

Director's Report

Slate Valley Cares

February 1st-29th, 2024

Monthly Overview

Good things we had an extra day this month—it felt like we needed every single one of them! We are systematically moving forward on many exciting initiatives including grants, sponsorships, partnerships, presentations, and powerful community outreach. As always, if there is something you read below that you find interesting and would like to know more about or learn how you could participate, you all know where to find me!

Vermont Foodbank Grants- APPROVED!

The Vermont Foodbank offers two community building grants: Vermonters Feeding Vermonters (VFFV) and VT Fresh. For the third straight year, we were able to get grant funding through these programs, \$4,000 and \$2,000 respectively. The VFFV funds must be used for purchasing local, Vermont grown/raised products, while VT Fresh funds must be used for increasing food access and/or desirability, i.e. displaying food in beautiful ways. Below is a breakdown of how these funds will be allocated.

VT Fresh: Pop-Up Food Center & Farmers' Market Setup

This year the Vermont Foodbank broadened their acceptable domains of use, allowing us to be more creative with the available funding. The past two years, we have used this funding for heavy duty, wire rack shelving, as well as produce display materials. This year, our plan is to use the \$2,000.00 to purchase a collapsable, 10'x10' tent, along with an SVC Banner, and some transportation equipment, such as totes and a collapsable cart. This infrastructure will be extremely versatile and allow us to further several initiatives including hosting pop-up food centers in low-income housing units, farmers' markets, as well as fundraising and community events. This will ensure that SVC has a clean, professional look when we are out in the community.

Vermonters Feeding Vermonters: Pre-Season Produce Bulk Buy

The front end of the growing season is generally the most stressful time of the year for most local growers. This is when cash flow is at its lowest, while overhead costs are the highest. Thus, our approach to using these funds is getting the money to the growers now when they need it most. Last year we were able to purchase 20 CSA shares worth of fresh, seasonal vegetables from two local growers. Our aim is to do the same again this year, while shifting a little closer to home. Greg Cox from Boardman Hill Farm has agreed to be one of our growers again this year. Not only is he a true professional, but he also gives us screaming deals, which further extends the value of grant funds. We also aim to partner with Otter Point Farm, in West Haven. Scott and Tanya have been very generous over the past year in donating beautiful vegetables from their farm, specializing in wholesale crop production.

Everyone Eats-UPDATE

BOWSE Grant funding, in partnership with the Vermont Farmers Food Center, was finally released at the beginning of February in support of SVC's Everyone Eats Program. Along with the funding, we also have an employee named Grace Davy. Grace will act as a hybrid employee for both SVC and VFFC, but for operational ease, will be paid through the VFFC. Unfortunately, we only have access to half the funding that was initially proposed, totaling \$12,600. VFFC has committed to contributing an extra \$10,000 and SVC will be responsible for

\$2,000 to round out the remaining budgetary balance. There are a couple of grants we may be able to apply for to cover the costs. Grace will start formally March 11th.

Grace's job description and proposed responsibilities can be found at the end of the report in the "Supplemental Information & Materials" Section.

Hunger Action Conference- Presentation

Every year the Vermont Foodbank hosts the Hunger Action Conference at the Killington Grand Hotel. This is an opportunity for everyone in the social food sector to come together, share time, space, and insights about this challenging work. This year, SVC has been invited to give a formal presentation about our Right to Food Center and how it has evolved over the last year. The conference will be May 3rd from 8:00AM-3:30PM and I highly recommend any interested board members to join the event as it is a great opportunity to network and get inspired.

QuickBooks-(Quick)UPDATE

I met with Bonnie a couple of weeks ago and she showed me the final steps to get all the financial records up to date. There are likely 15-20 hours left in the whole process, all said and done.

Sponsorships-UPDATE

Since our last Board meeting, we have successfully procured three more \$500.00 sponsorships and have a handful of positive sounding leads. If you know of any person, organization or business that might be willing to sponsor SVC, please use the wonderful materials Bo has put together and get the word out!

<https://www.slatevalleycares.org/about-us/partners-24>

Volunteer Coordination Committee-UPDATE

In only a week's time we were able to put together a list of 12 interested and invested volunteers and board members who are interested in learning more about the Coordination Committee and if they would be a good fit for the group. This is very heartening, especially hearing all the wonderful ideas volunteers have been sharing with me after being prompted. This feels like a success already!

Conclusion

After a dynamic month, it is encouraging to look back, both over the short and long term, and see the successful and meaningful progress being made organizationally. We are slowly making positive change throughout our community—what a great feeling!

Quick Stats

January 2024

Households Served: 754 (Up 38 Households)

New Household Applications: 35 (Down 16 Households)

Finances as of February 28th, 2024

- Operating Account: \$86,224.08
- Emergency Fund: \$35,078.93
- Right to Food Center Account: \$8,016.50

Supplemental Information & Materials

Job Title: Rutland County Eats Coordinator

Position Type: Part-time, 18 hours per week (with the possibility to increase up to 22 hours per week)

Responsibilities:

1. Coordinating Volunteers:

- Organize and manage volunteers involved in meal preparation and distribution.
- Provide guidance and support to ensure smooth coordination of tasks.

2. Meal Preparation and Distribution:

- Oversee the entire process from sourcing ingredients to meal construction and packaging.
- Start with 100 meals per week and progressively increase to 300 meals per week based on feasibility.

3. Ingredient Sourcing:

- Communicating with Slate Valley Cares to ensure necessary ingredients are ordered in advance.
- Research and identify reliable sources for quality ingredients.
- Establish partnerships with vendors to ensure a steady supply.

4. Recipe Research and Development:

- Conduct research on diverse and nutritious recipes suitable for mass meal preparation.
- Innovate and adapt recipes to meet dietary needs and preferences.

5. Income Generation:

- Explore opportunities for income generation to sustain the program.
- Develop and implement strategies for value-added products.
- Engage in fundraising activities and pursue grant funding to support the initiative.

Submitted by: Jeffrey Jackson, Executive Director—February 7th, 2024