

# Partner Profiles



United Way of the Tri-Valley Area

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*Editor's Note: This article is part of an ongoing series that demonstrates the community impact of the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area (UWTVA), its funded Partners, and recipients of donor-designated funds. To learn more about how you can give, advocate, or volunteer in your community, or to view the article archive, visit [www.uwtva.org](http://www.uwtva.org). To contact staff, call (207) 778-5048 or e-mail [info@uwtva.org](mailto:info@uwtva.org).*

## The Pantry Project

This spring, the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area and HealthReach RSVP (Retired & Senior Volunteer Program), are collaborating with local businesses, and food pantries to ensure food pantry shelves are filled and Greater Franklin County residents are fed. Ten local businesses or organizations are being engaged over the next three months (April, May and June, 2010) to fill the shelves and feed the hungry. Why is this so important?

### In Maine:

- Almost 14 percent of Maine families are not getting enough to eat every day.\*
- Approximately 20 percent of Maine's children are going to bed hungry every day.\*
- As our economy continues to struggle, families are having to make difficult choices between paying for medication, housing, heat, childcare, transportation and food, and their health is suffering.

### In Greater Franklin County, things are no different:

- The area's 10 food pantries are serving an average of 2,000 individuals per month, and this number is increasing.
- Locally, children make up 30 percent of the population visiting food pantries each month.
- In 2009 between our 10 area food pantries, 22,941 people were provided good food and hope.

The Pantry Project is a significant way to make a difference in our region – and the United Way and RSVP have made it simple and fun to participate.

- We will supply a portable five-shelf unit, 18" x 36" x 72", as well as cardboard boxes with signage. The sturdy shelf unit also includes bright and attractive Pantry Project signage.
- Participating companies or organizations will receive a Pantry Project notebook with project instructions, a press release template, a sample e-mail to send to employees, and a list of area food pantries for food deliveries. (All materials are also included on enclosed CD.)
- Shelving units will be delivered partially assembled. Participants should expect to set up the shelf display (with minimal effort needed) in a highly visible area and pack food items in the supplied

boxes as the shelves become full. Businesses and organizations will have the choice of delivering boxes of food to a pantry of their choice, or arranging for the food to be picked up by United Way or RSVP staff, or volunteers. A list of healthy and nutritious food items to guide contributors will also be included.

- Each participating business or organization will be responsible for letting employees know about the Pantry Project and encourage people to bring in food items. At the end of the month, the participating organization or business will pack the shelf unit and boxes and return them to the United Way of the Tri-Valley Area in Farmington, or arrange for pick-up.

**If you are interested in participating in the Pantry Project as a business or organization or would like to volunteer to help, please contact Lisa Laflin at the United Way of The Tri-Valley Area: [lisa@uwtva.org](mailto:lisa@uwtva.org), 778-5048; or Linda Rood, HealthReach RSVP; [Linda.Rood@MaineGeneral.org](mailto:Linda.Rood@MaineGeneral.org), 778-0427.**

*\*Source: Good Shepherd Food Bank [www.gsfb/hunger](http://www.gsfb/hunger)*

*The United Way of the Tri-Valley Area's (UWTVA) mission is to improve people's lives by focusing the caring capacity of our communities. One of 10 United Ways in Maine, UWTVA conducts an Annual Fundraising Campaign, contributions to which are reinvested in Greater Franklin County, by supporting programs run by area 501 (c)3 health and human service organizations. UWTVA also coordinates the Emergency Food and Shelter Program and collaborates with area volunteers and organizations to conduct initiatives that support the community, including food drives and homeless prevention activities.*