



News Across the Table

Our Neighbors' Table, September 2021 / Edition 14

Market News

Have you noticed our cart of extras during curbside pickup? The ONT market generally puts a few items out front, which you are welcome to add to your order. When visiting the cart, we ask that you please wear a mask and remain socially distant from your fellow shoppers.

Heather's Recipe:

BROWN SUGAR & BUTTER BAKED ACORN SQUASH



Fall is upon us! This dish is super easy & kids love it!

PREP TIME: 10 Minutes

COOK TIME: 75 Minutes

SERVES: 4

INGREDIENTS

- 1 acorn squash
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons maple syrup
- Dash kosher Salt

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F
2. Microwave squash for a minute to make it easier to cut
3. Cut the acorn squash in half and scoop out seeds & pulp
4. Score the inside of each half so the butter & sugar mixture can seep in
5. Place squash halves cut side up in a roasting pan. Pour 1/4-inch of water in the pan so the squash doesn't burn or get dried out in the oven
6. Rub butter inside of the squash, then sprinkle the salt, add brown sugar and drizzle the maple syrup
7. Bake for 60-75 minutes until squash is softened



Heather Paterson is ONT's Meal Manager. Her delicious recipes are made into meals and available free for takeout every Wednesday from 4pm to 6pm at Main Street Congregational Church, 145 Main St., Amesbury.

Apply for SNAP by phone!

Our Neighbors' Table is a SNAP Outreach Partner. We can help you apply for SNAP (food stamps) by phone. Call Tress at 978-388-1907, ext. 18 to apply, help with an open SNAP case, or to answer your questions about SNAP.



Call Tress Ricker
978-388-1907 Ext 18

A note from our Executive Director: Lyndsey Haight

Thank you to everyone who completed our Guest Satisfaction Survey this spring. Your feedback is critical in helping us design everything we do, from our markets to the Wednesday Meal to our website. Did you know even the Amesbury Market was designed based on surveys and meetings with many guests back in 2015? It's true. And today, we need your input more than ever. So, what were the results of the survey?

We heard that 45% have had your household finances directly affected by the pandemic (55% of you who have children). We heard that housing is the greatest expense facing your household and that 16% of you are worried about eviction this year. We are sharing this information with our elected officials to stress the importance of rental assistance and eviction prevention.

We also wanted to know if we were meeting your food needs, and 83% of you said YES! And you also tell us that shopping at ONT saves families \$25-100 per week, and more than half of seniors save \$25-50! 96% of you feel we are getting you enough information and support and that our programs offer a safe and welcoming environment. 98% feel we are offering the amount of food you need.

How will your input inform our programs going forward? In addition to these high scores, we also heard your suggestions and requests to try to offer more produce and foods to fit dietary restrictions. We heard that 37% want to come back and shop and 30% want to have a choice of shopping online or in-person. Many of our Wednesday Meal guests are eager to come back to dine inside with us – as are we! And we heard that some of you need us to expand our ordering hours. We are going to do our best to work on each of these suggestions.

You know best if our programs are working and, again, I thank all of you for time to complete these surveys. More than 500 guests filled one out!

As always, public health guidelines are our primary guide for re-opening plans. Our Amesbury and Newburyport markets remain online with curbside pick-up. But know that we miss all of your smiles and kind hearts. As the summer comes to a close, I wish you continued health and safekeeping. You know where to find us if you need anything!

SNAP Update

USDA authorizes permanent increase to SNAP effective October 2021

USDA announced an historic update to the "Thrifty Food Plan" (TFP) to more accurately reflect the cost of a healthy diet for SNAP households. As a result, USDA is implementing a 21% increase in the maximum SNAP monthly allotments at the same time that the temporary 15% COVID boost will end. This means that SNAP benefits will increase roughly \$8 per person per month starting 10/1/21. However, we do not know yet when DTA will be implementing this update.

This change is separate from the temporary COVID-19 "emergency allotments" that currently provide an "extra" benefit of at least \$95 per month. We expect those supplements to continue at least through the end of this year, as they are connected to the COVID state of emergency declarations.

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www.ourneighborstable.org/guestnewsletter para fazer o download do pdf com a versão traduzida.

An estimated 314,000 MA workers scheduled to lose Unemployment after Labor Day!

According to the Century Foundation, an estimated **314,000 MA workers will lose all of their unemployment benefits after Labor Day**. As a result many families will be in an extremely difficult financial position.

It will be especially challenging for families unable to re-enter the workforce due to lack of child care, concerns about the Delta variant, or ongoing health effects from COVID. For many households this change could result in a drop to \$0 income.

You can get on the subsidized childcare waitlist through the Child Care Circuit in Lawrence by calling them at 978-686-4288 or applying through their website at www.childcarecircuit.org. Very low income families with children may qualify for cash benefits through TAFDC, which also provides free childcare for its recipients. Apply for TAFDC through the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) at 877-382-2363 or online at www.DTACconnect.com.

We here at Our Neighbors' Table encourage all of our community members who are facing this hardship, or for anyone who could use extra \$ for food, to please apply for SNAP right here at Our Neighbors' Table. ONT Staff member Tress Ricker can help you apply right over the phone. Call her at 978-388-1907 Ext. 18.

People facing the loss of unemployment benefits are also encouraged to apply for TAFDC with the Department of Transitional Assistance. People with very low income who have children may qualify.

Volunteer Profile: Ron Starr



"Lyndsey (ONT Executive Director) made me do it" Ron Starr said laughing when asked why he started volunteering. "No, I'm joking. I've wanted to do this for a while and things opened up and I had the opportunity." For the past six months Ron has been volunteering in

the Warehouse, and he quickly became a staple volunteer as he works at least three shifts a week. Whether he is cutting down boxes, organizing in the fridge/freezer, or picking up donations he's probably cracking jokes. "Oh, I love cutting boxes. Probably my favorite part...No, I like working with everyone and just doing stuff. It's always great to work with the professional staff, especially Mike and Dan. It's particularly special to help fulfil the ONT mission with an amazing group of volunteers who have worked incredibly hard for much longer than me. Much and deep respect to them." said Ron. When he picks up donations at places like Cumberland Farms, he will sometimes see the impact of his work on the community. "People will come up to me because they see the ONT logo and they tell me what great work we do or just thank me. They will sometimes say they used to be a guest or they currently are one." Long time resident of Amesbury, and semi-retired free lance video director, Ron spends his free time with his 3, almost 4, year-old grandson. Thank you, Ron, for all of your hard work.

September is Hunger Action Month!

Send a note of encouragement and gratitude to ONT volunteers at ourneighborstable.org/sendanote

Community



Resources

Veterans Northeast Outreach Center

The mission of the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center is to provide the highest quality of services to assist, support, and advocate for all veterans and their families in Essex, Middlesex, Barnstable, and Rockingham counties.

Financial Services: Through the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program, the VA aims to improve very low income veterans' families housing stability. SSVF will provide outreach and case management services and will assist participants to obtain VA benefits and other public benefits, which may include:

- Rental arrearage
- Utilities & utility deposits
- Moving expenses
- Security & 1st month rent
- Transportation
- Housing Counseling
- Referrals for employment & training, legal services, fiduciary & payees services, health care, daily living, and peer support opportunities

Veterans Northeast Outreach Center
10 Reed St., Haverhill
978-372-3626

Our Neighbors' Table Location & Hours Information:

Newburyport Market: Newburyport Senior Center, 331 High St., Newburyport
Thursdays, 10:00am - 11:30 am

Amesbury Market : 194 Main St., Amesbury
Wednesdays: 10:00am - 1:00pm and 2:00pm - 4:00pm
Thursdays: 12:00pm - 3:00pm and 4:00pm - 6:00pm
Fridays: 9:00am - 12:00pm and 1:00pm - 3:00pm
Saturdays: 9:00am - 1:00pm

Merrimac Market: The Merrimac Mobile Market is temporarily suspended. ONT guests who live in Merrimac are invited to pick up their groceries at our locations in Amesbury or Newburyport.

Grocery orders can be placed online or by phone until 3pm the day before pick-up. Order groceries at:
ourneighborstable.org/getfood



"OPERATION BACKPACK" IS UNDERWAY!

Be prepared for your children heading back to school. If you need school supplies for your children this year, please give **Pettengill House** a call at (978) 463-8801.

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