



2016 ANNUAL REPORT



Providing nourishing food and kindness to all of our neighbors in need.





OUR MISSION

Hunger comes in many forms. Our Neighbors' Table is committed to establishing a community that provides for the whole person with nourishing food, kindness and dignity.

OUR CORE VALUES

Service with dignity
Community
Quality
Respect
Confidentiality

WHAT IS FOOD SECURITY?

“Having no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations”

- US DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

In other words, someone who is food secure has no problems getting food when and where they need it. Food insecurity begins with the anxiety of whether or not you will have enough food and continues to extreme cases of rationing meal sizes or skipping meals altogether.

There are an estimated 6,000 people living in northeastern Essex County who are food insecure.

2016 AT A GLANCE



543,000
meals



3,000
people



307
families
with children



386
seniors



126
military
veterans



514
active
volunteers

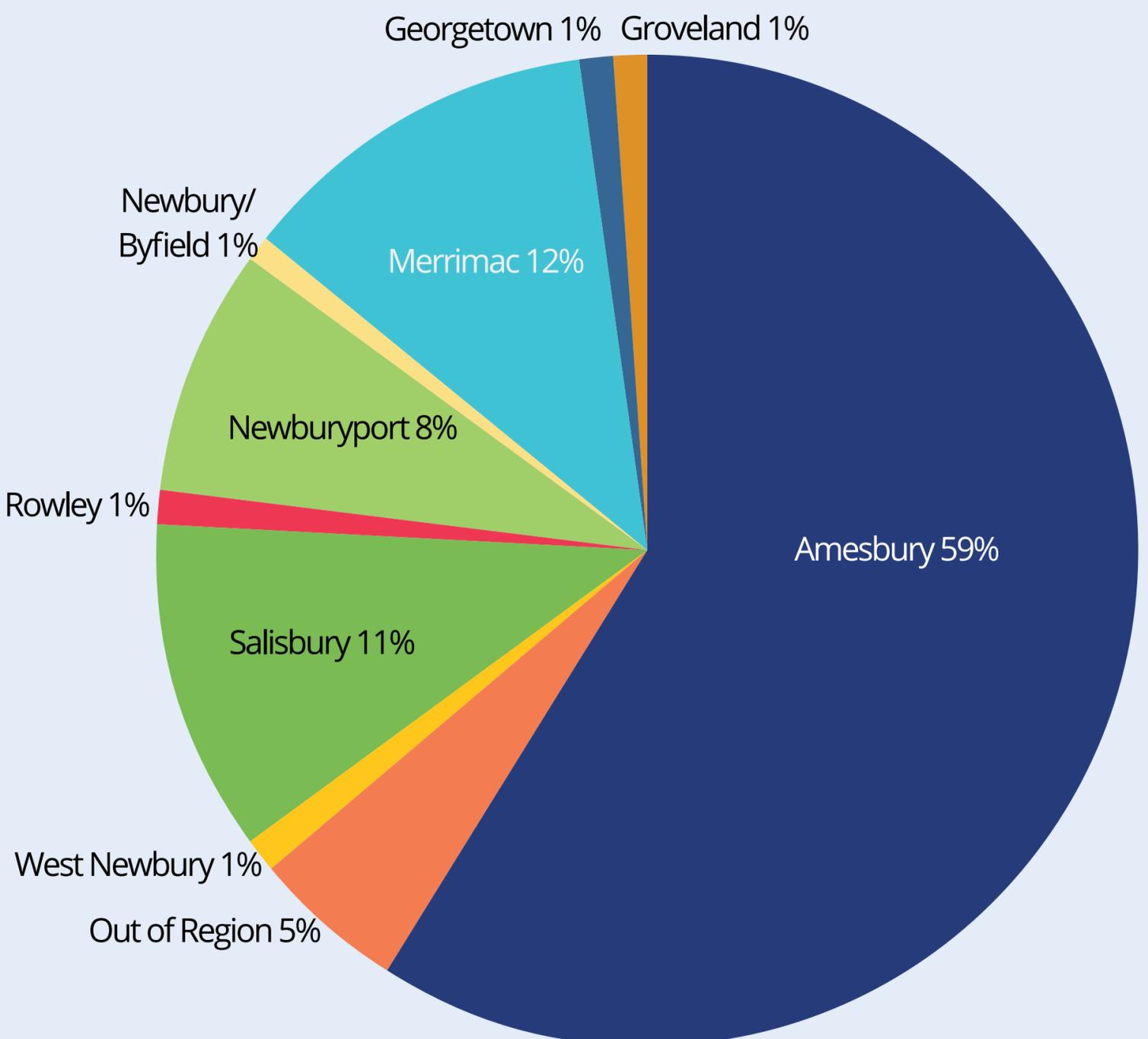


\$154,000
in food donated
through local
food drives



\$0.99
average
cost per
meal

WHERE ONT GUESTS LIVE



YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

In 2016, your support helped ONT distribute 543,000 meals to people in need. Here's a snapshot of enrollment and meals provided in each of our programs:

WEDNESDAY MEAL

4,838 guests | 11,675 meals

GROCERY PROGRAMS

ONT MARKET

2,090 people | 402,228 meals

AMESBURY MOBILE MARKETS

104 people | 49,583 meals

MERRIMAC MOBILE MARKETS

352 people | 31,675 meals

HOME DELIVERY

108 people | 22,205 meals

SUMMER LUNCH PROGRAM

163 children | 25,302 meals

HOLIDAY PROGRAMS

1,482 people | 73,373 meals

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

322 people | 6,045 meals



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CHANGING THE FACE OF “FOOD PANTRIES”

We cannot talk about 2016 activities at Our Neighbors' Table without highlighting the opening of The Jardis-Taylor Center. After 18 months of planning, designing, fundraising, and building, on May 18, 2016, The Jardis-Taylor Center for Our Neighbors' Table officially opened its doors. This event was eagerly anticipated by ONT board, staff, volunteers, guests, and the community as a whole. And the results have far exceeded any of our expectations.

The first step through the door reveals a program space that defies what we've known as a “food pantry.” The new market at The Jardis-Taylor Center is more reflective of a modern neighborhood grocery store, with shelves lined with a variety of grocery staples – pasta, rice, canned fruits and vegetables, cereals and toiletries. And at the center of our market are the foods our guests need most – an abundance of fresh fruits and vegetables, many grown here in our region; a freezer full of meats, fish, frozen soups and, even desserts; and a cooler stocked with milk, eggs, cheeses, yogurts, and more produce. Every single guest at the market is free to shop at their leisure, grocery cart and all, to select the items best suited for their household. No one

follows them around, no more arbitrary rations. Every guest is free to take what they need. It is truly a genuine shopping experience!

None of this would have been possible without the hard work and support from many individuals and the collective commitment of the communities we serve. We extend our deepest gratitude to Greg Jardis for donating the property and spearheading our capital campaign, to John Massaua for managing the entire construction project, to the Institution for Savings Charitable Foundation and J Family Charities for their leadership gifts to the campaign, to Newburyport Five Cents Savings Bank for financing the construction, Greg Colling of Merrimack Design for creating a design that exceeded our greatest wishes, to McPartland Corporation for their workmanship and time- and cost-savings, to the ONT Board of Directors for readying this organization for this important project and for rising to the occasion through it's giving and advocacy, to the hundreds of donors who made this project possible, and to the dedicated staff and volunteers who gave of their ideas and their time to ensure our guests received seamless service in the high standard to which we have all been committed. For a full overview of the project and our generous list of supporters, please visit ourneighborstable.org/a-place-for-everyone.

This was a remarkable milestone in our mission to provide food, kindness and dignity to everyone in our community. Just like the last 25 years, it was made possible through the dedication and perseverance of many.



With humble appreciation,

Lyndsey Haight
Executive Director



WHO ARE WE SERVING?

According to data compiled by The Greater Boston Food Bank and Feeding America, there are approximately **6,000 people who are food insecure living in northeastern Essex County** – people who are worrying about running out of food or actually going without. More than 2,500 of those people live in Amesbury and Newburyport combined, but there are children, adults and seniors struggling with hunger in every one of the twelve communities served by ONT. In 2016, nearly 3,000 people received food from ONT's grocery and meal programs. **But who are the people seeking help from Our Neighbors' Table?**

In 2016, ONT served **1 out of every 12 residents of Amesbury** – adults, children, and seniors – a rate consistent for the last three years. Since opening the new market, there has been a **53% increase in the number of people coming to ONT** from across the region, with notable increases in people coming Newburyport (107 new people) and Salisbury (175 new people).

Families and single parents make up the majority of the people we serve, and they are not making enough money to support their families. According to the Economic Independence Index published by Crittenton Women's Union, a family of four must earn

at least \$76,000/year to afford the basic necessities of shelter, utilities, clothing and food. The families seeking help from ONT are earning less than \$45,000.

In Amesbury, more than 30% of students in the school system are enrolled in the school meal program. In fact, **1 out of 8 children in our region** is or is at-risk of being food insecure. So, it's no surprise when we see a spike in families seeking help in the summer from our **Summer Lunch Program**. This year's SLP enrolled **61 new families** from across the region that had never been to ONT before. Thanks to the generosity of ONT donors, **163 children had a healthy breakfast, lunch and snack every day during their summer break.**

Despite being employed or receiving retirement or disability benefits, the people we serve at ONT are **overwhelmingly poor**: 96% are living at or below 185% of the federal poverty level (\$22,000/yr for an individual; \$46,000/yr for a family of four). By the time a household reaches this income level, it is no longer eligible for nearly all public assistance programs, including Medicaid, SNAP (food stamps), school meals, or subsidized housing.

Only 18% of households served by ONT are supported by an adult who is unemployed, looking for work. Why is this information important? It tells us a great deal about the role ONT has to play in helping local residents meet their basic needs. No longer are people coming to our door because they are in crisis or experiencing a rare emergency. **The individuals and families getting food from ONT rely on our programs to live day-to-day.** Fixed incomes for retirees and people with disabilities and low wages for working parents means food assistance is a critical resource to keep them from going hungry, losing their homes, or neglecting their health. The people served by ONT struggle with the daily choices of paying rent or buying food, putting gas in their cars to get to work or feeding their children, filling their much-needed prescriptions or eating dinner.



QUALITY OR QUANTITY? ONT IS COMMITTED TO BOTH.

Since opening its doors 25 years ago, ONT has seen a continuous growth in both the number of people served and the amount of food provided. In 2011, ONT distributed 200,000 meals to the region. In 2016, we distributed **543,000 meals**. But the measure of success is not simply pumping more meals into the community. Meeting the food needs of our region means providing assistance in a meaningful way – 1) ensuring those in need can access our programs; 2) committing to providing quality food that our guests need most; and 3) serving our community in the most dignified way possible. In essence, in order to have impact, it's not a choice of quantity versus quality, it's meeting the needs of as many people with the highest quality service possible.

Serving more people. In just the first three months of operating in The Jardis-Taylor Center, ONT experienced a 22% increase in the number of seniors visiting our market. **Our new facility is 100% ADA accessible**, meaning senior and individuals with mobility issues who simply could not access our space before can now easily maneuver the market. Our community room serves as an indoor waiting room where guests can comfortably wait for assistance without standing in the cold.

Adding more hours to our weekly market has increased access for more people and reduced their overall waiting time. In 2016, we increased our program operations from 5 total hours on Friday and Saturday, to 9 hours Thursday through Saturday. By the end of 2016, the ONT market was **serving 120% more guests each week** than in 2015. Thursday evenings have proven to be our busiest shift.

Quality and Choice. ONT's guests have overwhelmingly pointed to fresh fruits and vegetables, meats, and dairy products as the items they needed most, items they cannot afford at the grocery store. As a result, ONT is committed to making these products the focal point of our programs. The Wednesday Meal, run by restaurant-industry veteran Jim Miller, centers on wholesome, minimally processed ingredients with menu items including baked scrod with rice pilaf, homemade chicken pot pie, and roasted pork loin with sweet potatoes and vegetables. More than 50% of the food given out in the market, home delivery and mobile market programs are fresh food items.

In 2016, ONT focused its time and resources to **invest in increasing our capacity** to serve more people and to improve the quality of the food we offer. Adding new program staff – a market manager, mobile market manager, and meal manager – has allowed us to research and source more fresh food at low or no cost from The Greater Boston Food Bank, local farms, wholesalers and retailers. The design of The Jardis-Taylor Center, complete with walk-in/reach-in refrigeration and freezer units, exponentially increases our capacity to distribute and store ample fresh foods for all of our programs.

As a direct result of these investments, ONT has improved the experience of every guest. A guest “shopping” in our market is allowed to take

whatever they need. While instincts might lead you to believe this would lead to a “free for all” of people taking too much, data shows that, on average, each guest is taking **LESS but more helpful food** at each visit. In our old program model, guests were rationed various food items – 2 cans of vegetables, 2 cans of soup, 1 pound of meat, 1 dozen eggs, a box of pasta. While each guest received a significant quantity of food, the selection did not easily translate into a cohesive meal plan or provide enough of one item to feed an entire family. Now, guests can assess everything available in the market and choose the foods that will best meet their family’s needs throughout the week – **just the way we all shop at the grocery store.**

Combining quantity and quality has set **ONT on a path to providing food security to the region.** Guests spread the word about the high-quality food and experience at ONT, bringing people who might otherwise not seek help. The targeted investment of ONT’s resources has resulted in higher quantity and improved quality while still meeting our target spending of **\$1 per meal.**



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