

# ELIJAH'S PROMISE

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Re-Imagining the Work of Ending Hunger



# Introduction

- Food insecurity remains high despite economic recovery. 14% of New York state residents are estimated to be food insecure by the USDA.
- Obesity and diabetes at epidemic levels
- Disparities in who has ready access to good, nutritious food and those who do not. *Food Desert* and *Food Swamp* have come to define those communities, primarily urban and rural low income areas, that lack access to grocery stores and markets, and those that are “swamped” with fast food and junk food.
- For those who are hungry, in addition to lack of access to good food, the emergency food system, which includes food banks, food pantries and soup kitchens, is flooded with junk food and food that doesn’t sell. Companies get tax write offs and the poor get the “leftovers”. And it is no longer an “emergency”, but rather a “supplemental” food system.
- Public safety net – participation rates in anti-hunger programs is inadequate, with 1 out of 4 eligible people *NOT* receiving benefits.

# A Paradigm Shift

Ending Hunger	Building Food Security
Individual	Community
Emergency Food System	Strong Local Food Systems
Charity	Justice
Government is the answer (SNAP, School meals etc.)	Public and Private sectors (fair wages, access to good food)
“hand out” – donation based	“hand up” – social enterprise

# Elijah's Promise Community Soup Kitchen

- The cornerstone of Elijah's Promise, our soup kitchen serves about 300 meals a day, seven days a week, resulting in over 100,000 meals served a year.
- The soup kitchen offers a “choice model”. Patrons can dine any time between the hours of 11am and 7pm and select from a variety of menu items.
- The soup kitchen also hosts a variety of community service-providers for the benefit of patrons, e.g. blood pressure screenings



# Promise Culinary School

- The culinary school is a state-approved Private Vocational School that teaches students a variety of skills, including, but not limited to:
  - Knife skills and cooking methods
  - Baking: breads, cakes, plated desserts
  - Alternative cooking: dairy-free, vegan, diabetic-friendly
  - Catering
- Financial assistance is available for all enrollees, and classes are offered in English and Spanish



# Promise Catering

- Our catering program employs graduates of the Promise Culinary School to provide quality meals for events and organizations in the New Brunswick area, including daycares and meals on wheels
- Our business model is to bring healthy meals to low income people while generating employment opportunities for Promise Culinary School students and graduates



# A Better World Café

- Our community café distinguishes itself through its unique ‘pay what you can’ model:
  - Customers can pay the suggested price of their meal, or more, which counts as a donation
  - Less financially able patrons can pay what they can, or volunteer an hour of their time in exchange for a meal
- The Café employs Promise Culinary School graduates and is supported by volunteers
- Vegetarian and vegan meals are offered daily, as well as a complimentary option



# Better World Market

- The Market is teamed up with Suydam Farms to provide a variety of fresh produce and locally produced foods to the community, including foods produced by Promise Culinary School students and graduates and local food entrepreneurs.

The Market is a hub of community activity, featuring local musicians, activity nights, and events. Income generated through the market goes towards supporting the soup kitchen





# Shiloh Community Garden

- In 2010, The City of New Brunswick, New Brunswick United Methodist Church, and Elijah's Promise collaborated to create a community garden
- After five seasons, spanning from early April to late October, the Shiloh Community Garden has expanded to 40 raised garden beds that locals folks can rent for a one-time fee of \$15.



# Other ventures

- **Community Supported Agriculture (CSA):** is a project between New Brunswick residents and local farms in which residents pay a fee at the beginning of the season and then collect fresh produce every week when harvest season begins
- **Raisin' Dough Community Supported Bakery (CSB):** provides an assortment of fresh-baked breads and pastries for a fee every week, all baked by Promise Culinary School
- **Let's Cook:** four-week cooking lessons that teach enrollees basic cooking skills as well as tips for navigating SNAP and WIC benefits

# Hunger...What Can We Do?

- Get involved with a local food policy council.
- Buy your food locally, from local farmers and farm markets, and local food businesses. Get to know the people who grow food, and produce food in your area.
- Grow your own food in your yard, your windowsill, or a community garden. Share your bounty with a local pantry.
- Promote better food in our schools by supporting farm to cafeteria programs, and school gardens.
- Learn about and support fair trade practices.
- Learn about your food's source and how the workers, animals and food are treated en route from farm to table. Spend your food dollars in support of equity and fairness along the food chain.
- Advocate for policy changes that promote access to good food for those who are food insecure.
- Research charitable organizations you support with donations to be sure they share your values and they are making the paradigm shift!

# What can we do?

- A terrific resource is available called the Good Food Toolkit, produced by GreenFaith and the John's Hopkins Center for a Livable Future to help faith communities take steps to strengthen their local food system. To download a copy of the toolkit, visit: <http://greenfaith.org/success-stories/just-released-food-audit>
- Visit the Food Security Learning Center at [www.whyhunger.org](http://www.whyhunger.org)
- And to learn more about Elijah's Promise, visit: [www.elijahspromise.org](http://www.elijahspromise.org)