



## Loaves & Fishes Rhode Island 2019 Annual Report

### ***“Providing Food, Promoting Dignity”***

In 2019, Loaves & Fishes RI (LFRI) continued our mission of ***“providing food, promoting dignity”*** serving our homeless neighbors in Rhode Island, primarily in Providence and Woonsocket. Last year marked our third year as LFRI, and our 11<sup>th</sup> year of a continuous interdenominational ministry that began in 2008 as Mobile Loaves and Fishes Rhode Island (MLF-RI), operating as an affiliate of MLF in Austin TX until late 2016. ***In 2019 we delivered over 20,000 meals and distributed over 6,000 articles of essential clothing to more than 600 individuals.***

The majority of our runs are conducted Sundays at noon and weeknights, bringing food and clothing to our ***Providence delivery sites: Emmanuel House, Crossroads, Greene Street***, and our newest stop at ***Broad and Central Street*** at the Trinity United Methodist Church and Southside Cultural Center. In the summer lunch was delivered every Friday to the Joslin Recreation Center children's playground in the Olneyville section of Providence. The balance of our runs occur on Saturdays at noon in ***Woonsocket, at the Sayles Street Women's Shelter, near the River United Methodist Church, and on occasion at Morin Heights.***



***We welcome and serve everyone***, without questions about identity, qualifying history or criteria. While we don't track any personal data on our clients, our volunteers will recognize familiar faces through repeated engagements. For those who are often shunned or ignored, avoided, and even cursed as they make their troubled way in the shadows, our interactions are perhaps even more nourishing than the food, personal hygiene items, and seasonal clothing that we distribute. We welcome each client with dignity, with “more than a meal” -- not only serving something hot along with a few items to provide nourishment into the next day or longer, but even more importantly, with the uplifting warmth of a familiar volunteer's kind words and faces that reflect compassion, caring, and respect for their worthiness and dignity as an individual.

### ***Our Volunteers, Partners, and Grant Sponsors***

In order to strengthen our capacity and increase our mission impact, LFRI regularly seeks interactions with its volunteers, partners, and grant sponsors. Most especially, we are grateful for the ***hundreds of volunteers and donors***, both individual and corporate, who continue to contribute so much, day after day, with their gifts of time, funds, and in-kind items, and acting in creative ways to keep our ministry operational and vibrant. A few examples from 2019 follow below, illustrating how LFRI works creatively, with many different faces from our community, including other non-profits, all in the cause of helping our neighbors in need:

- St. John's Episcopal Church in Barrington partnered with East Providence's ***Good Neighbors Soup Kitchen*** to make an unscheduled LFRI truck run to serve meals to residents at Harbor View Manor in Riverside, a 9 story building of 131 units, when it lost all power August 30.
- St. James Lutheran Church in Barrington supported a portion of its LFRI operations in 2019 through \$2250 in grants awarded by ***Thrivent Financial***, a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded by Lutherans,

to its individual account holders; over \$14,000 in such grants have been awarded by Thrivent since 2015 to support LFRI.

- In honor of Nelson Mandela Day last July, an employee of **Johnson & Johnson** in Raynam, MA, organized an office team-building day that assembled 67 toiletry bags, to commemorate Mandela’s 67 years of service, and approached LFRI to distribute them in coordination with Emmanuel Church Cumberland’s run later that month.



*Photo courtesy of Johnson & Johnson*

- At St. David’s on the Hill Episcopal Church in Cranston, a gentleman parishioner makes nearly weekly trips to **We Share Hope** to fill his SUV with food and available personal hygiene supplies for the Emmanuel Shelter in Providence.
- In December 2019, in the spirit of interagency collaboration, LFRI provided “fast food” gift cards for distribution to the clients of the **Shower to Empower Mobile Unit**, operated as an Outreach Program by the **House of Hope Community Development Corporation** leveraging its broad partnering network of social service providers. Serving over 1800 clients since its launch in April 2018, *Shower to Empower* uniquely links basic needs such as complimentary showers and haircuts, with case management and medical navigation services in a mobile delivery model. It is aimed to provide basic needs and restore dignity to Rhode Islander’s experiencing homelessness, ultimately making connections to essential services.

**Hundreds of LFRI volunteers** have been involved, in so many ways, large and small, in making possible nearly **250 LFRI runs in 2019** -- most with, but a few without, our canteen truck. We were blessed even more by a small yet outstanding group of volunteers under the very capable leadership of Suzanne and Barry Toothaker, who organized and conducted LFRI’s first major fundraising event in four years, hosted by **RI Country Club** in Barrington, culminating in a fun evening attended by over 220, featuring our guest speaker, Christina McKibbin of **We Share Hope**, and **netting over \$26,000**.

LFRI’s board continuously seeks opportunities to engage and partner with other agencies addressing hunger and homelessness, to identify improved access for services, shared operations and interests, economic provisioning, sourcing and support, exploring how we can work together in serving our clients. LFRI extends a warm invitation to churches who may be interested in learning about our ministry, and perhaps participating in a mentoring relationship with one of our member churches. Through our Facebook page and webpage (lfri.org), we continued to receive inquiries from local organizations and area churches – including one from nearby **Putnam, CT** -- about our mission, organization, operations, so that they might identify ways they can participate and share in what we do.

Generous sponsors for grants received by LFRI in 2019 are noted in the financial narrative below. These organizations, many of whom have provided past grant awards to our predecessor organization, MLF-RI, continued support that has been particularly helpful in boosting LFRI’s mission support outlays to member churches.

## Financial Posture

LFRI's work is made possible by many hands, caring hearts, and the miracle and blessing of working together. The generous support of grant sponsors and individual donors, combined with volunteer networks in our member churches, led to a healthy financial posture for LFRI in 2019. Together, LFRI and its partner churches teamed to deliver over \$100,000 worth of goods in 2019 to our neighbors in need -- an amazing miracle of grace, generosity, and organization, and truly a blessing that we are able to share and be witness to such an abundance! LFRI distributed \$25.7K in mission support grants to our member churches to augment their own shares of program expense, which exceed \$40K per year in aggregate. The most significant component -- more than half of what we deliver -- is comprised of 'in-kind' contributions of food, clothing and basic essentials donated by member church congregations and their associated communities of volunteers -- a dozen socks here, a half-dozen gloves or scarves there, a dozen hard boiled eggs or snacks or fresh fruits at time, and hundreds upon hundreds of donated items adding up to more than 200 truckloads of care brought to the poorest among us. LFRI especially wishes to acknowledge these collective contributions, which expand our capacity to deliver more to our clients:

- Our philanthropic sponsors, who together provided \$6.5K in grant awards received by LFRI in 2019: The Episcopal Charities Fund of RI, and the CVS Health Charity Golf Classic.
- Our corporate sponsors, whose combined contributions totaled \$8.1K: Amica Companies Foundation, Barrington Congregational Church, Barrington Presbyterian Church, Barrington Women's Club, Bayside Veterinary Care Inc., Benevity Community Impact Fund, Calvary Commandery No 13 Knights Templar, Central Congregational Church, Elco Printing Inc., Flatbread Pizza, Fidelity Inc. Gil's Appliances, Grapes & Grains Inc, Mary's Helpers of St Mary's Church, Ming's Asian Food LLC, St John's Episcopal Church Women, Nut Leisure, St Paul's Episcopal Church, Striper Marina Inc, St Luke's Episcopal Church, Taylor Box Company, Your Cause LLC. In addition, **Cape Cod Express** continued its generous provision of in-kind support for LFRI's truck and related maintenance and repairs.
- Our 51 individual donors, who together donated \$8.4K.

## Looking Ahead

While continuing our mission of serving Rhode Islanders in need, LFRI will continue to focus on:

- **Securing future sources of funding.** To support LFRI operations LFRI shall identify new candidate grants to pursue as potential sources of revenues to augment the contributions made through our member churches. We shall continue to recruit individual and corporate donors as well as volunteer teams in our communities.
- **Increasing coordination with our fellow partners in ministry,** including shelter site management, community action agencies, and fellow social service providers in the Rhode Island area. LFRI welcomes opportunities to collaborate and engage by sharing awareness of the situational landscape of hunger and homelessness across RI, and to seek ways to expand or adjust our operations to more effectively and more efficiently address, without duplication, needs that align with our mission of **'providing food, promoting dignity'**.
- We will continue our practice of **meeting with and encouraging new teams of volunteers** to join with our member churches in serving the neediest of our neighbors.

**LFRI Officers** elected in September 2019 for one-year terms:

Jeffrey Manickas, President  
William Sweeney, Treasurer

Eleanor O'Neill, Secretary  
William Aldrich, Assistant Treasurer