

THE Hunger Game

DAVE AND DONNA GOODRICH VOLUNTEERED FOR THEIR FIRST FOOD DRIVE 10 YEARS AGO

with St. Mary's Church in Portsmouth. Along with fellow parishioners, they placed bins there to fill with canned goods, asked friends and family to donate what they could and asked if local businesses would do the same. They came to church every week with bags of food. After a month, they had what they thought was enough. But when they delivered it to Newport's Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center, where Donna was a board member, the food pantry shelves were almost bare. "It was a crisis," remembers Dave. "So we delivered every week, instead of every month."

What began as the “give a dollar, an hour and a can every week” challenge from the church’s former Rev. Pam Mott, led to a community crusade that collected 4800 lbs. of food in 2005 and expanded the Goodriches’ and the church’s role in feeding the hungry on Aquidneck Island. The church was collecting food so constantly that it became the flagship food drive, delivering nearly 10,000 lbs. of food last year, and the Goodriches’ received *The Newport Daily News* Community Service Award in 2013 for their involvement. “We saw the immediate need for food and humanity,” says Donna. “We really just wanted to raise the level of interest and sensitivity to hunger here.”

That’s what MLK Center Director of Development Alyson Novick says it’s all about. The center served 140,000 meals at its soup kitchen in 2013, and is on track to serve 150,000 this year, she says; it has expanded its Veggie Box program with Farm Fresh RI, serving fresh vegetables and fruit to people who need it (see Bytes, p. 9); and has doubled the size of its food pantry and built a larger loading dock to accommodate increased deliveries thanks in part to community donations like the Goodriches’. Its growth, however, does not mean hunger is eradicated here, she explains. “Hunger is all over the country, not just in Newport or certain neighborhoods. It’s right in our backyards,” she says. “We see seniors, working families, people on



MLK Community Center Executive Director Marilyn Warren and volunteers Dave and Donna Goodrich load food into the center’s Food 2 Friends van for delivery to the homebound hungry on Aquidneck Island.



**MLK Community Center
Volunteers Eilish
Heaney and Heather
Baker sort apples for
the center's food pantry.**

disability, singles. They work multiple jobs, and just run out of money at the end of the month. And if you're under the impression the government takes care of the hungry in this country, that's just not the case."

According to the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, which delivers food to the MLK Center and other food pantries statewide, the Ocean State's hunger pains are higher than the national average. More than 15 percent of Rhode Island households are food insecure, which means they lack reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food, while 14.5 percent nationwide, or 17.6 million households, are food insecure. With the millions of tourists flooding in every year to experience the mansions, yachting and seaside grandeur, as well as the general appearance of wealth in this community, the disparity with hunger is often overlooked. "Their lives are not neat little packages," says Donna, a former Rogers High School teacher. "We took food to people's homes every four weeks because we wanted to develop a rapport

with them, see what's happening with their families and in their lives. We got so involved that if you were talking about donating food, you were talking with us."

The Goodriches stepped down from their leadership roles in 2012, though they continue to volunteer at St. Paul's United Methodist Church soup kitchen, the Seamen's Church Institute's Food

to Docks program and MLK's Food 2 Friends program, which provides food to people who are homebound. Meanwhile, St. Mary's Church has maintained its dedication to the hungry, with collection bins in the parish hall, regular deliveries to MLK and Lucy's Hearth, as well as nearly 75 prepared meals each month to St. Paul's Church. Rev. Jennifer Pedrick points out the lush vegetable and herb garden tended by volunteers who are attempting to distribute more than 2000 lbs. of fresh produce this year. She also plans to expand the church's extensive kitchen through cooking classes. "We feed both spiritual and physical hunger," she says. "We know from our own families that every gathering is marked by a meal. So if we can go into the world and feed people, then we're doing Jesus's work."

MLK's Novick says hunger is not just Newport's problem, it's something the entire community must sort out, and the Goodriches and St. Mary's Church understand that. "Hunger is their thing. They care about food, in a real, essential way," she says. "They keep the pantry running." ❖

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—ALYSON NOVICK,
MLK CENTER DIRECTOR
OF DEVELOPMENT

Hunger Pains

When a girl who loves to eat edits a magazine that creates a food issue, that girl smiles. A lot. Then she gets to taste test desserts for an article and she can't stop wiggling with excitement. It turns out "she" is me, "researching" for this August issue. So you can imagine my glee when beignets come out of the 15 Point Road kitchen covered in confectioners sugar with vanilla bean ice cream. Suddenly the restaurant's waterfront view fades and all I can see is sugary doughnut goodness. So I snap a few photos and grab a fork. My husband loves his key lime pie. I love beignets.

There is a lot more to savor in this annual food and festivals issue, including a tailgating with kids story that is a parent's dream. Who doesn't love relaxing at a polo game or vineyard with a picnic of bite size nibbles where the kids are entertained? I don't even have kids, and I love that! Here I'm tasting a Brazilian brigadeiro in a 1929 Ford Model A sedan, an appropriate treat in the midst of World Cup fever.

It's not all about frivolous foods, however. Newport County



has a hunger problem, with soup kitchens full of hungry patrons and food pantries with empty shelves across the island. In Rhode Island, 43 percent of the RI Community Food Bank's clients choose between paying for food and paying for utilities. Hunger is an issue that Newport's Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center and St. Mary's Church in Portsmouth are trying to remedy. See how they're doing, and how you can help all year round, on p. 42.

I hope you like the rest of this issue too, a dedication to summer's remaining days. Cheers!

Annie Steen
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inbox

via email

Hi Annie,
I am thrilled with the July issue that arrived in my mailbox today! I've already skimmed it and can't wait to read it all word for word. Every article looks great!

I won't be able to visit Newport this July as I usually do (haven't missed a year since 1995!) since a new grandson will be born in July and my son is getting married in August, so this year your wonderful magazine will be my "Newport vacation." Of course, I can still get a few souvenirs online! And I'm thinking I'll do that!
So, thank you for the wonderful issue. I hope to be back in person next July!

CINDY KING



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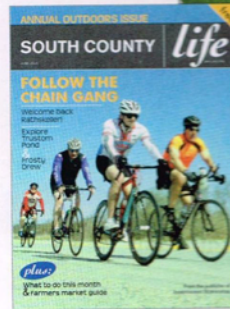


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On the cover: Louis Armstrong performing at the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival. Photo courtesy of The Newport Daily News. See story, p. 20.

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Clockwise from top left: Marianne Lee; Annie Sherman; Brittany Lauro; Alyson Novick/courtesy the Martin Luther King Jr. Community Center