OUR STORY

Food Link is a volunteer-powered food rescue organization that was started by Arlington residents DeAnne Dupont and Julie Kremer in March 2012. Initially called the Food Recovery Project, Food Link began as DeAnne and Julie volunteered their time and personal vehicles to recover excess fresh foods from Panera Bread and Trader Joe’s after they learned that their leftovers were being thrown away every night. With plenty of food recovered and nowhere to put it, DeAnne and Julie began calling local social service organizations to find those that might be able to distribute it to residents in need.

Two and a half years later, the name of the organization was changed to Food Link, because food recovery was only one part of the puzzle: volunteers had to link food to the people who could use it.

In 2016, Food Link engaged in a process of transitioning from a founder-led organization to one with an expanded board of directors and staff to guide and operate a stable and sustainable nonprofit.

THE NEED

Paradoxically, the United States faces challenges regarding both wasted food and hunger:

- The United States wastes about **126 billion pounds of food** per year. (ReFED)

- **One in six children** nationwide do not have consistent access to adequate amounts of healthy, nutritious food. (USDA 2016 Food Insecurity Report)

- **Over 17% of seniors** are food insecure. (AARP)

- **Nearly 750,000 Massachusetts residents** do not have consistent, dependable access to enough food to lead active, healthy lives. (Feeding America)

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Food Link is a lean and efficient nonprofit with unparalleled volunteer enthusiasm. It is in the midst of a successful transition from being founder-driven to becoming a model for long-term sustainability, including salaried staff and a permanent working space.

Food Link raised over $150,000 in 2016 through a mix of individuals, corporations, and foundation grants to fund a number of capacity building investments including:

- One full-time Operations Director
- One half-time Volunteer Coordinator
- A van for the daily use by volunteers
- New refrigeration and freezer units
- A financial reserve to prepare for equipment and build-out of a new space.

Food Link increased its rescued food collection and distribution from 105,000 pounds in 2012 to 378,000 pounds in 2016, providing greater nutrition to people served by a growing number of social service organizations.

www.foodlinkma.org
Despite the perception of Arlington as an increasingly affluent community, the truth is that the high cost of living in the Greater Boston area means that many residents – especially families and seniors – have limited resources for fresh food. Thanks to Food Link, residents of Arlington and other towns have increased access to healthful and nutritious foods.

YOUR INVESTMENT HELPS YOUR COMMUNITY

Dinner last night was almost free, thanks to Food Link…I continue to be delighted and amazed at how excellent, nutritious food can be donated, schlepped, and distributed so that organizations such as Lex Eat can provide a healthy meal once a week to those in need. I dare say that Lex Eat would not be able to provide meals without Food Link. Without Food Link, our costs would be prohibitive, and fundraising would become a full-time job.

I am so thrilled that we can provide healthy, fresh food to our guests…and we absolutely could not do it without Food Link.

—Robin Tartaglia, Lex Eat Together
YOUR INVESTMENT HELPS US GROW:
A RECENT EXAMPLE

A popular restaurant in Lexington closed abruptly and the owners contacted Food Link late on a Sunday evening to donate their remaining food.

By noon on Monday, Food Link was there, helped by an emergency call for volunteers from the Volunteer Coordinator, Matt Gray.

Thanks to the capacity of “aMEALia,” our new van, Food Link was easily able to collect all 1,600 pounds of fresh food available. Matt adds, “Our new refrigerator and freezer units made it extremely efficient to rescue the entire amount of food. This increased capacity allowed us to take a step back and spread out the distribution of this food—if a delivery site later in the week typically receives dairy products from us, we can store it for them until that delivery. We are no longer forced to play ‘hot potato’ with the food and move it out as quickly as possible.”

The fact that this rescued food might otherwise find its way to a landfill or incinerator creates a tangible environmental benefit. Supporters of Food Link should feel confident that they are addressing two very important issues: food insecurity and sustainability.

– Adam Chapdelaine, Arlington Town Manager

WHO WE SERVE

Arlington Boys & Girls Club
Arlington EATS
Arlington Food Pantry
Arlington Senior Center
Belmont Food Pantry
Bunker Hill Community College, Single Stop Program (Boston)
Chestnut Manor (Arlington Housing Authority)
Cor Unum Meal Center (Lawrence)
Cusack Terrace (Arlington Housing Authority)
Drake Village (Arlington Housing Authority)
Eliot Community Human Services, Young Adult Vocational Program (Arlington)
Fidelity House (Arlington)
Hope Dove Inc. (Lowell)
Housing Families, Inc. (Malden)
Jewish Family and Children’s Services (Waltham)
Lex Eat Together (Lexington)
Lowell Transitional Living Center
Massachusetts Bay Veteran Center (Somerville)
Medford Community Cupboard
Medford Council on Aging, Medford Senior Center
Medford Family Life Education Center
Medford VFW
Menotomy Manor (Arlington Housing Authority)
Stan Kaszanek Transition House (Malden)
The Joseph M. Tierney Learning Center (Boston)
Thompson Elementary School (Arlington)
Wayside Youth & Family Support Network, STEPS Young Adult Resource Center (Arlington)
Youth Villages, Germaine Lawrence Campus (Arlington)
YOUR INVESTMENT HELPS OUR VETERANS

The Massachusetts Bay Veterans Center in Somerville houses 22 previously homeless veterans of all ages for an average of six to nine months while they get back on their feet. The building also includes seven subsidized housing units for veterans. In addition to the many services provided by the center’s dedicated staff, Food Link has played an important role in the lives of the veterans as well:

“Our center doesn’t provide food for the residents, so this is a treat,” says Anthony Joseph, the program director. “Food Link usually makes two or more deliveries each week and everything goes quickly—though sandwiches and desserts are the most popular! Residents can save the sandwiches in their refrigerators and eat them throughout the week. When we have groups of veterans who like to cook, they often cook together for the camaraderie.”

He adds, “We also allow former residents who successfully moved to permanent housing to come back and eat with the current residents. They often do, and they really appreciate the chance to have a good meal.

It helps them stretch out their funds to pay their rent and other necessities.”

Anthony continues, “Food Link’s support is a really good thing for us—we have guys here who have been living in their cars, some 70 years old, and they are so thankful for the fresh food.”

Massachusetts Bay Veterans Center Program Director
Anthony Joseph