Gift Catalog
2023–2024
**Stretching to meet rising need as record numbers of people turn to the Center**

We hear a lot these days about low unemployment, slowing inflation—a “soft landing” for the post-COVID economy. Despite this “recovery,” many people here, and across the nation, have been left behind and are struggling to get by. In fact, never in our 47-year history have we seen so many people turn to the Amherst Survival Center—approximately 4,000 people each month, a staggering 40% more than during the highest surges of the pandemic.

Visiting a food pantry or meal program was once an occasional stopgap in hard times, but now, the hard times are all the time. Food prices have soared. Housing is unaffordable. Childcare is hard to find. Wages have not kept pace, nor have SNAP benefits or other safety nets. Temporary COVID relief has come to an end.

**We know that access to food is a basic human right.** The Center has made a commitment to provide enough fresh, healthy food to really make a difference in our neighbors’ health and budgets. Over the last year, we’ve successfully gotten more food to more people than at any time in our history; but still, there are some forces weighing us down. Because of supply chain breakdowns and the end of COVID funding, there is less variety of free food available from the Food Bank. COVID-era grants are gone. And, as many donors feel the pinch themselves, individual donations have slowed.

**Thousands of our neighbors rely on the Center** to make sure they have the food they need, as well as medical care, connection, and access to so many other resources to care for themselves and their families. This Gift Catalog is a window into the urgent needs of our community, as well as a snapshot of the jaw-dropping impact you have helped make possible. Together, we have improved the health, well-being, and stability of our neighbors. We are building new partnerships, securing new grants, and asking for your help. **By contributing this year, you are sustaining a critical community hub that is abundant with food, free from judgment, and full of connections that feed the body and spirit.**

With profound gratitude for your steadfast support,

Lev BenEzra, Executive Director

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**A Community Hub and Safety Net for All**

For over four decades, the Center has been a community hub and a critical safety net. We offer “one-stop-shop” access to food, free health care, lockers and laundry, links to other local resources, and community.

**Choice.** Our Food Pantry stocks food to suit different dietary needs, preferences, and cultural traditions. Shoppers choosing the foods that work for their household is a key ingredient in dignity and satisfaction and means less wasted food.

**Connection.** Our sunny dining room is bursting with energy as community members break bread together. A good meal and a good conversation are medicine for body and soul.

**Care.** A hot shower, laundry, lockers, and mail service provide critical support for people experiencing homelessness.

**Health.** Participants avoid suffering from unaddressed health issues with help from the volunteer doctors and nurses at our onsite medical clinic.

**Support.** We provide access to community resources such as health insurance, SNAP, housing support, and vouchers for clothing.

**Community.** The Center’s calendar is ever-growing with musical performances, art workshops, movement classes, and special events that celebrate the rich diversity of our community. These activities provide joy and connection, reduce stigma, and feed the whole person.

**Join us! We would love to meet you!**

**$50**

**Community Activities and Resources**

Music, classes, workshops, and access to other resources.

**$100**

**Laundry, Showers, and Mail Service**

Critical support for people experiencing homelessness.

**$1,200**

**Daily Lunch (for ~350 people!)**

Providing a hot lunch remains at the heart of our operations.

Over the last year, we provided more than 1.3 million meals – prepared and groceries – to 9,000 community members.
More Food for More People

The Center’s mighty kitchen team is serving four times as many hot lunches as in 2019, with roughly 350 meals plated up or boxed to-go each day. Our menu changes all the time, offering healthy, delicious, and culturally diverse dishes that feed families with a range of tastes and preferences.

The Food Pantry is in high demand, higher than pandemic surges. With the new “Fresh Boost,” a second monthly shop of produce, milk, eggs, and other perishables, our Food Pantry provides personalized choice of two full weeks’ worth of groceries per person every month. "I have diabetes," one shopper told us, "so the choice of fresh produce is essential in my ability to stay healthy."

Our Food Pantry Delivery program, launched early in COVID, is now a critical point of access for 1,000+ people who can’t get here, pandemic or not. Our refrigerated truck and van travel 1,300 miles each month bringing fresh, healthy food to people’s doors. "I have no car, so the Center has been a serious help," one recipient shared. "Especially because I have a baby. It’s great that twice a month I get the staples we need. It has made a tremendous impact on our lives."

In addition, 100-150 people stop by daily for a wonderful variety of produce and bread recovered from local farms and area stores.

More lunch-goers, more pantry shoppers, more deliveries! All this adds up to purchasing significantly more food than ever before. We need your help to fortify inventory and meet current demand.

$40
Fresh Boost
More fresh food midway through the month.

$125
Groceries for a Household of 4
Two weeks’ worth of nutritious groceries from the pantry.

$170
Lunch for 50 People
Hot, nutritious lunches served in our dining room or taken to go.
Want to sponsor a full day of lunch? See page 3.

My daughter always says, “Sharing is caring.”

I am from Bangladesh and here as a graduate student. I have a scholarship, but it is not sufficient for my family’s living expenses, and rent here is high. So, the Center helps us save a lot on groceries. We get more than food here. We love coming here. My daughter can play, and we meet new people, too. We are lucky something is here to help us.

— Ashik
3,257 bags of pet food were distributed in the last year.

Access: Reaching More People

One recent weekend, 22 households registered to use the Food Pantry for the very first time - a large but no longer unusual number. “I never thought I would need this,” is a common refrain from many first-time participants. Despite working (sometimes multiple jobs), more and more of our neighbors find that skyrocketing costs of basic needs like rent, utilities, food, and medical care mean they need help to make ends meet.

This increase in participants is also the result of our efforts to make sure we are known, accessible, and welcoming. We have expanded our open hours and deliveries and have worked especially hard to connect with students, Mandarin speakers, Afghan refugees, and other new immigrants. We have partnered with community leaders, focused on language access, and increased the diversity of the foods we offer, including Halal meat, maseca flour, and a variety of Asian greens.

“Everyone is cheerfully greeted and warmly welcomed without judgment.”

“I didn’t know too much about the Amherst Survival Center until I was a student volunteer. Now that I work in the Human Services field, I make sure clients are aware of the ASC. It is comforting to know there are services available here for people when they need them, including for myself. The ASC is a real asset to our community for the Food Pantry and other services they offer. It’s also a great space to see familiar faces and meet new ones!”

— Jill

$20
Tele-translation Service
Easy communication with a participant, no matter what language they speak.

$200
Evening Pantry Hours
Expanded hours for onsite shopping and curbside pickup make food accessible to those who work during the day.

$425
Grocery Delivery for 5 New Households
When families contact us for the first time, help us say “Yes! We’d love to help.”

Pet Care Package
When times are hard, a pet’s companionship is invaluable. When budgets are tight, some pet owners even put their animal’s needs ahead of their own. Having free pet food at the Center means that our furry friends are cared for and the human-food goes to their people.

$25
Pet Care Package
Make a gift in honor of or in memory of a favorite furry friend!
Amherst Survival Center

Bold Action, Big Impact

OCT 2022 – SEP 2023

Due to rising cost of living, lagging wages, impacts of climate change, and the loss of crucial safety nets like pandemic SNAP benefits, more people than ever are struggling to put food on the table. In response, we are providing more food, making it more accessible, and reaching out so that more people know we are here to help.

Total Meals Provided
1,360,801 total meals for over 9,000 neighbors
(Prepared plus groceries for meals at home)

Daily Lunches
351 lunches served each day
(on average)

More Food to Each Family

The Food Pantry Provides...

Two weeks of groceries per household
6,293 people
(Available onsite, curbside, or via delivery)

Fresh Food Distribution
Produce and bread recovered from local farms and stores
128 people/day

Groceries Delivered
For those who can’t get here
1,266 people
(Including 292 kids and 424 seniors)

“When it feels like nothing else is out there, the Amherst Survival Center is supportive in physical, emotional, and spiritual ways.”

“We help us seniors live healthier and longer lives.”

“My mental health has improved because of less stress over expenses. The deliveries help because it’s so hard for me to get out.”

530 Volunteers
Served 32,069 Hours

2023-2024 Gift Catalog
The Free Clinic

Leaving symptoms and underlying illnesses unaddressed causes greater medical problems down the road. Even with insurance, co-pays and deductibles can make care unaffordable, and appointments can be hard to get. The result is delayed care or deep medical debt.

Our volunteer health-care providers offer check-ups, diagnosis, and on-the-spot wound care at our weekly clinic. They write prescriptions and make referrals to specialists and diagnostic tests. They even conduct kids’ school and camp physicals, or complete required exams to clear a patient to return to work.

Providing Health Essentials

Did you know that you aren’t allowed to use SNAP to buy diapers, tampons, pads, or incontinence products? Without these personal care items, a person’s health and dignity are at stake. A child without diapers is not allowed to go to day care, causing parents to miss school or work. Seniors who cannot afford incontinence products may shut themselves in at home or suffer humiliation. Your support helps the Center purchase needed items when they’re not available through donations.

$30
Diapers for Four Children
Help wipe out diaper need.

$50
Toiletries & Personal Care Pantry
The bare necessities of toilet paper, soap, toothpaste, or menstrual products.

$100
Supplies for the Health Clinic
Support daily operations of the clinic.

When I got here, I thought “Where am I? This place is amazing!”

The first time we came was November last year. We learned about it through the shelter. I felt lost and I was crying, but when I got here, I couldn’t believe it. We can wash our clothes, take a shower, and eat a hot meal. There’s music, a health clinic, and if you don’t know where to go they can help you find a warm place. This is the help people need.”

— Madeline & David
Thank You, Volunteers!

The impact of the Amherst Survival Center is powered by our incredible volunteers, who give their time and skills in a profound offering of mutual aid. Some of our volunteers regularly rely on our services, and some do not. They welcome participants, cook meals, unload food trucks and stock shelves, lead activities, assist shoppers, pack groceries for deliveries, sort recovered produce, and provide medical care. They build community and connection. We all have gifts to offer, we all have needs, and none of us do this on our own. We believe that together, we have enough.

530 volunteers served a total of 32,069 hours last year.

Thank you to our dedicated Staff, Board of Directors, and Committees!

Staff
Rizwana Abid, Administrative Associate
Carleen Basler, Program Director
Lev BenEzra, Executive Director
Alan Callaham, Community Meals Coordinator
Chris Dyson, Food Pantry Specialist
Miranda Groux, Resource Coordinator
Samuel Guerin, Director of Operations
Emma Havalotti, Program Specialist
Elizabeth Morrissey, Food Pantry Coordinator
Marcus Opalenik, Food Pantry Specialist
Kelley Jewell, Development Manager
Joseph Rogers, Food Pantry Specialist
Lisa Solowiej, Volunteer & Outreach Coordinator
Kendell Sweeney-Thomas, Food Pantry Coordinator
Karolyne Symonds, Community Meals Specialist

Board of Directors
Jennifer Moyston, President
Deron Estes, Vice President
Risha Hess, Treasurer
Christopher Howland, Clerk
Cammie McGovern
Benjamin Peters
Liesl Swogger
Allison van der Velden

Thank you to the community members who join our board members on the Development, Finance, JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion), and Investment Committees.

Thank you to our interns and support staff, who are an essential part of our team.

“We get a lot more people than we ever have. It gets busier by the month!”

“I’m 81, I’ll be 82 soon, and I’ve been volunteering for 7 years. We get a lot more people than we ever have. It gets busier by the month! The world isn’t getting any better for the average person, and a lot more people need the food. If my house wasn’t paid for, I wouldn’t make it on my own. I couldn’t make a mortgage and get food. People that come here need the food, and they mean it.”

— Doug
Food Recovery is Essential to Our Reach

We are fortunate to live in an area where nutritious fresh food is grown in abundance. We believe everyone should have access to this local bounty. Luckily, our food recovery partners agree. Thank you to the local farms (especially this year!), grocery stores, and community members with backyard gardens who generously donate fresh produce and baked goods for our neighbors every day.

Thank you to our Food Recovery Partners...

Atkins Farms, Big Y, Mi Tierra, Panera Bread, Starbucks, Stop & Shop, Tandem Bagels, Target, Trader Joe’s, Walmart, and Whole Foods Market!

...and to Local Farms Fighting Hunger!

Amherst College Book and Plow Farm, Brookfield Farm, Food Bank of Western Mass Farm, Hampshire College Farm, Kitchen Garden Farm, Mycoterra Farm, Next Barn Over Farm, Old Friends Farm, Riverland Farm, Simple Gifts Farm, Stone Soup Farm, UMass Extension Vegetable Program, UMass Hydro Farm, UMass Permaculture, UMass Student Farm, and Warner Farm.

Thank you also to the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts; we are honored to partner in this work.

Area businesses are vital partners in our mission,

providing financial support and in-kind goods and services, running food drives, and offering employee time as volunteers. We are so impressed and honored by the ways our local businesses continue to support this community. When you frequent these businesses, let them know you appreciate their support!

You are central to our shared impact!

Every grocery cart, delicious meal, supportive interaction, medical visit, or connection to other services is made possible by the incredible support of this community. When we call, you rise to the challenge. Your support has been swift and extraordinary, especially over these last few challenging years. At the Center, we are all invited to take what we need and contribute what we can in a beautiful sharing of resources. You donate financially, bring conversation to lunch, volunteer your time, organize food drives, invite a friend, plan fundraising events, and do whatever it takes.

For people with no more savings, insufficient wages, no safety net, or no home to rest their head, the Center is an indispensable lifeline. With sky-high costs of food and rent and the end of COVID-era supports, more people than ever before in our 47-year history are turning to the Amherst Survival Center for help – more than during the highest peaks of the pandemic. COVID grants to organizations like ours have ended as well, yet our neighbors are in greater need. Your help now is more critical than ever.

With your support we will:

- Serve more people in the Food Pantry, onsite and by delivery, providing two full weeks of groceries each month per household, including more fresh, healthy, and culturally appropriate foods.
- Plate up ~350 delicious, substantial, balanced, and comforting lunches each day, both in our dining room and to-go.
- Build community, offering a wide range of activities to bring people together and providing support services to help people meet their basic needs.
- Reach out and increase access for people in our community who are not yet connected with the Center, listening to their needs and welcoming them warmly.

Your individual donations make up 55% of our cash revenue.

It is your support that will sustain and expand our reach in 2024 and beyond.

Our total budget includes:

- Cash Revenue: 35%
- In-Kind Donations: 65%
- Individuals: 55%
- Private Grants: 32%
- Government Grants: 8%
- Business/Orgs: 5%
- Other: <1%

For a list of business supporters, visit amherstsurvival.org/business-partners

Our annual budget also includes $2.5 million in in-kind support, including donated and Food Bank food!
Thank you for your ongoing support!

This holiday season, give the gift of nourishment and health. We invite you to honor your friends, family, or business associates with gifts from this catalog. You can also make a general gift to be put right to use where it's needed most.

Complete and mail the enclosed gift envelope.

Multiple gifts? Wonderful! Please enclose a note with your gift selections and your recipients’ names and addresses.

Donate online at www.amherstsurvival.org

We will be delighted to send an ‘in your honor’ acknowledgement card to each of your honorees or, if you prefer, we’ll send the cards to you to distribute yourself.

Join our Sustainer’s Circle

Setting up a manageable monthly or quarterly donation increases your impact in caring for our neighbors and strengthening our amazing community.

Sign up at AmherstSurvival.org

The Amherst Survival Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All donations to the organization are tax deductible in accordance with state and federal tax laws.

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