



A single flame can dispel the blackest darkness.

Wood set alight in a fireplace chases away the chill in the air.

Friends are drawn around a campfire to cook and share a meal.

Light. Warmth. Food. Camaraderie.

These are words that also characterize Bread for Life. We have a passion, a zeal, and a fire to see lives changed in our community. And the needs are more significant now than they have ever been.

Just as a single spark can ignite a flame, so too can the smallest act of kindness grow into something that can change the course of a life. Every contribution you make multiplies in many ways, reaching others with warmth, light, sustenance, and hope.

We know you will be encouraged by the stories in this report about the lives you are impacting.

We thank you for helping to light the way for us and for our community.

One small candle may light a thousand.

—William Bradford

# spark is a little thing, yet it may kindle the world. –Martin <mark>Farquhar Tupper</mark>

No Light Too Small

Mother Teresa was once asked by an American reporter, "What's the poorest country you've ever been to?"

"I have been to many countries and seen much poverty and suffering," she replied. "Everywhere I go, people tell

me of their hardships and struggles and ask for help, and I give what I can. But of all the countries I have been to. the poorest one I have been to is America."

Unprepared for such an answer, he asked, "Why?" reminding her that America is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. "Because," she replied, "America suffers from the most terrible poverty of loneliness."

Unfortunately, we see this reality in the lives of many of the people we serve, especially our homebound clients. Yet, thanks to the caring hearts of many young people in our community, our clients are reminded that they do not go unnoticed. Handmade notes, unique cards, and small holiday gifts bring a ray of sunshine

he Manhattan

amid their isolation. "It was so wonderful to receive the card that was made for me," wrote one grateful recipient of a handmade Christmas card. "It made me feel so special."

Bread for Life provides a place for church groups, schools, clubs, and sports teams to help out. There are also two monthly programs for young volunteers—Family Feeding Friends and Kids Who Care. Visit southingtonbreadforlife. org/give-time/ for more information.



Food, Friendship, and Fun

After a two year hiatus, we are excited to say that Soup Night is back! Our annual community Soup Night, attended by a soldout crowd this past October at Southington High School, was an enjoyable community event. Soup Night raises funds to help cover BFL's operational expenses. A huge "thank you" goes out to our volunteers and all who supported us.

> Of course, the event would not be possible without the generosity of local restaurants that contributed the savory soups enjoyed by our patrons.

- Anthony Jack's
- · Aqua Turf Club
- Back Nine
- Calvanese Foundation
- · Close Harbour Seafood
- Youth volunteers served

- Craft Kitchen
- · Flair Restaurant
- Fratelli's
- Hawk's Landing
- J.D. Pizzeria
- Lewis Farms
- Manor Inn
- New Mill

- Outback
- Paul Gregory's
- Pepper Pot
- Polish Plate
- Rogers Orchards
- Saint's
- · Smokin' with Chris
- The Manhattan



### The Sweet Success

In her 1885 novel Mrs. Dymond, Lady
Ritchie penned, "If you give a man a
fish, he is hungry again in an hour. If
you teach him to catch a fish, you
do him a good turn." We know all
too well that giving a hungry person
a sandwich doesn't alleviate the
deeper problems that brought them
to their present situation. At Bread
for Life, we believe that a person can
regain lost dignity by acquiring work
skills and, at the same time, contribute to a

Our idea was to provide an opportunity for our clients to receive basic vocational training with the ultimate goal of operating several micro-enterprises staffed by these clients. With funding secured from the Foundation of Greater New Britain, we started our first social enterprise, the Southington Honey Company, in 2021.

larger purpose.

With start-up funds secured, we purchased bees and hives and learned all we could about beekeeping. Several of our clients expressed interest in becoming ambassadors for SHC. They attended weekly training sessions about proper grooming, customer service, merchandise display, and other facets of a small business. They also produced



## Rising to the Occasion

The success of the Southington Honey Company inspired us to start a second social enterprise. With funding once again from the Community Foundation of Greater New Britain, we are excited to announce that we are launching another enterprise—the Southington Bread Company.

Two of our clients are baking bread and cookies in our commercial kitchen. We plan to set up a pop-up shop in the spring, leading to a formal debut in the fall of 2023. Keep an eye on social media for more details. Come by to purchase delicious bread and cookies and support the efforts of our Southington Bread Company ambassadors.

# of a Changed Life

saleable goods such as coasters, note cards, and beeswax candles.

Our dream was fulfilled when, in June 2022, our clients staffed the SHC table at the Farmers Market every week from June to September. SHC was a huge success! Our local honey sold out each week, and our client-made products were also in high demand.

This achievement lit a spark in our clients. They looked forward to Friday afternoons at the Farmers Market where they communicated with customers, worked together as a team, and discovered unknown

talents. They learned to
persevere, mastering
tasks they once
thought were too
challenging.

day by the

At the start of

At the start of the training, one of our clients insisted that he was inept at handling money and could
not see himself
creating sales receipts.
Yet, after training, he took the
initiative to watch videos about

billing and learned the tasks necessary to complete a sale. That determination has affected other areas of his life—he is more self-confident, outgoing, and quick to lend a hand. A life changed.

**Bread** for Life clients

farmers market

produce saleable goods to

sell alongside honey at the

Come to the town green to visit the Southington Farmers Market on Friday afternoons to support our enterprise by buying local honey or SHC products and meet our remarkable sales team.



# Healthy Steps Forward

At Bread for Life, we take seriously the many facets of our clients' health and well-being. But unfortunately, the reality for many living in poverty is that their lifestyles are often plagued with obesity, smoking, substance abuse, and chronic stress. And adding poor access to healthcare to that mix only escalates the risk of declining health and disability.

Wanting to affect healthy changes in our clients' lives, we created a Bread for Life Walkers Club, meeting every week from May through November. Volunteers met with eager clients weekly, starting with a quarter-mile outing in May. By October, they had completed a two-mile trek, with participation in the Apple Harvest Road Race as their goal. We were delighted as they proudly sported their Apple Harvest Race shirts and completed the two-mile community walk.

We plan to restart the Walkers Club in the spring. After that, who knows where 2023 will take us?





Giving Made Simple

How
far that little
candle throws his
beams! So shines a good
deed in a weary world.
—William Shakespeare

A new program in town provides paid meals at local restaurants for hungry folks who cannot afford a meal. It's called *Plate It Forward Southington*, the brainchild of BFL volunteer Gary Brummet, and first funded by the Friday Morning Breakfast Club.

The concept is straightforward. You simply pay for another meal when dining out at a participating restaurant. The receipt for that meal is taped to

a board at that eatery, and a person in need of a meal can claim the ticket and receive that meal.

Eating in a restaurant is a luxury out of reach for those we serve. "It was so nice to go to Paul Gregory's and get a really delicious meal," said one of our clients. "My ticket was for an omelet and hash browns. They were really good, and it was so big that I had to ask for a container for what I couldn't finish."

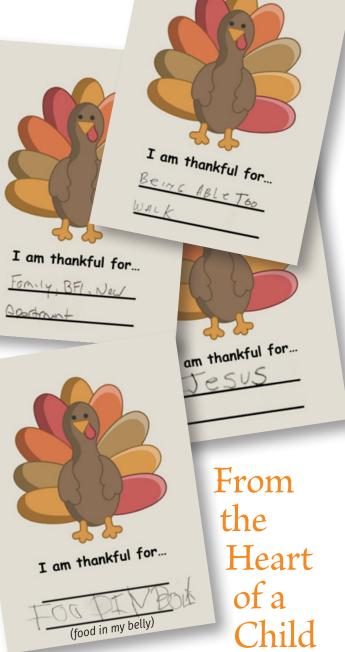
>>> PLATEIT

THE MEAL RECEIPTS BELOW HAVE BEEN PRE-PAID BY KIND PATRONS OF THIS RESTAURANT. IF YOU ARE HUNGRY AND NEED A MEAL, PLEASE TAKE ONE RECEIVE THAT MEAL. AND GIVE IT TO AN EMPLOYEE TO RECEIVE THAT MEAL.

We are proud to partner with Fancy
Bagels on Queen Street and Paul
Gregory's on Center Street, the
first restaurants participating
in this program. And we look
forward to welcoming more
generous establishments.

Displaying titles available at Southington Public Library, (I to r): Dave Obedzinski, President and CEO of Community Foundation of Greater New Britain; Paula Knight, Bread for Life Education and Outreach Committee member; Liz Chubet, Library Adult Programming Coordinator; Donna Ayer, Bread for Life Executive Director, Kayla Milligan, CFGNB Director of Philanthropy, and her son Theo.





As our clients readied themselves to enjoy their Thanksgiving dinner this past year, we handed them "turkey cards" and asked them to write down what they were thankful for. We then hung them up in the dining room as a reminder for all of us to be thankful all year.

One of our clients, Todd\*, comes to BFL with his mom in the summer and on school vacation days. Only five years old, his simple four-word statement reminded us of the importance of our work. He wrote that he was thankful for "food in his belly."

Thank you for helping us fill Todd's belly. Your generous goodwill enables us to serve in more ways than you can imagine.

\*Name changed.

# Bringing Relief to Families

We are all uncomfortably aware of the increased food prices over the last three years. Sadly, research from Connecticut non-profit DataHaven reveals that food insecurity profoundly impacts adults with children as Pandemic Relief Programs fade. This past year, approximately 7% of Connecticut children lacked sufficient nutrition. Unfortunately, that includes children here in our community.

Those numbers became very real to us with the dramatic increase in the number of meals we served in 2022 through our Children's Summer Lunch Program. The number of locations we operated expanded to seven sites, with an unprecedented number of 4,845 lunches. That is an increase of 41% over the previous year.

While the children we serve receive free breakfast and lunch during the school year, they, and their parents, rely on Bread for Life to provide these much-needed meals during the summer months.

"I have had to make really tough choices between groceries, paying



### Generous BFL Donors—1/1/22 to 12/31/22

We thank every donor for assisting Bread for Life in meeting our mission to feed the hungry of Southington.

Every effort has been made to assure the accuracy of the following list. However, if any names have been omitted or appear incorrectly, please contact our office.

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all do great
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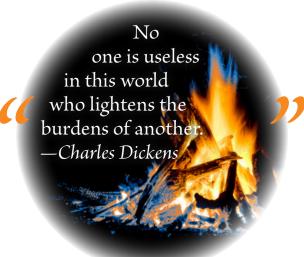
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Paul Aresco



Lunches served on site

Meals delivered to the homebound

Group meals delivered to seniors living in subsidized housing

Meals delivered to clients in local motels

Bags of groceries to in-house & homebound clients, dropins, & mobile pantry program

Lunches served in our Children's Summer Lunch **Program** 



PO Box 925 Southington, CT 06489 860.276.8389



#### If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one. —Mother Teresa



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