FOOD BANK, MEALS ON WHEELS COMBINING ORGANIZATIONS TO FEED MORE WESTERN NEW YORKERS IN NEED

The Food Bank of Western New York, Meals on Wheels for Western New York and the Meals on Wheels Foundation of Western New York have formed a joint organization in order to tackle the root causes of hunger while better reaching underserved populations and more efficiently meeting the needs of the community. The new organization, known as FeedMore WNY, will expand on Meals on Wheels’ and the Food Bank’s current programming with plans to add new services, including child summer and afterschool feeding programs, food pantries for mobile seniors and workforce development training through the establishment of a community kitchen.

FeedMore WNY expects to distribute at least 10 percent more food to Western New Yorkers in need in its first three to five years as a unified organization. It will accomplish this through the creation of more feeding programs targeted to better reach underserved children and seniors. The organization also plans to launch culinary and warehouse training opportunities to provide hard and soft skills to individuals with high barriers to employment.

“Our goal is to utilize the strength of this new alliance to attack the root causes of hunger, serve new clients and help fill unmet needs.”

“The Food Bank and Meals on Wheels are among the most highly respected nonprofits in our community,” Jerry Sheldon, FeedMore WNY board chair, said. Sheldon previously served as chair for the Food Bank of WNY Board of Directors. “Despite their individual successes, our community still has many unmet needs. Our goal is to utilize the strength of this new alliance to attack the root causes of hunger, serve new clients and help fill unmet needs. The synergy of the two nonprofits’ missions will serve our community more efficiently and allow for the development of programs, as well as a community kitchen that neither nonprofit could do on its own.”

FeedMore WNY will employ more than 110 employees. No jobs were eliminated as a result of the two organizations combining operations.

Both organizations have dedicated teams, including staff and volunteers, who are committed to supporting the mission of helping those in need throughout the community. “We are both well-known and respected in the communities we serve and we are each financially sound,” Christine Procknal, former president and CEO of Meals on Wheels, said. “This is the perfect time for us to form an alliance. Together we will develop new and innovative ways to serve our communities and alleviate hunger. Together we will feed more.”
Welcome to FeedMore WNY! Our Board of Directors, Community Ambassador Council and staff are excited for this opportunity to better serve our vulnerable neighbors and tackle unmet needs in our community.

As FeedMore WNY, we will expand and improve upon our existing services, so clients of our Meals on Wheels program, food bank programs and partner hunger-relief agencies will continue to enjoy nutritious food and exceptional care. We also will create new opportunities to alleviate hunger. Our plans include more comprehensive senior feeding opportunities and the creation of child summer and afterschool feeding programs. Down the road, our goal is to launch a workforce development program that includes culinary and warehouse training opportunities targeted to unemployed and underemployed individuals facing high barriers to successful and sustainable employment.

Though Meals on Wheels and the Food Bank have been collaborating for decades, the decision to join forces was made after much careful consideration. We toured and learned from national models where successful food bank and Meals on Wheels integrations already have taken place. We have studied hunger-relief programs with community kitchens that provided skills training to those they served and we will use those programs as best practice models. A task force comprised of board members, staff and community volunteers from Meals on Wheels and the Food Bank worked incredibly hard to ensure we asked all the right questions and conducted a thorough review of where the organizations are today and how best to position them for the future. Ultimately we enthusiastically agreed that, by coming together, we could make a greater impact in the community.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who worked on making this next great step in eradicating hunger in Western New York possible. I especially want to recognize my colleague and dear friend, Chris Procknal, who served as interim president and CEO of Meals on Wheels for the past 18 months. Prior to her role as executive director, Chris was the chief operations officer for the organization. The dream of FeedMore WNY was realized thanks to her strong leadership, compassion and dedication to our mission. I thank Chris for her service to our organization and the community as she now embarks on her well-earned retirement.

Most of all, I thank you. Without your support, we would not be here today. With your continued partnership, we can provide nourishment and hope to more children, families, seniors and veterans. Together we WILL feed more!

Sincerely,

Tara A. Ellis, President & CEO

**FeedMore WNY FAQs**

**What is FeedMore WNY?**
The Food Bank of WNY and Meals on Wheels for WNY have joined forces to become FeedMore WNY. The goal of FeedMore WNY lies in its name: to feed more Western New Yorkers of all ages for whom securing nutritious food is a challenge. FeedMore WNY’s mission is to offer dignity, hope and a brighter future by providing nutritious food, friendship and skills training to its Western New York neighbors in need.

**Why are the Food Bank and Meals on Wheels coming together?**
The Food Bank and Meals on Wheels share complementary missions and a longstanding history of working together to feed the Western New York community. After decades of collaboration, combining organizations was a natural progression and the logical next step. As both organizations looked to improve and grow programs and reach more of our neighbors in need, we realized that we could accomplish far more together than we could hope to achieve on our own.

**Are the organizations combining for financial reasons?**
No. Both organizations are financially healthy and sound so this alliance is not based on financial necessity. The effort was not prompted by internal or external funding decisions or by recommendations by either organizations’ core funders. We do, however, believe it will be financially advantageous and lead to more flexibility to feed Western New Yorkers in need.
FEEDMORE WNY OPENS FIRST COLLEGE PANTRY THROUGH SCHOOL PANTRY PROGRAM

FeedMore WNY recently partnered with SUNY Erie to launch its first on-campus college food pantry under its School Pantry Program. The pantry is located on SUNY Erie’s City Campus. FeedMore WNY’s School Pantry Program also serves students and their families through pantries at five area high schools.

Hunger has become a growing problem on college campuses. Many students struggle to afford the costs associated with a college education and sacrifice purchasing food in order to make ends meet. Through the School Pantry Program, students are able to access free, nutritious food to take home for themselves and their family members.

“It is a heartbreaking reality that so many college students in our community and across the nation struggle with hunger.

“I have been working with someone from the Food Bank or Meals on Wheels. How do I contact them now?

For now you can still reach us at the same email addresses and phone numbers. As we continue to integrate, we will make sure any changes on our end do not impact your ability to connect with us and any new phone numbers, physical addresses or email addresses will be communicated to the community.

I receive food assistance and support from Meals on Wheels/the Food Bank. Will my services be impacted?

No. You will still continue to receive the high-quality care, nutritious food and friendship that you are used to. Your day-to-day interactions with Meals on Wheels, the Food Bank or one of the Food Bank’s partner agencies will not change.

Will any of your programs be eliminated?

No programs will be eliminated as a result of this alliance. In fact, the ultimate goal is to expand and improve on our already successful programming. We also will be creating new programs to help fill unmet needs, including child summer and afterschool feeding programs, more comprehensive senior feeding opportunities and warehouse and culinary training programs to help individuals with high barriers to employment.

Where is the FeedMore WNY website?

We are in the process of bringing all of our resources together. In the meantime, you can continue to access Meals on Wheels’ website at: mealsonwheelswny.org and the Food Bank’s website at: foodbankwny.org. When the new FeedMore WNY website launches, we will communicate that exciting news to our community.

We believe that receiving a college education should never come at the cost of accessing healthy food,” Tara A. Ellis, president and CEO of FeedMore WNY, said. “We hope that this pantry is the beginning of many more similar partnerships for FeedMore WNY as our community works together to solve the crisis of hunger on college campuses and feed our hungry neighbors of all ages.”

FeedMore WNY currently is working with SUNY Erie to open additional pantries at its North and South campuses.
12TH ANNUAL WALK OFF HUNGER | SATURDAY, JULY 27, 2019 FROM 10 A.M. TO 2 P.M. (WALK TO BEGIN AT 11 A.M.) ISLAND PARK IN WILLIAMSVILLE

This fun, family-friendly event, presented by Life Storage, will feature great food, children’s activities, raffles and more! Registration for the 2-mile walk is $25 per person. Children ages 15 and younger are free to attend.

FILL THE BACKPACK | SUNDAY, JUNE 2 - SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2019 WEGMANS LOCATIONS THROUGHOUT WNY

Wegmans Food Markets, News 4 WIVB-TV/CW23 WNLO and Fidelis Care will team up with FeedMore WNY to collect food for children in need. For two weeks in June, Wegmans shoppers will be able to purchase pre-packaged bags of food to support the BackPack Program, which helps students who rely on school meals by providing them with food to take home on the weekends.

ALSO MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR:

Hungry to Help | Thursday, June 20, 2019 Delaware North Courtyard, 250 Delaware Ave., Buffalo, NY 14202

Don’t miss this new culinary experience featuring signature cuisines from local chefs!

Buffalo Spree’s Best of WNY | Friday, June 21, 2019 Larkin Square, 745 Seneca St., Buffalo, NY 14210

Enjoy a cocktail party celebrating your favorite WNY places to eat, work, live and play.

Third Annual Run 716 | Sunday, August 4, 2019 Flying Bison Brewing Company, 840 Seneca St., Buffalo, NY 14210 15k scenic race and relay throughout Buffalo.

Plate Expectations | September 2019

The evening will include delicious food and drinks, auction items, “lucky numbers” and games such as a balloon pop for the chance to win great prizes!

19th Annual Motorcycle Run & Rally/Cruise-in | Saturday, September 14, 2019 Newell-Faulkner American Legion Post 880, 2912 Legion Drive, Eden, NY 14057

Registration begins at 9 a.m. and kickstands up at 11 a.m.! The motorcycle run starts and ends at the American Legion Post 880. The motorcycle rally and cruise-in includes food, beverages, raffles, vendors, “dice runs” and live entertainment all day.

TO LEARN MORE OR TO MAKE A SECURE DONATION TO THE FOOD BANK OF WNY, VISIT WWW.FOODBANKWNY.ORG.

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