

June 17, 2013

TFC's INAUGURAL COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT AT THE GREATER BOSTON FOOD BANK



TFC Staffers at the end of our shift-notice we're all still smiling! Back Row (L to R): Chuck Hipp, Jane Taubner Barney, Betty Harris, Scott Swartz, Kathy Chianca, Tim Meckel, Leann Sullivan, Mary Evans Front Row: Michelle Volpe, Connie Wyllie, Renée Kwok, Elisabeth Christino, Susan Frodigh

On the evening of June 12, 2013, TFC staffers rolled up their sleeves along with 32 folks from other firms and agencies and donated a couple of hours to the Greater Boston Food Bank (GBFB). Prior to carpooling over to the warehouse, we fortified ourselves with a delicious pizza and salad dinner.

Upon arrival, we were dwarfed by the skyscraper-like shelves of canned goods. During a brief video highlighting the work of the GBFB, we learned that, "In eastern Massachusetts, one in nine members of our community is at risk of hunger, and that number is expanding. The Greater Boston Food Bank has witnessed a 23% increase in requests for food assistance since 2005." Even further sobering information . . . "Hunger is no longer just a problem facing those in poverty. A recent study shows that 47% of those at risk for hunger in eastern Massachusetts earn too much to be eligible for government-provided emergency food assistance. Many never dreamed they would need a food pantry or community meal program to feed themselves and their families."



This is the sight that greets a visitor to the GBFB.

Prior to arriving at the GBFB, we imagined ourselves sorting cans and checking expiration labels, but were surprised to be involved in a "Retail Rescue" project which entailed sorting frozen meat from retail stores into 7-9 lb. bags as well as loading boxes with 25-30 lbs. of assorted prepared foods. Not to worry, if you didn't care to handle the frozen meat, you could choose to be on "cardboard" duty knocking down the boxes or be a "counter" to determine how many bags of meat were collected in the various bins marked "beef," "poultry," "pork," and "prepared foods." After a brief training on how to sort, weigh and report the food, the volunteers lined two long tables where the pallets of meat were unloaded box by box.

Unfortunately, there was a "trash" pallet (e.g., if a package was ripped or the meat was discolored), and we initially felt badly that any of this donated food landed there. However, we were glad to learn at the end of the shift that hog farmers would happily haul it away for their hungry customers!



We listen to the special instructions for sorting, weighing and recording the food.

In just a short time, we got into a rhythm of sorting, bagging, weighing, and reporting. All the while, a cadre of warehouse workers were whizzing by with forklifts, continuously dropping pallets for our sorting pleasure.

At the end of the evening, we were astounded to learn that in just two hours of our collaborative efforts, we netted 12,950 lbs. of sorted food. This represented 8,965 meals or roughly the equivalent of feeding 2 families of 4 for an entire year!



A sample from our
"Retail Rescue"



Volunteers lined two long tables
for the sorting and inspection process.

We unanimously agreed this inaugural service project was a worthwhile effort and one which we will likely repeat in the future. For more information about the Greater Boston Food Bank, visit <http://www.gbfb.org/>.



Net result of our efforts--12,950 lbs. of food sorted!