easily maintained and sanitized. The work we are doing providing food to struggling families is being honed and improved by the crisis as we expand our volunteer base, donor base, food distribution and delivery capacity. We know our work must continue and expand even after things return to "normal".
After we delivered groceries to Maria, a mom in Everett, she called and said tearfully, “You have no idea how blessed I am right now. I really appreciated it. In the future, when I go back to work, I’d like to help other people the way you helped me. God bless you and God bless everyone who’s doing this.”

We're in the home stretch of our Under One Roof project. We know that with our partnering foundations, banks, corporations, organizations, faith communities and you, our faithful volunteers and supporters, we will cross the finish line. If you, or people you know, have been waiting to see that finish line, or wondering how to make the greatest impact with your financial support, now is the time. Your gift can be made in honor or memory of a loved one, with naming opportunities on our wall plaques or for areas of our building and grounds. We need the help of each and every person who is a friend of Bread of Life and is able to make a financial gift, at whatever level, to make that gift now - and help us cross the finish line!

Thank you for thoughtfully considering this request.
God bless you, and stay safe,
Gaby

Gabriella Snyder Stelmack
Executive Director

Click here for information on our "Under One Roof" Campaign.

P.S. Our "Under One Roof" campaign continues to gather momentum, despite the crisis. Please like us and follow us on facebook and follow us on twitter. If you know of a house of worship, organization, business, individual, radio or TV show where we can talk about our campaign, please let us know by contacting Patty Kelly, Development Director: Patty.Kelly@breadoflifemalden.org, 781-820-4749.

Click here to get involved in Bread of Life's work.

Board Member Thoughts:
Dr. Douglas Mayers

As some of you know, I served as a Navy doctor with the Marines for the last years of my career. My mission was "force protection" which kept the Marines healthy and safe to meet their military mission. Now, having joined the board for the Bread of Life (BOL), this has transitioned to "force protection" to allow us to meet our mission of feeding the local patrons who need our support. Our mission has expanded greatly over the past few months as the lockdown for the COVID-19 epidemic has been extended so that now 24% of Massachusetts residents are on unemployment. Our local mission has become critical to many families.

COVID-19 is a new respiratory virus that has spread around the world in the past few months. As with most respiratory diseases, it is mainly spread by droplets when you speak or cough and from surfaces contaminated by those droplets. As with many viruses, this virus is transmitted readily in people who live in crowded circumstances such as nursing homes and homeless shelters and causes more serious disease in the elderly and infirm. To meet our mission of feeding those in need, it is critical that we protect ourselves and each other. Luckily, this is not complicated:

1. We need to maintain social distancing of 6 feet from each other, as possible, since this is the distance that droplets typically can spread.
2. Since social distancing is often challenging, we should always wear a face mask covering our nose and mouth when working in the kitchen or serving our patrons.
3. Wear gloves when handling food or providing food to patrons.
4. Avoid touching your face, nose and eyes.
5. Disinfect the counters and pantry surfaces frequently and wash your hands with alcohol-based hand sanitizer regularly and after removing your gloves.

We instituted these procedures early at the BOL and staff and patrons have established a very safe routine as we deliver food to the community. To date, none of the BOL staff or volunteers have developed symptomatic COVID-19 infection. Keep up the good work and be safe!
Volunteer Recognition Month

Throughout the month of May, follow Bread of Life on Facebook (link below) as we feature some of our fabulous volunteers. Join us in a Virtual Volunteer Recognition Zoom Event at end of May (date and time TBD). Stay tuned!

BOL Facebook Page

BOL Wish List

The number of people we serve has risen dramatically and continues to grow. This past Friday we served the highest number ever in a two-hour period at our food pantry: 160 households. Any donation you can provide from wish list greatly appreciated!

Extra Cheese Please!

Domino's Pizza Malden generously donated 25 cheese pizzas for our families. We're so fortunate to be a part of such a supportive community. THANK YOU!

Mask Appeal

Thank you Jamila Mouflih and Association of Moroccan Immigrant Network for the donation of masks. Very much appreciated!
Bayrd Foundation Donation

Thank you to Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation for generous donation of $25,000 to help Bread of Life’s COVID-19 relief efforts. We are very grateful for the long time support of the Adelaide Breed Bayrd Foundation- they are great friends of Bread of Life.

Neighbor helping Neighbor

Thanks to the generosity of a member IBEW Local 2222, Bread of Life families received a warm meal from our friends Harrows Chicken Pies. We are so grateful to our community working together to help neighbors!

Running Support
Thank you Run Club of Malden for running a virtual marathon and raising funds for Bread of Life! $660.00 was raised with more coming from individual fundraisers! Watch running club member Joe LeBlanc talk about the event here.

Food Drive

The Edward Jones- Financial Advisor: Christopher C Cinella food drive is in full swing and receiving lots of items. Chris is a great supporter of Bread of Life - from sponsoring our BOL team at Melrose Rotary Club’s Family Feud (so much fun!) to hosting this drive - thank you for all you do!

Standing in the Gap...

"quotes from the folks we serve"

A social worker from Communitas called Bread of Life trying to arrange grocery delivery to a senior citizen and his adult disabled son. "This is so helpful," she said, "This will make the family so happy."

A woman from Everett referred her elderly neighbor to receive a grocery delivery, saying "I did get an order for myself today and thank you so much. It's very much appreciated. There's a lot of good things in there. I can use everything. I can even make soup!"

An elderly woman from Everett said, when she got signed up for grocery delivery, "I appreciate it. You have no clue!"

A senior citizen called, anxious because he was out of food but wanting to stay home to protect himself against COVID-19. When he found out that Bread of Life could have a volunteer deliver groceries to him he said "Can you really?! Thank you so much!"

Our Everett Pantry Coordinator said "Delivered a huge amount of food to a senior this morning. He was extremely grateful."

Shop and Smile

If you shop at Amazon, every purchase will result in a donation to Bread of Life if you register at Amazon Smile and select us as your designated charity. The big shopping season is upon us and this is a great way to give back! You can sign up at Amazon Smile here.