

Hello to RTWM family and friends!

After running our race, we are finally slowing down enough to walk together and take stock in what you all, as volunteers and helpers, have accomplished in the past six months of 2024, and in the past **full year** - July 1 was our year anniversary - of being our own nonprofit entity!!! We made it, together! This year has been a year of creating a new foundation, moving to new soil, and yet rooting ourselves in our important values and traditions. **You** continue to be the biggest root of all – the volunteer community. Thank you for your commitment to the cause. This year, starting our second year as a nonprofit, we will focus on gratitude. We thank you, first and foremost, for all you do. Below you will find statistics of poundage and stories of pride, community gatherings and upcoming events. *You are at the heart of it all.* We also thank all our partners. A few weeks ago, I got to do that on [WWLP's Founder's Day on Mass Appeal](#). WWLP has been a founding partner, helping us spread our mission and support our work almost from the beginning. We will soon be announcing our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event where we can begin to share our gratitude for you. There will be an additional appreciation event in Hampshire County this summer as well as our fall event usually held in Hampden County. Keep on the lookout!

With care,

Jodi Falk, Executive Director of Rachel's Table of Western Massachusetts

**In this Issue: Volunteer Updates, RTWM in the Community,
Program Updates, Volunteer Spotlight**

Volunteer Updates

New Volunteers

We have welcomed **27 new volunteers** since Jan 2024! Welcome Brad Albert, Mary Antolina Andrews, Peter Benjamin, Maxine Bernstein, Bob and Marie Coughlin, Howard Dickstein, Greer Doble, Jane and John Dion, Stewart Creelman, Marie Holmes, Kathleen Horgan, Nancy Houle, Kevin Joslyn, Frances McGregor, Chad Mooneyham, Joanne Moore, Joan Nataloni, Susan Perez, Rosalie Rioux, Jeanne Ryan, Jessica Sinopoli, Laurel Smith, Margot Wise, and Sue Zegarra.

New Donors and Agencies

In 2024 RTWM has welcomed the following new and seasonal **food donors!** Bernardino's Bakery, Cross Street Farms, East Longmeadow Public Schools, Granger School/Agawam Public, GreatHorse, Liberty Mediterranean, Longmeadow Public Schools, Red Rose Pizzeria, Revitalize CDC, Springfield School Volunteers, Stony Hill Farm, West Springfield Public School, WWLP-TV22. RTWM has also welcomed a new partner **agency** this year, Michael J. Dias Foundation.

Have you signed the Waiver and Code of Conduct yet?

Our Volunteer Task Force has been hard at work for quite some time creating a Volunteer Handbook. The important thing for now is that we are asking you to read it and sign both the code of conduct and waiver of liability forms that you'll see on our new [volunteer resources webpage](#). We thank you for taking the time to help us out by reading and signing. We want to heartily thank the Volunteer Task Force, led by Jan Dickstein, with members Marla Adelsberger, Donna Shea and Rosalind Devine, who spearheaded this effort.



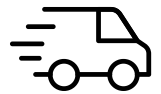
2024 Statistics Jan-June

396,471 lbs

rescued so far in 2024

276,028 lbs

was moved by our van



68%

because of the van, 68% of the food moved in 2024 had been Meat, Dairy, Produce and more!

RTWM in the Community

Feast of the East

In April 2024, over 30 small businesses came together for the annual Feast of the East food tasting event, hosted by The East of the River Five Town Chamber of Commerce. The focus of the night was on uplifting the community, spotlighting local businesses and promoting economic growth. Feast of the East also spotlighted us and organized all leftover foods to be donated to Rachel's Table. Several partner agencies received leftover brisket and other items from restaurants in attendance.



Where in the world are RTWM Volunteers?



Marla and Donna at Easthampton Farmers Market



Marla, Jan and Roz at RSVP Fair in Northampton



Sarah and Former Teen Board President Emmalene at WNE University Care Fair

Glenbrook School Event

Glenbrook School recently hosted a student versus staff volleyball game, attracting many students. All proceeds from the event were donated to Rachel's Table. Thank you to Glenbrook School for their generous contribution! This event is a great example of communities coming together to fight hunger! There are many ways that businesses, schools and other organizations can join us to decrease food insecurity in western Massachusetts. If you know any organization that is looking to give back have them reach out to Kathy at khenry@feedwma.org.

Program Updates

Outrun Hunger

Rachel's Table of Western Massachusetts and Rachel's Table Teen Board asked the community to come out and Outrun Hunger on May 19 at Forest Park! The 5k race and 1-mile family-friendly walk in one day helps RTWM fight hunger all year long in Hampden, Hampshire and Franklin Counties. PJ Library also sponsored a story walk to share with younger friends the mitzvah (good deed) of giving back to the community. Over 130 participants came to walk, run, dance with Boomer of the Springfield Thunderbirds, listen to music by DJ Matt of Peterson Productions, and eat popcorn, bagels and fruit – donated by PeoplesBank, Alex's Bagels and InterProduce. RTWM is thankful to the Harold Grinspoon Foundation for supporting the Teen Board – a group of teens dedicated to educating themselves and others about food insecurity, especially childhood food insecurity, serving the local community, and advocating for change. Thank you to everyone who came out to run, walk and volunteer. It was a beautiful day!



Rescue

RTWM has rescued a lot of food since the beginning of 2024. In the spring, at Performance Food Group's Food Expo, in one night, volunteers rescued and distributed an impressive **12,127 pounds of produce, bread, bakery items, and dry goods** to 21 partnering agencies.



Program Updates



Rescue Cont

In June, Springfield School Volunteers provided **130 boxed lunches** to four partnering agencies. As summer continues, **297 pounds of milk and snacks** from Ashley School in West Springfield were distributed to partner agencies, while Longmeadow Public Schools contributed **1,481 pounds of produce, dairy, chips, snacks, bread, bakery items, sandwiches, and fruit cups** to eight partnering agencies. Additionally, **196 pounds of dairy and produce** from Memorial School in West Springfield were distributed to one partnering agency. Finally, JCC Early Learning Center contributed **10 pounds (11 boxes) of dry cereal**.

Purchase

Since 2024, RTWM has completed three purchase programs with Jewish Family Service (JFS) for Tu BiShvat, Passover, and Shavuot. This program ensures that over 30 local Jewish families have access to kosher and holiday-appropriate food five to six times a year. Given the strong connection between food and celebration during these holidays, it is crucial to address the intersectionality of religious food observances and food insecurity. A study shows that over 60% of individuals who utilize food banks and keep kosher wish there were more variety and options to meet their lifestyle needs. This initiative is made possible by the dedicated efforts of Chana, Kathy, and the volunteers who help pick up and pack the food. Thank you to Berezin family for making this program a success. We are looking for more support financially to ensure kosher-observant families are served for most major holidays and more. There are more families who have requested this service – call the office if you can help!



Top photo - Arturo And Chad picking up food at Shoprite

Bottom photo - Kathy, Emunah and Moshe with the packed bags

Program Updates

Gleaning

Gleaning has begun! Sign up for [gleaning alerts](#) to receive emails with information about upcoming gleans! Check the [calendar](#) for upcoming events and bookmark our [Gleaning SignUp](#) to register for a glean. Peruse the [Gleaning Handbook for FAQs](#) about what to wear and bring, background information about gleaning, and more!

We are looking for more farm partners! If you or a farmer you know is open to gleaning or has surplus harvested produce you/they would like to have picked up, please reach out! All produce donations are tax-deductible. [Gleaning FAQ For Farmers flyer you can share!](#) [Check out Cara and Sarah talking about Gleaning on InFocus!](#)

Grow

There are now 11 gardens blossoming across Hampden County! Volunteer crews came to Independence House, Ronald McDonald House and Boys & Girls Club of Chicopee to build raised beds and haul wheelbarrow load after wheelbarrow load of mulch and soil across new garden spaces. Special thanks to:

- New Growing Gardens liaisons Marie Holmes and Rosalie Rioux for bringing time, tools, and materials to gardens at Ronald McDonald House and Christina's House!
- Springfield Renaissance School, Ascentria Care Alliance's SNAP Ed team, and Westfield Bank for bringing hard working crews to our volunteer workdays!
- NOFA/Mass for their continued solidarity and technical support!
- New volunteer Sue Zegarra for competently and fearlessly jumping into an unknown carpentry project!



In February, Friends of the Homeless (FOH) hosted a Winter Seed Sowing workshop. Together, FOH residents and Growing Gardens volunteers learned to make mini greenhouses out of milk jugs and seeded this year's FOH garden. In June, we teamed up with The Gray House and Ascentria Care Alliance to offer a SNAP education and cooking class using strawberries, fresh greens, and herbs from the garden. Students made sweet potato and black bean quesadillas with fresh fruit salsa. Special thanks to Yolanda from The Gray House and Marie Ange Laroche from Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts for providing Spanish and Haitian Creole interpretation, respectively. It was a delicious community event! Rep Brian Ashe came out, along with representatives from the offices of Senator Oliveira, Senator Gomez, and Rep Gonzalez! Our legislators saw the teamwork that goes into feeding western MA!

Program Updates

Teen Board

The Teen Board program is on break for the summer and will resume in August, but we have many congratulations to share! A heartfelt congratulations to our senior members and officers who graduated high school – we will miss you and wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors. Congratulations to our newly elected officers: Lauren, Maia, Gemma, Vanessa, Max, and Bassie! Additionally, kudos to all the teens who participated in Outrun Hunger. The event was a great success thanks to your continued dedication and willingness to support Rachel's Table.



Join the Jewish Federation of Western Mass., community members, and other Jewish organizations to support our community's needs and celebrate Jewish culture!

SUNDAY
29 SEPTEMBER 2024
FIRST RIDE AT 9 A.M.

SINAI TEMPLE
SPRINGFIELD, MA

REGISTER
VOLUNTEER
SPONSOR
DONATE

SCAN ME

WWW.JEWISHWESTERNMASS.ORG/RIDETOPROVIDE24

Ride to Provide

The Jewish Federation of Western Massachusetts is excited to share that registration for this year's Ride to Provide annual bike ride is now open! For 2024, Ride to Provide will take place at Sinai Temple in Springfield on Sunday, September 29th. Everyone is invited to participate, whether it's to participate in the bike-run, as a volunteer or sponsor, or through a donation. Click here for more details. A portion of the funds raised goes to RTWM. **A Team Leader is needed from Rachel's Table! As a Team Leader, you will:**

- Encourage others to sign up and participate for the Rachel's Table team
- Promote the team and donations towards the Rachel's Table team
- Gather sponsors for the Rachel's Table team
- Be given a Community Fair table to promote Rachel's Table's work in the community
- Attend up to 3 meetings with other Team Leaders to mingle, connect, and learn more about how to fundraise for your team

If you are interested, please reach out to Donor Impact Officer, Bobby Naimark, at bnaimark@jewishwesternmass.org or 413-737-4313, ext. 261.

Volunteer Spotlight



In each Highlights of the Season, we spotlight a volunteer or two who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to support food security with Rachel's Table. This season, we are shining the spotlight on **Jessica and Mike Craig!**

Jessica and Mike joined the RTWM family in May 2023. Since then, they have willingly stepped into nearly every RTWM program.

They dispatch once per week and are part of the dedicated van team, driving 1-2 routes per week across the three counties to deliver thousands of pounds of food to dozens of agencies. Last year they joined us in the gleaning fields, and this year for ESSENTials they not only transported the food to our office but stayed and helped pack the bags of food. Wherever help is needed, Mike and Jessica are some of the first people to jump in. Not only that, they are humble people who always have a smile on their face and a kind word. They embody the spirit of service, and we are so grateful and honored they choose to volunteer with us! Thank you, Jessica and Mike, for all you do and the full heartedness with which you do it.

Research Associate to Support Artsfest '24

We are in search of a research associate to help research recent hunger statistics to support the upcoming Hunger Awareness Artsfest '24 sponsored by the teen board. We are looking for someone to complete about 15 hours of research independently, internship credit can be awarded to students if needed. Please email sbate@feedwma.org for more information.

**Best,
Jodi, Kathy, Cara, Chana, Sarah and Jay**

RTWM Volunteers in the news

- [Rachel's Table Van Coordinator Steve Lepow Honored with 2024 Myra Kraft Community MVP Award from the Patriots Foundation.](#)
- [Volunteers Steve and Marla speaking to Channel 22 News InFocus about volunteering with Rachel's Table \(Time Stamp 38:28\)](#)