



August Mission Camp

In Aid Of FeedMoreWNY



About FeedMoreWNY

Our organization was born from the healthy merger of two of the area's most well-known, well-respected organizations—the Food Bank of WNY and Meals on Wheels for Western New York. For many years, the two groups worked in tandem toward the singular vision of ending hunger in our community.

Today, FeedMore WNY continues the longstanding mission of offering dignity, hope and a brighter future by providing nutritious food, friendship and skills training to its Western New York neighbors in need. Through our food bank distribution center and partner hunger-relief agencies, as well as our home-delivered meal program and other targeted feeding programs, FeedMore WNY alleviates hunger and assists community members of all ages throughout Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Niagara counties.

August Mission Camp will have four weeks of activities. The goal is to increase our understanding about the issues of hunger in our community. For each week there will be an activity that will lead to a suggested donation and a suggested advocacy activity.

We are focusing on fundraising rather than collecting food, because FeedMoreWNY can make our money go a lot further than we can purchasing items to donate.

August Mission Camp Outline:

Week 1: Food Insecurity in our community

Week 2: Hunger in Working Families

Week 3: Hunger issues with teens

Week 4: The real cost of your favorite meal

Week 1: Food Insecurity in our community

Before the Covid19 pandemic, 1 in 8 people in Western New York were at risk of hunger or food insecurity. 1 in 5 children in Western New York were food insecure. Those numbers have only gotten worse with the pandemic.

What does it mean to be food insecure?

It means not having consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life. It doesn't necessarily mean that there is no food in the household, but it can mean that the household has to make choices between food, utilities, medicine or other needs.

There are many reasons that a household could be food insecure:

- Not enough income to cover purchase of food
- No or limited accessible sources of food
- No or limited ability to prepare food

There could be some combination of all three of these.

There are many places in Western New York that are food deserts.

What is a food desert?

A food desert is a place where there are not places to purchase fresh food that are accessible by the transportation available to the people.

For example: If the majority of people in a neighborhood don't have a car and the nearest grocery store is over a mile away, that is a food desert. There are food deserts in rural areas too, for example towns where the nearest grocery store is more than 5 miles away.

Travelling to purchase food can be a major obstacle for people.

Think about if you had to walk (or take a bus) to do your grocery shopping. How much would you be able to carry? How many times a week would you have to go grocery shopping? How much time would that take?

Think about if you had to drive more than 15 minutes to get to a grocery store. How much gas would it take to drive that far? How much would it cost?

Activities for Week 1:

Activity 1: Time & Money

Many people in Western New York live more than a mile from a grocery store and don't have a car.

To get a feel for what that might be like start with walking a mile around your neighborhood.

How long did that take?_____.

How many bags of groceries does your household normally buy each week? _____.

Try carrying a full bag of groceries while you walk a mile. How many could you carry at one time? _____

How many trips would you have to take to get all the groceries your household usually buys in one week? _____.

Can you think of anything you wouldn't be able to buy if you had to carry it for a mile?

Minimum wage in Western New York is \$11.80/hour.

Multiply the number of hours it takes you to walk a mile (20 minutes is .33 of an hour) by the number of trips you would have to make to get your groceries by \$11.80 and put that number in the donate box this week.

Activity 2: Grocery Stores

What grocery store do you usually shop at? _____

Do a search and find out where those stores are located.

Can you find a place in the City of Buffalo where there are neighborhoods more than one mile from a grocery store?

Write a letter to the corporate office of the store you shop at asking them to consider putting a grocery store in that neighborhood.

Write in the advocacy box who you wrote a letter to.

Donate This Week	
Advocacy This Week	

Week 2: Hunger and the working poor

Over half of the households who seek food assistance have at least one member of the household who worked for pay in the last year.

Of households with children who sought food help, in 2014, 71% had at least one member of the household who worked for pay during the year.

Of households who sought food assistance in 2014, 89% of those household who had at least one person employed had an annual income of less than \$30,000.

The federal poverty level for 2020 was \$26,200 for a family of 4 people.

Let's take an example of a family of 4.

If one member of the household works at a minimum wage job for 40 hours/week, they would make \$472/week before taxes. That translates to \$24,544 a year, if they don't miss any work for any reason. Assume that another member of the household works at a minimum wage job for 20 hours/week. They would make \$236/week or \$12,272 a year if they don't miss any work.

So, this household makes a maximum of \$36,816 before taxes.

This household would pay about \$6,000 in taxes, leaving \$30,816.

If they are lucky, they might find a 2 bedroom apartment for \$700/month. That is \$8,400. Utilities would be about \$300/month or \$3600. Health Insurance in the marketplace in NY for a family costs about \$1000/month or \$12,000. A monthly bus pass costs \$75/month. Assume the household needs 2, that would be \$1,800. That is a total of \$25,800. That means that the household has \$5,016 for everything else, food, clothes, cleaning supplies, phones etc... That is \$418/month or about \$100 a week.

This household will have to make choices: Food or Utilities; Food or Transportation; Food or Medical care; Food or Housing; Food or Clothes.

These are some of the households that end up using food pantries or other kinds of food assistance.

Activities for Week 2:

Activity 1: Eating from a food pantry

If you went to a food pantry today you might be given a bag of food to get your family through 3 days. That bag for a family of three might have:

- 5 cans of fruit
- 5 cans of vegetables
- 1 container of juice
- 1 package of dried fruit
- 1 jar of spaghetti sauce
- 3 cans of beans
- 2 cans of tuna fish
- 1 quart of milk
- 1 can of chili
- 1 jar of peanut butter
- 3 boxes of macaroni and cheese
- 1 loaf of bread
- 1 box of cereal
- 1 box of oatmeal
- 3 pizza kits or boxes of hamburger helper

How is this different than what you might buy at the grocery store? What would you need to add to this list to have enough food for 3 meals a day for your family? What would you eat for each meal?

When you go to the grocery store figure out how much it would cost to buy everything on this list. Put that amount in the donate box.

Activity 2: Advocate for the working poor

Figure out how much income your household would have if the people who have jobs worked for minimum wage. Figure out how you would spend that money to buy housing; utilities; transportation; insurance; food; clothes and pay your taxes. How would you manage? What would you have to give up?

What do you think the government could do to help people who work for minimum wage?

Write to your State Senator and ask them to sponsor a bill with your idea.

For most of us, our State Senator is: Michael H. Ranzenhofer New York State Senate Legislative Office Building Albany, NY 12247. Put your idea in the advocacy box.

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Week 3: Hunger and Teens

In 2014 the organization Feeding America talked with teens around the country about what food insecurity looked like for them.

The report of those conversations was called Bringing Teens To The Table. You can find the report and a lot more on their website, feedingamerica.org

The report found that food insecurity is wide-spread and that teenagers are active participants in helping their families get and manage their food.

The report also found that teenagers fear the stigma of food insecurity and that they will hide their hunger as much as they can.

Teenagers also report that they strategize how to avoid hunger and make family food last longer.

They try to find the most food for the least money, which often means eating at fast food restaurants.

They try to find food items that will last longer, which means getting processed food like boxed macaroni and cheese rather than fresh fruits or vegetables.

They think about where they shop. Food items are cheaper at Dollar Tree or other dollar stores rather than at Walmart or a grocery store.

Teens try to take care of their younger siblings. This is a quote from the report. "In Chicago, a girl reports that when food runs low, she will 'then try my friends or something, that live close by, see if I can get at least like two packs of noodles or something so we can all split it or something. Or I will go without a meal if that the case, as long as they, as long as my two young siblings is good, that's all that really matters to me.'"

School lunch programs are a big part of how teens combat hunger. In the report teens talk about taking home items from their free school lunches to help the family's food last longer.

The teens also talk about feeling embarrassed about using school programs or food pantries and being picked on by other kids in their school for getting free lunches or breakfasts or for having off-brand food in their lunch.

Activities for Week 3:

Activity 1: Buying food

Pretend that you are responsible for getting food for your family for this week. Say that you have \$40 to feed your family this week. Think about getting the most food for your money. Think about getting food that will last for the whole week. Where would you shop? What kinds of things would you buy? When you go to the grocery store figure out what you could buy with \$40. How could you make a week's worth of meals out of this food? Would it make a difference if you knew the children would get breakfast & lunch at school? How would that change what you bought?

If you purchased any meals from a restaurant this week, put the amount you spent in the donate box.

Activity 2: School lunch program

The Federal School lunch program is an important way to combat hunger in children and teenagers. It funds school breakfasts and lunches as well as summer feeding programs.

Write a letter or email our United States Senators about why you think that the school lunch program is important.

Our Senators are:

Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510
Contact: www.schumer.senate.gov/contact/email-chuck

Kirsten Gillibrand
478 Russell Senate Office Building Washington DC 20510
Contact: www.gillibrand.senate.gov/contact/email-me

Put in the advocacy box what you think is most important about the school lunch program.

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Week 4: The Real Cost of Your Favorite Meal

We sometimes forget about what it costs to cook meals at home.

Think about your favorite meal. What goes into making that meal.

We think first about the groceries we have to buy.

We don't usually think about things like salt, pepper, oil or spices that go into the meal. All of those things cost money and usually you can't buy them in small amounts.

Now think about what you cook your favorite meal in. Does it need a pot? A frying pan? Do you have to cut up vegetables or meat? Do you use a knife? A cutting board? A cooking spoon or spatula? You have all of those things in your kitchen. What if you didn't?

Now think about the stove. Did your stove come with your house? What would you do if your stove didn't work? How much would it cost to get it fixed? Is your stove gas or electric? What if you couldn't pay the gas or electric bill? How would you cook your food?

How much time does it take to cook your favorite meal? How much time do you spend getting the food ready to cook? How much time does it take to cook? How much time would it take you to clean up if you didn't have a dishwasher?

Making food at home has lots of hidden costs both in supplies and in time.

Activities for Week 4:

Activity 1: Making your favorite meal

Make a list of all of the things that go in your favorite meal. Don't forget things like salt, pepper and oil.

When you go to the grocery store write down what everything that goes in your favorite meal costs. Add it all up and put that amount in the donate box for this week.

Activity 2: Sharing with family and friends

Now that you know a little bit more about hunger think about what you learned this month. What is the thing that made the biggest impact on you this month?

Make an Instagram or Facebook post, or a tiktok or Youtube video about what you learned this month and share it with your family and friends.

Write what your learning was in the advocacy box.

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Add up all the amounts in your donate boxes and make a donation to FeedMoreWNY either through the website feedmorewny.org or by sending a check to FeedMore Foundation of WNY, 100 James E Casey Dr., Buffalo, NY 14206

For More Information Check Out:

Feedmorewny.org

Feedingamerica.org

Hungersolutionswny.org

Frac.org