

January 2022

Letter to the Editor,

Thirty years ago, in response to noticing a need in our community, Beverly Bootstraps began its journey. Originally, we were formed to fill the gaps left by limited Federal programs and to offer emergency assistance to those who might not qualify for those programs, or who were just experiencing a difficult time. From humble beginnings in the basement of the First Baptist Church in Beverly, we have slowly expanded our services to include things such as community outreach, English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and High School Equivalency (HSE) classes, and our Thrift Shop from which 100% of the net profits benefit our neighbors in need.

In recent years, however, more and more people in our community have begun to come to us to fulfill all their food needs rather than supplemental visits. The task of taking on more clients and with a greater frequency has led to not only a massive increase in the amount of food coming and going from our Pantry, but also a noticeable need for expanded access to the Food Pantry. We are proud to announce that we have stepped up to fill the need for more access to healthy food. Our Food Pantry is now open for clients to visit every seven days instead of every fourteen days. This expansion would not be possible without the incredible work of our donors and volunteers who have once again gone above and beyond to help their neighbors in need.

This year we saw an increase in the number of clients who rely on our client services and case management. With our recent expansion in coverage to Hamilton, Wenham, and Essex, we have been able to help even more people with programs such as rental assistance, fuel relief, and much more. We saw record numbers for both our Holiday Gift program, with 724 children receiving gifts, and our Back-to-School Backpack program giving out 716 backpacks filled with school supplies to children all over our coverage area! Our team of both employees and volunteers has put in thousands of hours of work in order to help our clients on their road to self-sufficiency. We cannot thank our community enough for all it has done to help us continue to meet our mission. In these difficult times, it is up to all of us to help those who are struggling; the community surrounding us here at Beverly Bootstraps has answered that call above and beyond our expectations. We often marvel at how your generosity allows us to serve more and more people in deeper ways. What began as a small Food Pantry in the basement of a church has become a proud and necessary institution, and for that we cannot thank you enough.

Gratefully,

Sue Gabriel, *Executive Director*

and

Chris Nazareth, *Director of Development and External Affairs*