

Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital Reduces Food Waste While Feeding Those In Need

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Food waste is a significant and growing sustainability concern. In 2021, Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital recognized a growing challenge in its community: large volumes of nutritious food from hospital kitchens were being discarded while food insecurity across the North Fork persisted. In response, SBELIH partnered with Food Rescue US - North Fork, a local chapter of a national nonprofit, to launch a sustainable food recovery program that reduces waste and supports hunger relief.

Each week, the SBELIH nutritional services team collects surplus prepared meals and safely packages them for pickup by Food Rescue US volunteers. The food is delivered directly to the Center for Advocacy, Support, and Transformation, a local organization in Southold serving 1,500 families (including 30% of children in Southold), seniors and individuals in need.

Since the program began, SBELIH has donated over 1,498 pounds of food, amounting to 1,248 meals and a community impact valued at more than \$2,923. The program has also significantly reduced landfill waste and carbon emissions, with 5,263 pounds of CO₂ avoided and 112,966 gallons of water saved.

Beyond the numbers, this collaboration has deepened community partnerships and helped address systemic food access challenges. SBELIH also implemented permanent food donation bins at both hospital entrances, allowing staff and visitors to contribute shelf-stable goods year-round.

This initiative reflects SBELIH's commitment to extending care beyond hospital walls and creatively addressing social determinants of health.

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