BECAUSE OF YOUR SUPPORT,

Project Bread continues to be a leading national model in responding to the individual crisis of food insecurity, while investing in systemic change to prevent hunger. With your help, stories across the state are being written every day with healthier endings.

THANK YOU!

Ellen Parker, Executive Director
PROJECT BREAD BELIEVES THAT THE OPPOSITE OF HUNGRY—IS A CHILD READY TO LEARN.

In Massachusetts, one in ten households is food insecure—and 80% of these households are home to children in need. For these children, school meals are a critical part of their diet, often making up half of the nutrients they receive each day. We believe these important meals provide a springboard for children to reach their fullest potential—and that they should taste as good as they are healthy.

Children who are hungry at school have a harder time concentrating in class and often fall behind their peers; it can be hard for a student to hear themselves think over the noise of a growling stomach.

Thanks to you, Project Bread continues to develop and expand anti-hunger programs around the state that protect low-income students from hunger. By providing nutritious meals at school, not only are we ensuring that these children’s needs are met each day, but they are building healthy eating habits to last a lifetime.

TOGETHER, WE ARE TAKING HUNGER OUT OF THE EQUATION OF LEARNING.

In the past five years school breakfast participation among low-income children eligible for free & reduced-price meals has jumped 40%
YOU HELP CHILDREN RISE AND SHINE

For many families, morning is the most hectic time of day. When you’re rushing against the clock to get kids up and out the door, breakfast becomes a meal that is all too easy to skip. At Project Bread, we know the success of a child’s day depends on a nutritious start. That’s why, with your support, we are helping breakfast make a comeback in schools around the state.

At Salemwood School in Malden, 80% of students qualify for free and reduced-price school meals. This qualifies the school to offer free breakfast to the entire student body, eliminating any stigma for those who might otherwise go without eating. While this provides families on a tight budget with a sense of relief, not all students are able to take advantage of the available breakfast before the morning bell—and that’s where Project Bread steps in to help.

Project Bread works with each school to implement a breakfast model that meets the unique needs of that school community. With our guidance and your support, Salemwood just made the switch from serving breakfast in the cafeteria to a grab-n-go model, so breakfast can be eaten in the classroom at the start of the day. This simple change caused participation in breakfast to soar from 560 breakfasts served each week to 3,000—a 500% increase! Your gifts have allowed our Child Nutrition Outreach Program (CNOP) to develop individualized plans for more districts to increase participation in breakfast and to ensure that more students start their days ready to learn.

YOU HELP US FOSTER HEALTHY EATING HABITS TO LAST A LIFETIME

If you’re a parent with a picky eater, you know how difficult it can be to ensure your child has a nutritious and balanced diet. If only you could get your child to try something new; they might find they like it.

For parents with a limited food budget, that challenge is made even greater, as you have to purchase food you know your child will eat—versus spending money on healthier, less familiar foods that might get wasted. Fortunately, our Chef Educators are on your side—and they’re rock stars when it comes to getting students of all ages to try new and unfamiliar foods.

When Sarah, a student at the Math and Science Academy in Greenfield, visited her grandparents over the holidays, she was excited to tell them all about the chef working in her school cafeteria. As they know Sarah to be a “bit of a picky eater,” her grandparents were blown away hearing about all of the foods she was enjoying at school—foods she never would have touched at home. They reached out to Project Bread to get recipes for two of Sarah’s new lunch favorites, garlic parmesan broccoli and chicken teriyaki, so their family could begin making them for dinner at home. It’s clear: when students enthusiastically interact with healthy food, their lives are changed for the better.

Thanks to you, our Chef in Schools program is operating in more than 100 schools this year, introducing more than 60,000 students to new foods and flavors, and building a foundation for healthy eating habits at home—habits to last a lifetime.

It’s a Thursday morning at Greenfield Middle School, and the students are busting in the cafeteria before heading to their first class. When they take a look at the lunch board before finding a seat, they light up: “It’s Chef Sam Day! I can’t wait for lunch!”

Weekly visits by Chef Sam, a Project Bread chef educator working within the Chefs in Schools® (CIS) program, are extremely popular with students. Sixth-grade teacher Vanessa Ricketts has seen a complete transformation in her students’ attitude toward lunchtime. On those mornings, students can be heard saying in the hallways, “It smells like my mom’s cooking.” They are excited to discover new recipes and tasty food they’ll get to try that day.

“When 11:50 am rolls around, my students speed-walk to the lunch line, and then scoot over to Chef Sam’s table to sample his new recipe,” Vanessa says. She sees her students raving about the food to one another, and giving Chef Sam a thumbs up on their way to the sample table for seconds. “When a Chef in Schools special appears as the main meal at lunch, the lunch line is always the longest,” shares Vanessa, “and it’s so much more than just a meal. It’s a whole new environment in the cafe, and it makes my students feel cared for and special.”

Every Project Bread chef makes an effort to incorporate various ethnic options into their menu rotation—Asian chicken salad, fajita wraps, chicken biryani, and others—so students have the opportunity to try new foods. “We want food to taste like home,” says Chef Sam Icklan.

Through your support, our Chef Educators are working to transform school food in five other low-income school districts around the state this school year, and for that we are very thankful.