



The Good Food Exchange



Spring 2015

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Holiday Food Rescue

Twas three days before Christmas when Ken Finkelstein got the call: please send Friendship Donations volunteers to rescue fresh, healthy food about to be thrown away at the Cornell dining hall in Appel Commons before the facility closed for the holidays.

With a sizeable group of volunteers already alerted to help, he headed to the dining hall in his car to make sure all went smoothly with the pickup. That's when he got a second call: Ithaca College's dining facility also had surplus food to give away.

"We weren't expecting to hear from them because they had already donated quite a bit of dairy and produce a few days earlier. But they called and asked if we'd be willing to pick up more, so I said, 'Sure,'" recalls Finkelstein, who was on call that day to fill in for FDN program coordinator Meaghan Sheehan Rosen.

The third call came soon after he arrived at FDN's food-storage area at the Just Be Cause Center to help volunteers in seven vehicles unload the rescued food. On the line were staff at the Rescue Mis-



Our volunteers pick up donated food 24/7 throughout the year—from orchard apples to supermarket surplus to campus dining hall fare—and redistribute it to those who need it most.

sion Friendship Center seeking surplus food donations.

"We looked around and realized there was an enormous amount of

food, much more than the food pantries who pick up from us would need," says Finkelstein. "So some of our volunteers brought over about 20 boxes to the Rescue Mission, including fresh produce, yogurt and industrial-sized containers of milk and juice."

But a lot of milk—300 gallons in dining-hall-sized containers—remained in FDN's CoolBot. So he phoned FDN founder Sara Pines for help. "She called people she knew and managed to find recipients for all of it," he says.

The evening of the great food rescue, the donated food had been stacked six-foot-high in FDN's storage area. But by the end of the holiday week the area was almost completely empty, he was pleased to see. Everything had been given away.

"It was an ideal time for us to get the food because there's a real need around the holidays, and thanks to the hard work of our volunteers, we were able to rescue and

redistribute it," Finkelstein says. "I felt very proud of the effective way the organization worked." ■

—Article by Linda B. Myers

PARK FOUNDATION

Great news! The Park Foundation recently awarded FDN \$13,000 for general operating support. Thank you for helping to support our mission.

Coming Soon: Neighborhood Food Hubs 2015

This July, FDN's Neighborhood Food Hubs program will be entering its third year.

On a designated day, volunteers who host the Hubs around the county will set coolers in front of their homes. If you have extra produce from your thriving summer garden or CSA share, drop it off at your nearest Hub, and it will be transported to FDN and then to a designated food pantry.

Last year, ten Hubs collected and redistributed 2,800 pounds of food. For information, visit www.friendshipdonations.org/hubs or use the QR code to the right.



Dear FDN supporters,



Anisa Mendizabal

With your help, FDN rescued and redistributed close to half a million pounds of food *just last year!* Now that's something to celebrate—as well as one of the reasons we held a community celebration in February at the Just

Be Cause Center.

Another reason was to debut the wonderful new film about what we do, “The Story of Friendship Donations Network: Rescuing Food, Reducing Hunger,” by filmmaker Mark Hartsuyker, with original music by David Graybeard. Thanks to Mark, who donated his time and talents over many months; to David, who wrote a song just for the video; and to the Social Service League of Ithaca for their gift of support, we now have a wonderful way to share what we do. (You can view the video at www.friendshipdonations.org.)

The community celebration was also our way of reflecting to volunteers and supporters the impact of their combined efforts. We give heartfelt thanks to the team of volunteers and food donors who made the event a reality, especially to Kathy Simons and Kristina Yurukova, who worked tirelessly to conceptualize, plan, and make it a unique and special gathering.

When you make a gift to FDN, you

can be sure you're supporting an organization that does a lot with very little. We've stayed true to founder Sara Pines's vision for creating a network that keeps valuable food from being thrown away and redirects it to people in need across our community.

We are able to continue to do this by keeping things simple and efficient. We employ just one (incredible!) paid employee, our part-time program coordinator, Meaghan Sheehan Rosen, who matches volunteers to food rescue and delivery assignments, and continually finds ways to improve what we do while keeping our footprint light.

Our volunteers—whether picking up food, helping unload it at our storage space or at a food pantry, speaking on our behalf or hosting a Neighborhood Food Hub—provide the energy for virtually all of our operations. Our board members, all volunteers, manage our nonprofit organization's finances, make policy decisions, and plan for our future sustainably.

Our rent is modest thanks to landlord Jerry Dietz, who established the Just Be Cause Center in memory of his late wife, former FDN president Judy Dietz, to help nonprofits manage overhead more sustainably, and who donates to us the cost of such expenses as the photocopying of this newsletter.

But one thing is certain: we couldn't do any of it without your assistance. Thanks for your continuing support of our dual mission—to rescue food and

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rescuing food, reducing hunger

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Program Coordinator

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give it to those who need it most while reducing waste in our community. Your help contributes to making this community a caring one.

—Anisa Mendizabal
President, FDN Board of Directors

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