



SBELIH Teams Up With New North Fork Group To Tackle Food Insecurity

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Robert Galinski, director of nutrition, SBELIH; Linda Sweeney, VP of Foundation/External Affairs SBELIH; Anne Howard, co-director of Food Rescue North Fork; Stephanie McEvily, co-director of Food Rescue North Fork; and Holly Cato, food rescuer. (Courtesy Nicole B. Brewer, Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital)

GREENPORT, NY — Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital has partnered with the brand-new Food Rescue US North Fork to fight growing food insecurity on the East End.

To that end, SBELIH contributes the hospital's freshly prepared and packaged unused food each week to support the efforts of local

volunteer food rescuers. The collaboration helps to ensure that "essential sustenance finds its way to food pantries across the North Fork to combat hunger and waste," on the East End, SBELIH said.

"Healthy food is hard to sell," Robert Galinski, director of nutrition at Stony Brook Eastern Long Island Hospital said, referring to the daily offerings at the hospital's Greenhouse Grill, which serves breakfast and lunch daily. "The whole system with Food Rescue US North Fork is seamless. Our staff is passionate about their involvement and looks forward each Wednesday afternoon to seeing the rescuers, packing up prepared leftover meals, and passing them along to those in need. That makes me feel good."

The program operates with food "rescuers" collaborating with various establishments such as restaurants, grocers, and institutions, such as SBELIH, to salvage edible food that would otherwise be discarded.

The food is then swiftly distributed to nearby social service agencies, effectively addressing immediate needs while also curbing the rate of food waste, SBELI said. By intercepting food before it reaches landfills, Food Rescue US said it significantly reduces harmful emissions associated with decomposing waste.

Volunteers work to bridge the gap between surplus food and those facing food insecurity, ensuring fresh and nutritious meals reach millions of families in need nationwide.

Linda Sweeney, vice-president of foundation/external affairs at SBELIH, explained how the collaboration was born. Sweeney said she met Anne Howard and Stephanie McEvily, co-directors of Food Rescue North Fork, who asked her to help them get their organization up and running in January.

"I thought, 'Why not get the hospital to donate the excess prepared foods from lunch that would ordinarily be discarded?' It took no time at all to get started. Through this and other programs, I'm happy that the hospital can give back to our community in so many ways."