



WHAT'S ON OUR PLATE *May 2026*

You can help feed neighbors experiencing hunger in Berks and Schuylkill counties. Please support our mission today.

[Donate Now](#)



Celebrating a Decade of PASS at Weaver's Orchard

On May 19, we were excited to be able to spend part of the day at Weaver's Orchard to celebrate a decade of the Pennsylvania Agricultural Surplus System (PASS) program, which makes connections between farmers and food banks to help get more nutritious food into the hands of Pennsylvanians at risk of hunger.

Joining us were PA Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding, State Senator Judy Schwank, CEO of Feeding Pennsylvania Julie Bancroft, and President of Weaver's Orchard Ed Weaver, among others who are instrumental to the success of the PASS program. Our President, Jay Worrall, also had the opportunity to speak.

Other highlights of the day included a tour of the Weaver's property and refreshments prepared by our culinary team, made from local products available through the PASS system, including turkey burger (from Koch's Turkey Farm) sliders with cheese (from Valley Milkhouse) and smoked apple barbecue sauce (with Weaver's own apples,



Guest Editorial by President Jay Worrall Runs Throughout the Region

In the May 29 edition of the Reading Eagle, a guest editorial by President Jay Worrall was featured.

In the piece, "Feeding Growing Minds: The Urgent Need to Prioritize Childhood Nutrition," Jay writes about the rising need for food assistance, our record-breaking start to 2026 (as of the end of April, we distributed 36.2% more food than during the same period last year), and how our focus on meeting the nutritional needs of kids during their peak developmental years has been key to our fight against hunger in Berks & Schuylkill counties.

You can read the piece on the [Reading Eagle website](#) or at

of course) and seasoned roasted potatoes (from Bedway Produce Co.) on the side.

[Learn More](#)

the link below.

[Learn More](#)



Volunteer of the Month: Janelle

Nearly 450 hours within a year and half is quite a testament, which is one of the few reasons Janelle is the May Volunteer of the Month! Not only has she been nominated by other volunteers, but her hard work and dedication at both the warehouse, and Mobile Markets has made her a valuable member of our team!

Janelle says with a career that keeps her behind a desk, she was looking for a way to become more active and meet more people.

When asked what her favorite activity is, she had no problem admitting her heart belongs to the warehouse! When she's not volunteering, Janelle loves going to concerts and movies with her son. She also enjoys a good meal and drinks with her friends, as well as bike riding, reading and relaxing. Next on her "to-do" list is a road trip to New Hampshire and Maine!

"It is rewarding knowing that a couple hours a week volunteering has such an impact on so many lives struggling with food insecurity," she said.

[Learn More](#)



Hosting Our First-Ever Volunteer Forum

On May 26, we had the great privilege of hosting our first-ever Volunteer Forum at the Goggleworks Center for the Arts!

At this event, our volunteers had the opportunity to learn more about how the food bank operates and what's coming up next for us. But even more importantly, we had the opportunity to hear from *them* - learning more about how we can improve the volunteer experience, directly from the people who are making our organization run smoothly day after day.

The Community Kitchen's chefs provided lunch for the volunteers, during which each table had a discussion topic based on the interests of each attending volunteer. We got a ton of great insights from those discussions, so thanks for the collective brain power and care, HH volunteers! And thanks to everyone who attended!

We say it all the time, and we truly mean: We couldn't do what we do without our volunteers!

[Learn More](#)

HAPPENING NOW: Schuylkill County Supporters, Triple Your Gift to Helping Harvest by Donating Through NEPA Gives!

For just 24 hours - from 7 p.m. on June 4, 2026 until 7 p.m. on June 5, 2026, Helping Harvest is participating in the NEPA Gives (formerly Schuylkill Gives) day of giving.

As a reminder, thanks to a generous match by a local charitable foundation, all gifts from Schuylkill County donors currently have 3x the impact.

You can participate in **NEPA Gives** and make a donation to Helping Harvest by visiting [our NEPA Gives profile page](#).



2026 Berks County Celebration of Community & Hope on October 1

MARK THOSE CALENDARS!

Our fall Celebration of Community & Hope – Berks County will be held on October 1, 2026.

Festivities start at 5pm at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Reading (701 Penn Street Reading, PA).

Keep your eyes on your inbox for an official save-the-date and sponsorship information...this is one you won't want to miss! We'll also have more on our [News & Events page](#) soon!



Helping Harvest Board of Directors Approve New Strategic Plan for 2026-2030

The Helping Harvest Board of Directors recently approved a new strategic plan, a comprehensive roadmap designed to guide our growth through the end of this decade.

This plan sharpens our mission to provide nutritious food to people facing hunger in our communities, and a renewed vision in which every person facing food insecurity has access to the food they need.

We hope to accomplish this through several long-range strategies including:

- Targeted and relational community service
- Supply chain efficiency and effectiveness
- Stewardship as a defining value
- Maximizing the Community Kitchen
- Building a culture of storytelling

The strategic plan was featured in a number of local news outlets, including [Berks Weekly](#), where you can read more.



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