

The Feed!

SPRING 24 NEWSLETTER
PHILABUNDANCE



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Loree D. Jones Brown
Chief Executive Officer

From Loree's Table

Dear Friends

A new year always brings with it the possibility and promise of what's to come, but this year is especially meaningful as we mark Philabundance's 40th anniversary. Over the last four decades, this organization has grown from one woman's vision to bridge the gap between food waste and food insecurity to an operation that spans nine counties, two states, 350 agency partners, and distributes more than 50 million pounds of food each year to those who need it most.

While that progress is inspiring, it is just the beginning. Throughout 2024, our year-long anniversary celebration is an opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to empowering our communities through food. Empowering our neighbors to achieve the social and economic mobility that will break the cycle of food insecurity; empowering our agency partners to identify and address the needs of their communities; and empowering our volunteers, staff, and generous friends to carry our momentum forward.

In the pages that follow, you'll see how we are working to co-create these solutions, from our continued advocacy efforts (page 3) to asking the questions which will help us better understand the realities of food insecurity and innovating through programs like our first Philabundance Cook-In (page 6).

Our operation may look different than it did 40 years ago, but one thing remains the same: none of it would be possible without you—our vocal champions, our generous donors, and our proud partners.

On behalf of all of us at Philabundance, I thank you for your shared belief in our vision for a future without hunger. Thank you for working so tirelessly alongside us.

Yours in service,

Loree D. Jones Brown
Chief Executive Officer

Philabundance is: More Than Food

On September 6, 2023, Philabundance employees and volunteers, the Philabundance Board, and elected officials gathered to unveil Mural Arts Philadelphia's latest commission, which adorns Philabundance's Hunger Relief Center: "More Than Food."



The mural, designed by renowned artist Calo Rosa, is a vibrant homage to movement. Featuring food flowing through the Philabundance warehouses, volunteers actively engaged, and the journeys of the people served, the mural reflects the ceaseless dynamism of Philabundance. At its heart, the mural depicts the community coming together to savor a meal, encapsulating the unifying power of food.

"In this mural, I got the chance to honor my mom looking at the past as a part of history, and my son looking forward to the future," says Calo. "The fact that Philabundance helps create this love in homes and the joy of opening a box and creating something with love is what inspired this mural."

Why The Farm Bill Matters



Philabundance CEO Loree Jones Brown testifies before the U.S. Senate Agriculture Committee on the need for strong nutrition programs in the Farm Bill

Advocacy is a powerful tool in the movement to end hunger. At Philabundance, our Government Affairs team works hard to protect and expand vital government food assistance programs that consistently provide food to people facing hunger in our region.

This is an especially important year for advocacy because the Farm Bill is eligible for reauthorization by Congress. The Farm Bill is a comprehensive piece of legislation that governs most federal food and farming programs. It impacts access to nutritious food for the more than 44 million of people in the United States facing hunger.

The Farm Bill, which must be reauthorized every five years, provides Congress with a key opportunity to at best improve – and at worst, roll back – critical federal nutrition programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP), and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), also known as the Senior Box program. Together, these programs help millions of families keep food on the table and ease the strain on food banks like Philabundance.

Protecting and strengthening the Farm Bill is especially vital, as our network of community partners is experiencing soaring demand for food assistance. Hunger is on the rise largely because pandemic-era government assistance programs have ended, while food inflation and cost of living remain high. The latest

USDA Household Food Security Report revealed an overall food insecurity rate increase, from 10.2% (1 in 10 households) in 2021 to 12.8% (1 in 8 households) in 2022. Unfortunately, we anticipate this trend will continue without intervention, and SNAP Emergency Allotments expired in early 2023. On average, Pennsylvania SNAP recipients saw their benefits reduced by \$92 per month.

"During the pandemic, we learned that bipartisan leadership to address hunger works. Because the government made bold investments in addressing hunger, more people were fed at a time of high need," Chief Executive Officer Loree D. Jones Brown said while testifying before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on Food and Nutrition, Specialty Crops, Organics, and Research in Washington, D.C. "SNAP is our best defense against hunger. It is the most effective and efficient way to ensure people have access to the food they need and want."

As Loree said in her testimony, "It is in our nation's best interest that we have well-nourished communities so they can thrive." Philabundance is urgently calling on Congress to pass a strong bipartisan Farm Bill that supports food banks and the people we serve. There is no excuse for anyone in this country to go hungry when solutions exist.

Do you want to join advocacy efforts to end hunger for good? Take the next step today! You can sign up for advocacy alerts by emailing advocacy@philabundance.org.



Philabundance Celebrates 40 Years

Philabundance is excited to be celebrating our 40th year working to support people in need through food in the Philadelphia area. Starting as a small food rescue organization in 1984, Philabundance now distributes more than 50 million pounds of food annually across 9 counties, while working to attack the root causes of hunger – our mission is to relieve hunger now, and end hunger for good.

1984



Pam Lawler, establishes Philabundance as a much-needed food rescue organization.

1993



Philabundance established Share the Harvest, a program that connects local gardeners and their produce with communities in need.

1999

Philabundance participated in the Walk Against Hunger to help benefit local hunger-relief organizations.



2001



Philabundance joins Feeding America, the nationwide network of more than 200 food banks that feed more than 46 million people.

2011



Philabundance and the Phillies celebrate the inaugural Phans Feeding Families campaign.

2022



President Joe Biden makes his second visit to Philabundance on MLK Day of Service.

2021



Philabundance Community Kitchen celebrates its 1,000 graduate from the program.

1980

1985

Philabundance moves into its first real office space in Manayunk.



1989

Philabundance starts the 'Little Red Bus', one of the first offerings of programs designed for children.



1990

1998



Our Galloway Warehouse in South Philadelphia opens to accommodate the growing demand for emergency food to become the area's largest hunger relief organization.

2000

Philabundance opens the Philabundance Community Kitchen (PCK) to provide culinary vocational training to low income adults.



2000

2005



Philabundance merges with the Greater Philadelphia Food Bank to offer a full plate of services.

2009

Philabundance establishes the Emergency Relief Initiative and the Food Help Line to better support and connect those in need with proper support.

2007

Fresh For All, a weekly produce distribution is established.



2010

2013



Philabundance launches KidsBites, a program to provide school children and their families with healthy food staples.

2020



Philabundance Covid response doubles the amount of food distributed into the community from 25M pounds to over 50M.



Camp Out For Hunger 2023

For the 26th year in a row, Philabundance joined forces with WMMR's Preston & Steve for their annual Camp Out for Hunger event

The annual event spanned five days, featuring local and national celebrities, TV personalities, star athletes, sensational bands, and many other dedicated hunger heroes who come together each year to support this vital cause.

This year's event, which kicked off on November 13, resulted in more than 10 truckloads of donated food and raised more than \$1,000,000 to combat food insecurity throughout our region this holiday season.

A special shoutout to our corporate leaders from Subaru of America, Comcast, and Campbell's Chunky Soup whose donations of food and funds will go far to help our

neighbors in need. Philabundance also welcomed new sponsors from United Concordia Dental/Highmark, General Flooring, and IBEW 351.

Did you know? Our Business Challenge invites local companies to fight against hunger alongside Preston & Steve, inspiring friendly competition to see who can donate the most funds and food during Camp Out. To learn how your organization can participate in our 2024 event, contact Ali Corr at acorr@philabundance.org or 724-237-4968.

Philabundance Community Cook-In: A Culinary Celebration of Community Empowerment

Last summer, Philabundance, in collaboration with Feeding America and Bank of America, hosted its first Philabundance Community Cook-In. Held in the heart of North Philadelphia, a region affected by food deserts, this event was more than an emergency food distribution; it was a statement that accepting help is not only okay but can be a dignified, empowering experience.

"We see it way too often that people are lined up along buildings," said Amba Kasongo, Home Delivery Programs Manager and coordinator of this event. "This time we invited them into our home at Philabundance. We humanized the process instead of just dishing out cans and bread, creating an engaged, dignified response to people's needs."

At the core of the Cook-In were the student chefs from the Philabundance Community Kitchen (PCK) workforce program. These aspiring chefs, undergoing a transformative 16-week journey to reintegrate into society with newfound culinary skills, served hot food as well as hope and inspiration. Their participation was a powerful reminder that the help offered at the Cook-In was from the community, for the community.

The Cook-In was an engaging affair with cooking demonstrations by PCK's head chef and in-house nutritionist. Families savored the meals and took home meal kits designed to feed four, complete with recipe cards for at-home cooking. The initiative also provided PCK-prepared meals and essential kitchen tools like chef's knives, baking sheets, and even grocery shopping carts, ensuring that the benefits of the day extended well into the future.

"Elders pulled me aside to share that shopping carts and knives often go unnoticed," Amba said. "They told me those little things have a big impact. We want to be mindful of how we can be more impactful and intentional, and I hope that's what the community got from us."

Feedback from the event has been overwhelmingly positive. The Cook-In not only nourished bodies but also nurtured a sense of belonging and respect.

For Amba, the impact of this event holds special significance. "I remember moments when my parents didn't know where the next meal was going to be. Even though it's a small number of meals, it matters."



Delivering Cheer, and Turkeys, During the Holiday Season



On Saturday November 18, neighbors came together to attend Philabundance's special Thanksgiving turkey distributions. For many families, the high cost of turkeys makes it challenging to afford this traditional holiday meal. By providing this essential Thanksgiving protein, Philabundance not only addressed immediate nutritional needs but also fostered a sense of normalcy and joy during the holiday season.

Two distributions at our Galloway and Berks warehouses provided nearly 1,000 families with frozen turkeys for their Thanksgiving dinner. Guests were warmly greeted by Philabundance volunteers and staff, and each turkey came with instructions on how to prepare a frozen turkey, information on

our free culinary training program, as well as information on the Farm Bill. Separate from our efficient drive-through style distribution at our Galloway location, at our Berks warehouse, guests were invited to visit community resource tables with information from the city's Office of Children and Families, Office of Reentry Partnerships, Philabundance Community Kitchen's free culinary program, and Healthy Pantry Initiative, as well as several other local organizations offering free financial aid and children and family resources.

"We knew we'd receive a strong turnout at these distributions, so it was important to us that we capitalize on the opportunity to provide more than food," says John Coates, Director of Community Food Access at Philabundance. "Why not bring incredible organizations around us to the table to help connect the dots for our neighbors that need and deserve these resources? I considered it a huge success and I hope our neighbors do, too."

Nourishing food is always important, but the Thanksgiving meal carries special cultural and emotional significance. These distributions were a heartwarming display of community support and resource sharing, as volunteers, staff, and neighbors gathered to celebrate the power of connection, gratitude, and food.



In addition, Philabundance was able to make the following items available to our community partners to meet increased demand this holiday season.

30,000 poultry items

200,000 holiday sides

6,000 ready to eat meals-prepared by PCK



A Message From the Board

Forty years ago, Philabundance began with a woman of passion and a single Subaru. Our founder, Pamela Rainey Lawler, saw perfectly good food going to waste while too many people in our community were going hungry. She took action to bridge this gap, and Philabundance was born.

Guided by Pam's vision and passion and buoyed by the support of tens of thousands of volunteers, community partners and donors in the decades since, Philabundance now distributes more than 50 million pounds of food each year throughout nine counties across the Delaware Valley. We continue to expand and improve our programs, invest in the futures of our neighbors in need, and advocate for programs that advance our communities. With partners like you, we strive daily to relieve hunger now and end hunger for good.

The holiday season is always a particular time of reflection and gratitude here – never is the anguish of food insecurity felt so keenly, and never does the generosity of the community in response shine so brightly. As Philabundance turns 40, the need for our community to take care of one another has never been greater. In fact, Philadelphia has seen the largest year-on-year increase in the costs of groceries of any region in our country since 2022, destabilizing families throughout our region.



John Hollway, Board Chair 2020-2023, and Dixie James, current Board Chair

Together, we can restore that stability for our neighbors, so that our communities can flourish. We are fortunate to see the power of community every day, and with that power Philabundance will continue to nourish, elevate and empower our neighbors. We will share healthy food and fresh produce with the community, grow our food rescue program, and we will expand our impact on the root causes of hunger. Our ability to make change is fueled by the involvement of many, and we are so grateful for your support.

We are honored to guide Philabundance, proud of what has been accomplished, and excited by what we can achieve in the future. As we set our sights on the next 40 years, we are thankful to know you are by our side.

With endless gratitude,

Dixie James, Incoming Board Chair
John Hollway, Outgoing Board Chair

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Philabundance Legacy Society *Help ensure our future for the next 40 years*

Since 1984, Philabundance has grown, adapted, and responded to help our neighbors in need, thanks to our generous and caring community of donors. You can support our work today, and beyond, by including Philabundance in your estate as part of the Philabundance Legacy Society.

Visit philabundance.mylegacygift.org/ to learn how you can establish a legacy of fighting hunger, today. Questions? Contact our development office at giving@philabundance.org or 215-339-0900.

PHILABUNDANCE
Driving hunger from our communities

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