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### September 2021

- [Birch Community Services: Feeding families and helping them become financially stable.](#)
- [Pandemic benefits extended to 2021-22 school year](#)
- [We need your talents!](#)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Low income is not the only cause of food insecurity. Overlapping issues like lack of affordable housing, social isolation, financial illiteracy, chronic or acute health problems, and high medical costs contribute to food insecurity as well.

Here's what we accomplished together!

### August 2021

Food Donated: **18,680 lbs.**  
Meals It Makes: **15,566 meals**

### Year-to-Date

Food Donated: **95,040 lbs.**  
Meals It Makes: **79,200 meals**

### Meet Our Pantry Partners

[Birch Community Services: Feeding families and helping](#)

In 1992, when Suzanne & Barry Birch saw bread going to waste, they got the word out to local grocery stores that they could put the extra food to good use. What started out as a home project has grown into a 22,000 sq. ft. warehouse. Birch Community Services now serves as a distribution center for 70 smaller non-profits and food pantries and distributes a million pounds of food per month.

**Forty percent of Americans are living paycheck to paycheck.** These families are working, but still struggling to make ends meet. Birch itself currently serves 600 families every week who are having trouble making ends meet, but not eligible for SNAP or other financial assistance. Families pay \$80 per month and in exchange receive access to weekly “shopping” trips in the warehouse, taking home an average of \$1,000/month in food, clothing, and household items.



To participate in Birch's Sustainable Families Program, one family member must be working or actively looking for work and each family is required to volunteer two hours per month. The time they spend at Birch gives participants a true sense of ownership and community. In fact, family volunteers make up seventy percent of Birch's labor, providing the equivalent work of 25 full-time employees.

Valerie Rippey explains how Birch is unique, “At our heart we're a financial literacy program. People come to us for food, but we see it as a vehicle to get them in the door and the key to helping them with financial hardship.”

Participants meet with the Financial Literacy Manager and enroll in the 8-hour

setting and counseling.

The average participant pays off \$7,000 worth of debt and saves \$1,000...Birch's philosophy of a hand up, not a hand-out, in action.



"Birch Community Services has so much gratitude for the Portland Food Project donors. Because of your donations, our families are not needing to spend money on food."

—Valerie Rippey, Birch Community Services

To learn more about Birch: [birchcommunityservices.org](http://birchcommunityservices.org)

If you are interested a tour of the Birch warehouse, contact [Valerie@bcsi.org](mailto:Valerie@bcsi.org)

## FOOD NEWS

### Pandemic benefits extended to 2021-22 school year

The [USDA recently announced](#) plans to continue the Pandemic Electronic Benefits Transfer (P-EBT) for the 2021-22 school year. This benefit provides qualifying families financial support to cover the cost of meals if schools must be closed, reduce hours, or return to remote learning. Children who are approved for free or reduced-price meals and who attend a school that provides free meals to all students, are eligible to receive benefits. Additionally, the program has added benefits for children 0-6 whose families receive SNAP

## SHARE YOUR TALENTS

### Interested in a Bigger Role? We could use your help!

PFP is a 100% volunteer-run organization. Please consider volunteering to share your time and expertise to help with one of these tasks:

- Posting to social media
- Helping to write newsletters
- Helping at the drop-off location—unloading cars or handing out green bags
- Securing business sponsorships
- Lending your secure covered porch for early green bag drop off
- Managing your own green bag pick-up route
- Being a substitute driver on pick-up days

### Share your talents

Contact us at: [info@portlandfoodproject.org](mailto:info@portlandfoodproject.org) for more information or to volunteer.

Mark your calendar now!

The upcoming collection dates are:

October 9th

December 11th



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