

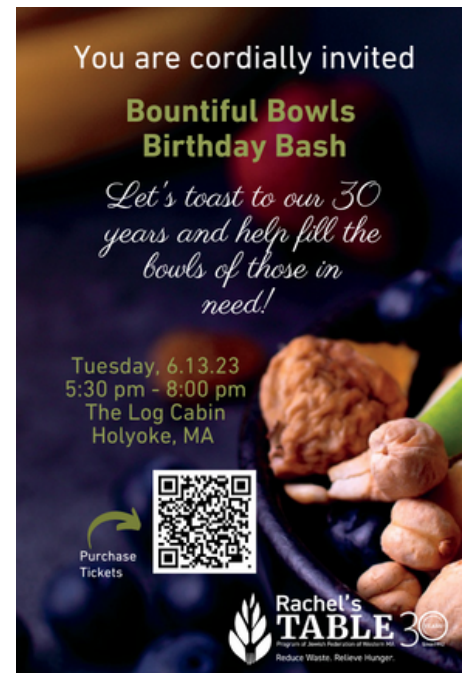
Dear Friends:

April/May 2023

Summer is around the corner marking the opening of farmers markets. We are excited to include fresh produce in our deliveries. As we see food prices rise and more people hungry, thank you for making a difference every day.

Bountiful Bowls is Finally Here! - SOLD OUT!!

On Tuesday, June 13, we will celebrate our 30 years of service to Western Massachusetts while we honor the 10 female founders, the “4 J’s” - mentors who have catalyzed new initiatives for Rachel's Table, and the Arbella Insurance Foundation who sponsored the start of the Growing Gardens program with a 3-year grant. We also will talk about our future and thank everyone who has been a part of our growth during these years. We are thankful to everyone who purchased tickets and sponsored this event. We always hope that there is a day when a Rachel’s Table is not needed, but as long as there is the need, we will be there to help!



Introducing Chana Laila

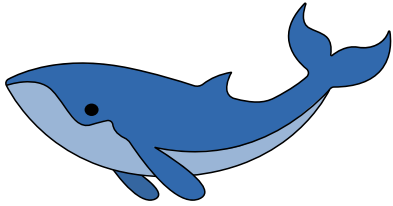
Chana joins Rachel’s Table with over 10 years of experience in office management and administration, with a focus on creative optimization and team building. She brings with her a lifetime’s passion for gardening, environmental sustainability, and creating community through music and the arts. Chana is an experienced herbalist who shares her garden plants and produce with her community, creates hand-crafted wellness products, and offers design consultations and support to aspiring gardeners. Chana studied music composition and performance at Hampshire College, has recorded two full length albums, and has spent many years leading live concerts, drumming workshops, and women’s Torah study groups, with a focus on bringing people together, building community, and facilitating personal growth. Chana is a trained birth doula who has supported many women with holistic labor support and postpartum services, and she is also a devoted mother of 5 wonderful children. Chana is excited to be directing her efforts towards furthering the mission and reach of Rachel’s Table, with a passion for the hard work necessary to make meaningful contributions.

A message from Chana: I am very excited to join Rachel’s Table staff and this amazing team of volunteers as the new Office Manager and Development Assistant. I look forward to meeting all of you and supporting the wonderful work that you do!

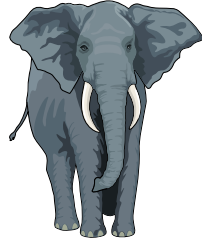
2023 Food Stats

In **2023**, through the **end of May**, with the help of all of you **volunteers**, the generous **Food Donors** we work with, **supermarkets**, **restaurants**, **local schools** & **universities**, food drives by concerned **churches**, **banks**, and other groups, and other contributions,

In 6 months, Rachel's Table has delivered over 238,507 lbs of food. which is the same weight as ...



A Blue Whale



15 elephants



55 Cars



15,000 Bowling Balls

Rachel's Table Van

The Van continues to rescue lots of food generally and specifically in the more nutritious categories like meat and produce. The van allows us to develop relationships with and accept large food donations from partners like Jozev Foods, Dollar Tree, and Big Y and Stop & Shop Supermarkets.

· In April & May in our non-Food Bank routes we picked up **over 15,969 lbs in extra food donations** compared to before we had the van highlighted by a **donation from Westfield State University of over 4,300 lbs including 463 lbs of eggs and 1,455 lbs of produce**. In the new **Big Y Westfield and Aldi's donations we rescued over 19,834 lbs of food** of which over **72% was meat, and when produce and dairy are included, it was 81% highly nutritious food**.

The total amount of food rescued by the van for April & May is 55,367 lbs.



Westfield State University Donation

Thanks so much to the hard-working Van Team members Steve Lepow, Lenny Shaker, Shaun & Anita Hayes, Mike Paysnick, Tim Harty, Arturo Cain, Paul Duquette and new Van Team member Bruce Winer.

Because the van will be used for larger donations, we are planning for the van to be operated by teams of two volunteers. **The work of the van will also be increasing as time goes on, so we are looking for more Van Team Members**. If you individually or you and a partner are interested in joining the van team email Steve Lepow at s_lepow@yahoo.com.



ESSEntials

At the end of May, as part of the celebration of Shavuot of Rachel's Table's ESSEN-tials program purchased and delivered holiday and every-day food, including blintzes, cream cheese & bagels, butter, quartered chicken, ground beef, rice, baked beans, and oranges to 38 of our Kosher community member families in need. Thanks to volunteer & Board Member Steve Lepow who helped pick up the food and assemble the bags and volunteer Iris Linson who also helped assemble the bags, and Cathy Chandler of Jewish Family Service who delivered the food to the families.

Growing Gardens

The 2nd year of the Growing Gardens program kicked off on April 3 with the annual orientation for participating agencies. In attendance were the agencies who started in the program last year, Christina's House (both locations), Robinson Gardens, St. Andrews, and Friends of the Homeless as well as the ones who are starting this year: Seniority House, Gray House, the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee, and Open Pantry-Wilbraham St.

All eight of the gardens are now established, planted, and growing. Garden's Dream Farm in Enfield donated plants for many of the gardens and Growers Direct in Somers donated for the St. Andrews garden with some extras used in other gardens. The Teen Board helped distribute the plants from Garden's Dream to the agencies.



Seniority House



The Gray House

With the help of several volunteer groups, Rachel's Table staff, The Gray House E.D. Kristen McClintock, and a number of the children in The Gray House's afterschool programs, there are now 9 raised beds growing tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, potatoes, peas, strawberries, basil, lettuces, carrots, parsley, pumpkins, and zucchini.

At Seniority House, a group of 8th-graders and a teacher from Springfield Renaissance High School led by Rachel's Table staff built, placed, and filled 11 wheelchair-accessible planting beds (a 12th bed hasn't arrived yet) and installed pathways that are also wheelchair-accessible. The residents have installed the plants and have even gone out and bought additional ones of their own.

At the Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee, some existing beds were rehabilitated by weeding, transplanting some flowers to other parts of the site, and adding compost. This work was done by BGCC volunteers and staff and Rachel's Table staff. This garden is temporary for this year and a new, larger garden will be created next year along with, possibly, chickens.



Open Pantry-Wilbraham St's garden was established primarily through the efforts of Growing Gardens' supporting partner NOFA-Mass, including Sister Anna Muhammed-Gilbert and liaison Beth Ward, as well as Open Pantry staff and residents at the house.

Gleaning

In early May, Cara attended and presented at the 2023 International Gleaning Symposium in Milwaukee, WI. She spoke on an interfaith panel called, "*How Does Faith Inform Our Work?*" She found it notable that several key words present in the mission statements and program descriptions of the other panelists' organizations aligned with Rachel's Table values and language for our work: reciprocity, service, nourishment. It is inspiring to feel we are part of a wider network of faith-based organizations engaging in food system repair work.

Gleaning has begun! We are so grateful for incredible volunteers helping lead the way in this year's gleaning expansion: longtime RT volunteers Jill Stewart, Alyce Stiles, and Judy Yaffe in Hampden County; Steve Colicelli of the Hampshire County Food Policy Council in Hampshire County; and Temple Israel Glean Team founder Rabbi Andrea Cohen-Keiner and veteran Sara Brown in Franklin County. Keep a lookout for the gleaning events calendar and online sign-up to go live in July.

Funded by the Regional Food Systems Partnership grant RT received last year, we are hiring a Gleaning Assistant to support the growth of the gleaning program. Please view and share the full job description, which can be found here: <https://rachelstablespringfield.org/careers-2/for-immediate-hire-gleaning-assistant/>.

We are looking for a volunteer who can regularly drive a Monday route to pick up produce from Brookfield Farm in Amherst and deliver to Stone Soup Cafe in Greenfield. Please contact Cara at csilverberg@feedwma.org if you are interested!

New Volunteers

Welcome to Pat & Bill Quinn, who drove their first route last week and Mike & Jennifer Craig, who have decided to join the Van Team and to Joe Hershon who has started driving routes again.

Teen Board

In April and May the Rachel's Table Teen Board Elected new Officers for the 2023-2024 year and Delivered 500 starter plants to 6 different agencies. The new Teen Board Officers will officially start their term at the beginning of next school year. The 2023-2024 Teen Board Officers are:

President - Franza M.

Vice President - Melina F.

Vice President of Programming - Lauren B.

Vice President of Special Events - Isabella D.

VP of Membership and Outreach - Mia C.

VP of Publicity and Social Media - Reese H. & Maia O.

Secretary - Nora S.



In May the teens delivered over 500 starter plants to many agencies participating in Rachel's Table Growing Gardens program. The starts were generously donated by Garden's Dream Farm in Enfield which is owned by a former teen board members' family. At Christina's House the teens were even able to plant the donated starts with the help of Board Member Marla Adelsberger.

The Teen Board is looking for new members for the 2023-2024 school year! If you know any teens or teen groups that would be interested, email Sarah at sbate@feedwma.org.

Rachel's Table Transitions into Its Own Entity!

As we make this important move to provide more timely, flexible and robust service to our community, please know that our current service will suffer no disruption. We continue to distribute food and nourishment through rescuing, purchasing, gleaning and growing food.

We will also have new emails and a new website! The older web information will direct you to us as well, but here is the new information as of July 1:

Website: www.feedwma.org

Emails: the beginning is the same, with feedwma.org as the second part – for instance: jfalk@feedwma.org, jlevine@feedwma.org, sbate@feedwma.org, csilverberg@feedwma.org, claila@feedwma.org.

Warm regards,
Jodi, Jay, Chana Laila, Cara, & Sarah

