Stop & Shop might be known for its vast selection of food and necessities, but around here, Stop & Shop is also known as one of our most consistent donors—often going out of their way to provide food for the people and organizations we serve. It’s not unusual for us to receive a call that a Stop & Shop truck is on its way, filled with food for us to share with our community. In addition, we pick up donated items from their distribution facility on a weekly basis.

Stop & Shop’s list of community engagement activities is long: Last November Stop & Shop associates loaded its fleet of trucks to deliver 22,000 turkeys to people in need across its five-state footprint. In addition, they raise funds throughout the year to support regional food banks and pantries to help fight hunger across the communities they serve. They also offer the Community Bag Program where $1.00 from the sale of every reusable bag goes to a monthly charity. Here at We Share Hope, we are so grateful for the fact that Stop & Shop thinks of us for items that need rescuing from their stores. Their donations have become a significant part of the operation and ensure that we can help those facing food insecurity throughout Rhode Island.

“Stop & Shop provides a great deal of support for us, every month. We pick up a variety of items from their distribution center, including produce, dairy products, meats and seafood. They make it possible for us to feed the vulnerable people in our community.” Says Johanna Corcoran, Executive Director of We Share Hope.

Thank you to Stop & Shop for the many wonderful ways you help the community!
A Note from Our Executive Director

Zero Balance Pantries

A few years ago, my husband was laid off unexpectedly from his job of five years. As we reeled from the shock of the news, I turned to our budget. How would we get through the next few months on only one income?

As I crunched numbers, I shifted focus from our budget to our pantry. I began to catalog the contents of the pantry and brainstorm meal ideas based on what I found. Thanks to the items in our pantry, I was able to make meals for a few weeks, which helped us save on grocery bills and stretch our single income.

Today, I realize we were fortunate to have these items ‘in reserve’ in the pantry. Thanks to conversations with our Hope Market guests, I’ve learned that many people facing food insecurity live week to week, not only in paycheck, but in pantry. For them, a crisis like a job loss, or a pandemic is even more catastrophic because they do not have a reserve of food or funds.

According to data collected from the Census Bureau’s Household Pulse Survey in November, a third of U.S. adults say they have difficulty covering everyday costs such as food, rent or car payments; people with the lowest incomes face the biggest challenges. Living paycheck to paycheck, these neighbors often see their bank account balance dip to zero.

If you’ve ever had the experience of looking at a zero balance in your bank account, then you can relate to the anxiety that occurs at the sight of those zeros. Our guests at Hope Market have shared that their bank accounts aren’t the only zero balance and that their pantries are also empty by the time they come to us.

Many who visit Hope Market, or our nonprofit partners have exhausted their options. Thanks to the food we share, they can add nourishing items to a pantry or fridge and experience the security of knowing where their next meal will come from. With your continued support, we can help our neighbors build up a food reserve that will help them withstand life’s unexpected curveballs.

The volunteer team at We Share Hope. recently recognized as D’Angelos “Everyday Heroes” for serving the community during the Covid-19 pandemic.

We Share Hope’s New Pantry Pick Up Program Makes It Easy to Fight Food Insecurity

Did you discover an assortment of unopened, nonperishable or canned food during your pantry spring cleaning?

Introducing We Share Hope’s Pantry Pick Up! This new program will send a friendly We Share Hope volunteer to your porch to pick up unopened, nonperishable items free of charge. These donations are brought back to the We Share Hope warehouse, where they are sorted and distributed to Rhode Islanders facing food insecurity.

“The Pantry Pickup Program will help us rescue food and reduce food insecurity in Rhode Island,” says Director of Programs, Emily Crandell, who is spearheading the program. “This is a simple way to include everyone in our mission to bridge the gap between hungry people and rescued food.”

The benefits of the Pantry Pickup Program extend beyond feeding our hungry neighbors. According to the Conservation Law Foundation, Johnston’s Central Landfill adds 3,800 tons of trash each day and 722 tons of that trash is food waste. If this rate of waste continues the landfill will reach capacity by 2034.

The Pantry Pickup Program gives Rhode Islanders an option for the nonperishable food they’re not planning to use, while preventing the landfill from reaching capacity so quickly.

So, the next time you’re organizing your pantry or at the grocery store, set aside some items for We Share Hope’s Pantry Pickup Program. Then visit wesharehope.org to schedule a pickup!

Nonprofit Partner Spotlight:
The Saint James Lutheran Church Chapter of Loaves & Fishes Rhode Island

Helping Creatively During Covid

The St. James Lutheran Church Chapter of Loaves & Fishes Rhode Island (LRFI) was founded over ten years ago in Barrington, RI. LRFI’s mission states: “With kindness and compassion, serving food and providing clothing to our neighbors in need, while honoring their dignity.”

Prior to the Covid-19 Pandemic, this kind-hearted group practiced their mission via a catering truck that traveled throughout Rhode Island, distributing hot meals, snacks, water, clothing, and other necessities to those experiencing homelessness. We Share Hope partnered with LRFI to provide the food used to create meals that went “beyond hotdogs” and included a variety of other hearty choices like pulled pork, sandwiches and steak and cheese subs. LRFI’s catering truck quickly became a beacon of hope for those experiencing homelessness.

When the pandemic shut down most of the state last year, LRFI’s catering truck mission was brought to a screeching halt due to safety concerns. However, the men and women of the St. James chapter of LRFI quickly identified different ways they could safely fulfill the mission and mobilized to assemble backpacks for the homeless filled with necessities like non-perishable food, hygiene products and essential clothing. Throughout this change in service, We Share Hope continued to support their mission by providing non-perishable food and hygiene products for the backpacks.

“Thanks to We Share Hope, and the efforts of many volunteers and donors, we have distributed over 300 backpacks so far.” says George Bowen, of the St James chapter of LRFI. “We do look forward to serving those in need a complete meal by returning to the use of the Loaves and Fishes food truck and greeting all of our friends who we have missed. The backpack project has been a way of serving during the pandemic but we can do so much more using the truck, and with the assistance of We Share Hope.”

We know that no matter what happens, the team at LRFI will do whatever is needed to ensure the homeless of Rhode Island have the nourishment and necessities to stay safe; We Share Hope is proud to support their important work!

We Share Hope Market

Over 400 people visit Hope Market every week. Meet a few of our familiar faces!

“I have special dietary habits and I have to eat a certain way. Shopping for the foods I need to eat can get expensive in traditional grocery stores, so Hope Market has helped me maintain my lifestyle while saving money!” ~ Henry

“My favorite thing about Hope Market is the volunteers. They are all so friendly and welcoming to me and the friends that I have sent here. I am so thankful for the work they do for We Share Hope.” ~ Lucy

“What keeps me coming to Hope Market is the wide selection of goods. I can do all of my grocery shopping here, which helps me and helps others in need. It’s a win-win.” ~ Cheryl

~ Cheryl
401Gives- Thank You For Sharing Hope!

On April 1st, the United Way of Rhode Island kicked off 401Gives, Rhode Island's annual day of giving. This was We Share Hope's first year participating in the program and it was a day filled with friends, fun and fundraising. The excitement started at 6:00am, when all donations were matched by the Rhode Island Foundation. Thanks to that match, we were able to earn over $800.00 in additional funds!

Then, we brought the celebration into Hope Market where our shoppers were greeted by Luke Renchen Entertainment's Rover Photo Robot and a prize wheel. We concluded the festivities with a Facebook Live broadcast to give viewers an inside look at We Share Hope's operations. Donations continued to roll in throughout the day, and we are thrilled to report that 80 donors helped us raise over $7,000 to combat food insecurity in Rhode Island. Plans are already being made for an even bigger celebration next year. Stay tuned!

Grand Opening: One Year Later!

We Share Hope made the move to Phillipsdale Landing in May of 2020, at the height of the Covid-19 Pandemic. At the time, a grand opening celebration was not possible. Thankfully, the recently relaxed Covid restrictions made it possible to finally celebrate our move. On Thursday June 10th, Hope Market shoppers, volunteers, and friends from the community gathered for a wonderful evening featuring an official ribbon cutting, light bites, and guided tours of the operations.