



# Feeding Chittenden March 2021 Newsletter



**"The people that deliver mean the world to me, especially in Covid, when I haven't been able to leave the house much."  
--Judy, recipient of homebound grocery delivery**

We know it can be difficult for some people to get to Feeding Chittenden, and deliveries have been especially important during covid-19. That's why this year, we're working hard to increase our capacity for free grocery deliveries. But we can't improve our services without help from our community! You can chip in today by clicking on the green button to the right.



## What's New at Feeding Chittenden?

Julia, our Food Access Coordinator, (pictured left) has been working hard to improve our grocery distribution methods in light of Covid-19. She incorporates the perspectives of staff, partner organizations, and recipients. Julia recently piloted an order-ahead system in collaboration with Champlain Valley Head Start, which was aimed at providing more choice to the families we serve, and also making our services more convenient through delivery. She created an online order form, through which a group of families were able to indicate their specific food needs. After receiving the order forms, Feeding Chittenden staff and volunteers packed individualized boxes for the families and delivered them to Head Start locations, where the families pick up their children after school.



The pilot ran smoothly, and we are hopeful that we will be able to implement a larger-scale version of online ordering and delivery so that everyone we serve has easy access to foods that are appropriate for their diets, cultures, and lifestyles.



## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: Edi Abeneto

Edi is our grocery distribution coordinator, and if you've ever been to Feeding Chittenden, you likely recognize him. He's been working at Feeding Chittenden for 13 years! Edi believes in the work done at Feeding Chittenden because he sees how hunger impacts all parts of individuals' lives. He says, "if we had zero hunger in Chittenden County, it would have a big impact on Everything. Economically, people will improve their lives (if they are food secure). If kids don't eat, they can't focus on school and be healthy. So that's why I say it's very important-- because without food you can't do anything. It has a big impact on our economy, our whole community."

Edi works hard not only to make sure everyone has food, but also to make sure that it's the right food for their lifestyles, diets, and cultures. Since the start of Covid-19, he has been extra committed to getting visitors all the items they need in the pre-packed boxes we distribute. He also speaks five languages, which helps him effectively communicate with many visitors about the culturally-appropriate foods they need.



Edi says, "I know a lot of people, and most of the people I serve here.. We have that connection. We'll have interactions and they'll tell me when I'm serving them, 'you may include this,' or 'we need this,' or 'we have a special diet.' And a lot of immigrants, they will suggest 'okay, we need some food from our culture.'"

Edi started working at Feeding Chittenden in 2004 as an interpreter shortly after his arrival in the US as a refugee from the Congo. He heard about the job at Feeding Chittenden (then called the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf) from a friend and was immediately interested because, in his words, "food is my passion." Being a speaker of English, Swahili, French, Kirundi, and Lingala, Edi was perfect for the job of communicating with a diverse population about their food needs.

Edi has "a passion and energy for serving his community" that he found long before

he started working at Feeding Chittenden. While living at a refugee camp in Tanzania he was a volunteer with a sector of the UN's World Food Programme. In this role, he helped to distribute food to students in need of assistance. Edi says that he still thinks often of his life in the Congo and his time volunteering at the refugee camp when he distributes groceries at Feeding Chittenden. His memories of food insecurity in his home country give him the "passion and energy" to fight the same issue here, in Chittenden county.

## CVOEO's Daytime Warming Center is Open!

The Warming Center is located at the Burlington VFW post (176 South Winooski Ave.) and is open daily 9:30 am- 4:30 pm.

There are plenty of hot beverages, free snacks, first aid, and other supplies. Please share this information with anyone who could use a warm place to rest!



## Congratulations Community Kitchen Academy graduates!!

Abbie and Malika made a lot of really amazing meals during their time in the CKA Kitchen, all of which were delivered to food shelf recipients. Thanks so much Abbie and Malika for your key roles in the fight against hunger in our community. We can't wait to see what you do next!



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