

FOOD RECOVERY NETWORK



ANNUAL REPORT 2014-2015



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Image courtesy of Denison Food Recovery



Cover image courtesy of James Souder

LEADERSHIP TEAM

September 2014 - May 2015

Senior Leadership

Executive Director: Ben Simon

Director of Member Support and Communications: Sara Gassman

Director of Expansion: Stephen Demarais

Grants Manager: Camila Pascual

Development VISTA: Mia Zavalij

Fellows

Expansion Fellows: James Souder, Sara Ribakove, Kevin Finklestein, Alex Krefetz

Member Support Fellows: Marlene Haggblade, Nicole Lesnett

Member Support VISTA: Mika Weinstein

Partner Liaison VISTA: Sarah Gross

Board of Directors

President: Robert T. Grimm, Jr.

Treasurer: Jeremy Kugel

Secretary: Ben Chesler

Member: Ernie Minor

Member: Rebecca Kagan

Member: Tim Kunin

Member: Ben Simon



SUMMARY

FRN just keeps getting bigger. This year we recovered and donated more meals than in all other years combined: more than 350,000 meals. That's 1,000 meals every single day that would otherwise be going to waste. We started September 2014 off with 96 chapters, but over the course of the year grew to 150 colleges and universities in 36 states. Students across the country are rallying together to take a stand against food waste and demanding that their campuses donate their surplus food. FRN is now not only the largest student movement against hunger, but one of the biggest brands in food recovery.

To keep up with this explosive expansion, this year we more than doubled the number of fellows in our national office that dedicate their days to talking to students across the country about how to start FRN chapters or improve their current chapters. As our staff ballooned from eight to 15 full-time team members and our desks all felt a little cozier, the new team brought infectious enthusiasm and energy to the office. Together they eliminated inefficiencies in our process for starting chapters, and came up with ways to institutionalize our chapters and make them long-lasting, sustainable parts of these universities.

For the first time FRN hosted two regional conferences in the fall, an "eastern" conference at Lycoming College in Williamsport, PA and a "western" conference at the University of Missouri in Columbia, MO. 60 students from 17 chapters collaborated in sessions based around increasing recovery capacity, strengthening community relationships, fundraising, and more. In the spring, we held our biggest gathering yet at the University of Georgia: the second annual Food Waste & Hunger Summit, which we co-hosted with the Campus Kitchens Project. 125 students from 42 chapters across the country traveled to Athens, GA to learn from nonprofit leaders, industry representatives, and their peers in a two-day conference that resulted in an overwhelming amount of idea generation, inspiration, and camaraderie.



SUMMARY



Images (left to right) courtesy of: Food Recovery Network at University of North Carolina at Greensboro, FRN @ FSU, Food Recovery Network at University of California, Davis

Our students are putting higher education on track to be the first sector of the economy without food waste. They're pioneering. They're self-publishing books on the homeless in their local communities. They're transporting recovered food in bike carts. They're organizing sleep-outs and food justice panels and skill-sharing sessions to learn how to use food scraps in recipes. They're working with app developers and starting their own food recovery nonprofits to fight food waste off campus. These students are an emerging generation of leaders fighting food waste, fighting hunger, and changing the way we think about food.

In just four years Food Recovery Network has transformed from a small group of students with an idea to a national network of student leaders, funders, staff, partners, nonprofits, businesses, colleges, universities, and donors that are rallying together, letting the country know that enough is enough: wasting 40% of the food we produce while one in six Americans don't know where their next meal is coming from just won't stand. Together we can continue making food recovery the norm, not the exception. Let's fight waste and feed people!



- FRN National Team

FALL 2014 *Measuring Our Impact*

Pounds Recovered

From August 28 to December 31, 2014, Food Recovery Network chapters recovered a total of **172,321 pounds of food**, the equivalent of **143,601 meals**. FRN chapters recovered this food from **214 total locations** and donated it to **197 total partner agencies**.

Volunteers Engaged

During Fall 2014, Food Recovery Network engaged a total of **2,140 volunteers**.

Skills Improved

88.2% of respondents to the Fall 2014 End-of-Semester Survey either agree or strongly agree that Food Recovery Network has helped him/her **grow as a leader**.

The top five skills that respondents reported to have increased as a result of involvement with FRN are:

1. Communication
2. Outreach
3. Volunteer Management
4. Volunteer Recruitment
5. Public Speaking

"I learned to be a leader, to have fire behind my words and actions, and to not give up when I doubt myself."
- Lindsay, Plymouth State University



FALL 2014

New Chapters

Students at 30 colleges and universities started new FRN chapters during Fall 2014:

1. Bellarmine University
2. Case Western Reserve University
3. Christian Brothers University
4. Colorado Mesa University
5. Drake University
6. Eastern Michigan University
7. Eckerd College
8. Florida State University
9. Macalester College
10. Massachusetts Institute of Technology
11. Millersville University of Pennsylvania
12. Missouri State University
13. Nichols College
14. Northern Arizona University
15. Saint Joseph's University
16. St. John's College
17. St. Mary's College of Indiana
18. Salem College
19. Syracuse University / SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry
20. Towson University
21. University of Houston
22. University of Michigan Dearborn
23. University of North Carolina Chapel Hill
24. University of the Pacific
25. University of the Sciences
26. University of Minnesota Twin Cities
27. University of Saint Thomas
28. West Hills College Lemoore
29. West Virginia University
30. Willamette University

"FRN has pushed me to stretch my introvert boundaries. It has helped me become more confident as a leader."
- Maya, Willamette University



FALL 2014

Notable Quotables

“Being a part of this organization has helped me grow in a wide number of ways, including improving my social and professional skills, learning to connect with people from different backgrounds, learning to organize and motivate a team of leaders, learning how to establish and develop an organization...the list goes on. Not to mention, being a part of FRN has given me the opportunity to meet some of the most amazing people, some of whom have become my best friends!”

- Hannah, University of Michigan Ann Arbor

“Working with FRN gave me confidence to pursue new goals, and helped me realize what an impact just a few devoted people can make!”

- Kelsey, University of Michigan Dearborn



Image courtesy of UM-Dearborn Food Recovery Network



Photo Campaign

During the Fall 2014 semester, Food Recovery Network launched the new academic year with a photo campaign asking students why they fight food waste. Nearly 100 students shared photos that captured their motivations for being involved in this movement.



Images courtesy of James Souder

"After we made our second recovery, I received a call from our contact at our partner agency. He took time out of his Saturday to call and tell me how grateful they were at Life Challenge to be receiving these donations...After that moment, I knew this was all worth it!" - Katie, Madonna University



FALL 2014

Regional Summits

During the Fall 2014 semester, 60 students from 17 chapters attended two regional summits held at Lycoming College and the University of Missouri. Each summit afforded FRN student leaders the chance to connect with one another, build skills, share ideas, and work through common challenges in a series of workshops, including:

FRNs, Not Friends: Creating a sustainable leadership team

More than Just a Drop-Off: Strengthening relationships with partner agencies

FUNdraising: Brainstorming ideas for fundraising events

Mo' Food, No Mo' Problems: Expanding to new recovery sites

How to Get Famous: Using social media

“The summit was awesome! I was surprised at just how many ideas I got from it! And I’m very inspired to make a huge impact on campus this year.” - Laura, Drake University



Image courtesy of James Souder



SPRING 2015 *Measuring Our Impact*

Pounds Recovered

From January 1 to May 31, 2015, Food Recovery Network chapters recovered a total of **216,519 pounds of food**, the equivalent of **180,432 meals**. FRN chapters recovered this food from **281 total locations** and donated it to **235 total partner agencies**.

Volunteers Engaged

During Spring 2015, Food Recovery Network engaged a total of **2,679 volunteers**.

Skills Improved

92.82% of respondents to the Spring 2015 End-of-Semester Survey either agree or strongly agree that Food Recovery Network has helped him/her **grow as a leader**.

The top five skills that respondents reported to have increased as a result of involvement with FRN are:

1. Outreach
2. Communication
3. Volunteer Management
4. Volunteer Recruitment
5. Event Planning

“I am so proud to have started FRN at Salem... being part of FRN is honestly my proudest achievement by far.”
- Virginia, Salem College



New Chapters

Students at 38 colleges and universities started new FRN chapters during Spring 2015:

1. Aquinas College
2. Boise State University
3. Bowling Green State University
4. Brandeis University
5. Butler University
6. Cal Poly Pomona
7. Coker College
8. College of the Holy Cross
9. Colorado Mountain College
10. Cornell College
11. California State University, Northridge
12. Duke University
13. Knox College
14. Lehigh University
15. Madonna University
16. New Mexico State University
17. Ohio Wesleyan University
18. Plymouth State University
19. Portland Community College
20. Rowan University
21. Saint Anselm College
23. Southern Maine Community College
24. St. Olaf College
25. SUNY University at Buffalo
26. Temple University
27. The New School
28. University of Denver
29. University of Maine
30. University of North Carolina Greensboro
31. University of South Alabama
32. University of South Carolina Columbia
33. University of Indianapolis
34. University of New England
35. University of Pennsylvania
36. University of Washington
37. Utah State University
38. Valley Forge Military College

“...it is so unbelievably simple to make a difference. Just like that, three students saved almost 300 pounds of food from going into a landfill and instead put it into some starving families’ stomachs. It is almost too easy.” - Paul, University of Denver



Notable Quotables

“Taking the initiative to start dance classes at Parkridge was a very empowering experience. It helps me see myself as a leader and helps propel me to want to do more in the community. My hope is to help build our FRN team at EMU so that others can share their passions and learn together with members in our community.”

- Brett, Eastern Michigan University

“[It is] so great to hear other students on campus who aren’t affiliated with FRN talking about it. One student in a class I took told the professor about it as an example of something being done to address food insecurity.”

- Madeline, Pomona College

“Students look forward each week for the food that comes from the colleges... Students are more likely to stay in school for the whole day and not skip out when they know food from the colleges is coming that afternoon. In addition to the students eating the food right away, if there is a lot of something we have sent it home with students. On many occasions the students have said that the food was their supper for that night. One time a student said that things were really hard for his family that week and they didn’t have much food. The food greatly helped his family.”

- Northfield Area Learning Center (partner agency of Carleton College and St. Olaf College)



Image courtesy of Food Recovery Network at Eastern Michigan University



SPRING 2015

2015 Food Waste & Hunger Summit

125 students from 42 FRN chapters joined us at the 2015 Food Waste & Hunger Summit. 12 of these students led workshops or spoke on panels to share their work and best practices. Nearly 250 additional attendees, including nonprofit and industry leaders as well as student representatives from The Campus Kitchens Project, were in attendance. FRN co-hosted the event with The Campus Kitchens Project.



Image courtesy of James Souder

"It's amazing being somewhere where everyone supports the same cause and everybody cares. I've never been in a situation where this many people have come together all for the same cause...it's very rewarding."
- Ebony, California State University Fresno



SPRING 2014

2015 Food Waste & Hunger Summit

Throughout the weekend, student leaders were able to share best practices, learn from each other to work through challenges their chapters are facing, hear from and network with industry leaders, dialogue with their peers, and engage the issues of food waste and hunger in the United States.

Breakout topics at the summit included:

The Root Causes: Social Issues and Food Justice

Championing Change: Advocacy and Policy

Strength in Numbers: Engaging Peers, Campus and Community

Rethinking Our Food System: From Food Waste to Opportunity

Beyond the Meal: Building Sustainable Solutions

“All the students who share the same passions as me just reaffirms what I do and it gives me motivation to keep doing it.” - Brett Zeuner, Eastern Michigan



Images courtesy of James Souder

BUILDING CAPACITY IN OUR DEPARTMENTS

With the addition of 4 new fellows this year, both the Expansion and Member Support Departments focused the efforts of their increased person-power on capacity building. Each department identified key areas where they could increase efficiency and effectiveness, and provide more concrete resources and support. These improvements will only compound our impressive impact in years to come.



Images courtesy of James Souder

“This semester has been very difficult and stressful for our chapter, but FRN National really helped us keep going and motivated us with new ideas and reminded us of the importance of our chapter.”
- Katie, University of Missouri



EXPANSION DEPARTMENT

This year, the Expansion Department significantly increased the number of official chapters to reach the goal of 150 chapters by May 2015. Additionally, they concentrated on improving their efficiency at converting applications into official chapters and on decreasing the time spent on establishing each new chapter.

Reducing time getting dining providers on board

In order to reduce wasted time and improve chapter conversion rates, the Expansion Department first focused on how students were approaching dining services to get their buy-in, as this was found to be a key cause of delays and student drop-off. To counter these issues, FRN developed a new succinct resource for students that synthesized the content of existing resources in a way that covers all of the key points in a digestible format, a professional email template for students to use when contacting dining directors, and a collection of recommendations from dining directors for all of the major dining providers. These new tools, coupled with the standardization of Expansion Fellows' training of students at this step, will mean that students are better equipped to contact and gain approval from dining services representatives.

In this industry, we've all encountered products, processes, programs or pieces of equipment that promise the world – save money, fine tune production, generate positive PR on campus and off, support your local community, etc. We seldom come across something that can promise all of those things and truly deliver. At the University of Rochester, we've found that the Food Recovery Network is one of those solutions.

- R. Cameron Shauf, Director of Dining Services, University of Rochester



EXPANSION DEPARTMENT

Improving collaboration with partner agencies

Fostering strong partnerships from the start between FRN chapters and the local organizations to which they donate recovered food is important to establishing long-term sustainable chapters. The Expansion Department noted that when there were delays later on in the expansion process, students were regularly losing contact with their partner agencies and then having trouble reconnecting when it came time to do recoveries. To counter this, they improved the existing materials on working with partner agencies and created a worksheet for students to use to record all of the relevant info from their direct contact at the organization. They also developed an FAQ sheet to give to the partner agencies to help them better understand the expansion process and the projected timeline for starting recoveries and donations. These measures will ensure that students are easily able to communicate with and update their partner agency and alleviate partners' concerns.



Image courtesy of Case Western Reserve University Food Recovery Network



EXPANSION DEPARTMENT

Improving team-building

This school year, the Expansion team continued to stress the importance of having strong multiperson leadership teams in order to ensure sustainable chapters. Noting that some students had a difficult time finding others to join their leadership team, FRN developed a worksheet with specific steps and guidelines to follow in order to assist students who do not have an existing network to draw from.

Reducing Inefficiencies in the system

Another key step to increasing efficiency and decreasing wasted time was standardizing the expansion process across the department. Using the Toyota Production System model for guidance, the Expansion team compared the slightly different ways that each member was carrying out the expansion process and developed an ideal model which was codified in training materials and email templates for next year's fellows. The Expansion Department also worked to reduce inefficiencies in their process by reviewing and making improvements to their progress tracking systems.



MEMBER SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

This year, the FRN Member Support Fellows and VISTAs greatly enhanced the way that Food Recovery Network chapters function and are structured. Additionally, the Member Support team collected and analyzed valuable information with the ultimate goal of providing more resources to official FRN chapters.

Gleaning

With the support of Bon Appétit Management Company, FRN Member Support Fellow Marlene Haggblade developed FRN's Guide to Gleaning in order to increase the amount of fresh, nutritious produce FRN chapters provide to their hunger-fighting partner agencies.

Farms are the number one place where surplus food is going to waste. Feeding America estimates that at least 6 billion pounds of food are wasted on farms in the US each year, and other estimates are much higher. With this resource, FRN intends to recover hundreds of thousands of pounds of fresh produce that would otherwise be tilled back into the soil or end up in the compost pile to supplement the prepared foods FRN chapters already donate to hunger-fighting organizations in their communities. Together we are fighting waste and feeding people...produce!

"FRN had expanded beyond just dining hall food and it's great to see them glean off farmers and then not just dropping off food but learning everything SECOM does for its neighbors."
- Eleanor Moreno, Director of Client Services, South End Community Outreach Ministries (partner agency of Calvin College)



MEMBER SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

FRN's Impact Over Time

Mika Weinstein, Member Support AmeriCorps VISTA, designed a process to more systematically help chapter leaders identify goals each semester and reach their full potential. She also created tools to help us analyze information about how our chapters grow over time so that we know, for example, the average amount by which our chapters increase the pounds they recover from one semester to the next. She revamped the End of Semester Survey using new software, and began creating reports using that survey data so that summary information on specific topics (e.g. What leadership skills have our chapter leaders gained?) is easy to access. Finally, in conjunction with Marlene, she developed educational resources to help students put on events and campaigns to raise awareness about food waste and hunger.

Understanding FRN Chapters

Nicole Lesnett, Member Support Fellow, developed a leadership toolkit based on the myriad ways our chapters are structured and led. She created resource documents outlining recommended Leadership Roles and Responsibilities, strategies and suggestions for volunteer recruitment, and best sources for educational information to use in awareness campaigns and events. Nicole also outlined how FRN leaders are integrating their chapters into campus infrastructure for long-term success fighting waste and feeding people, as interns with dining and sustainability offices, or by earning course credit.



MEMBER SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

Building Relationships with Partner Agencies

Food Recovery Network believes strongly in strengthening the partnerships between FRN chapters and the local organizations to which they donate recovered food. Building these relationships helps college students connect with the communities surrounding their campuses and learn more about hunger and food insecurity on a local level.

To promote this aspect of FRN's work, Sarah Gross, Partner Liaison AmeriCorps VISTA, visited numerous chapters who were holding events with their partner agencies and used these experiences to write a guide for students about how to build relationships with partner agencies. This guide explains how to move beyond simply donating food through volunteering and community engagement, and increase awareness. Sarah also designed and disseminated a survey for partner agencies to complete in order to learn about their work in communities and the impact of FRN on their organizations.

"With our increased donations of fresh items we now have expanded our food pantry to include a fridge and freezer of choice items that our clients can pick from. This has given our food pantry the honor of being one of the best as we allow our clients to have dignity to chose foods that they like."

- Elizabeth Sorge, Head Chef / Manager of Food Service,
Cherry Street Mission (partner agency of Bowling Green State University)



MEMBER SUPPORT DEPARTMENT

Partner Agency Testimonials

“This food service is the highest quality food that we have given the homeless. To treat them this way shows them that they are valuable and worthy of good things; this builds their self esteem which then helps them hopefully improve their lives.”

- Henry Demers, Founder/President, Hope NH at the 1269 Cafe (partner agency of Saint Anselm College)



Image courtesy of Food Recovery at Saint Anselm

“We have been very blessed to have U of R students take the initiative to start this wonderful program with us. The impact is not only the food they provide but the spirit in which they organize and the enthusiasm with which they deliver it to us.”

- Patty Lorenzen, Director, St. Peter’s Kitchen (partner agency of University of Rochester)



Image courtesy of Food Recovery Network at University of Rochester

“There was a week where we had not been paid for 6 months and funds were so stretched and here come the students with casserole after casserole and it not only fed the residents but fed the spirit of our staff and volunteers. Also funds are always very tight and it helps us to make our budget and our program goals.”

- Mary Slicher, Project PLASE (partner agency of Goucher College)



CHAPTERS IN THE NEWS

“Whittling down food waste”¹ (Northern Arizona University)

Last semester, the program recovered 1,400 pounds of food that likely would have been thrown into the dumpster, said Cat Sullivan, the sustainability coordinator with NAU Campus Dining, which helps coordinate the program. This semester is already off to an accelerated start after the program expanded from three North Campus dining locations to an additional dining hall on South Campus.

“Makena & Paloma: SCU’s Food Shared, Not Wasted”² (Santa Clara University)

Every Monday and Thursday, two FRN volunteers pick up excess food from Bon Appetit in Benson and drive it to Martha’s Kitchen, a small soup kitchen located in San Jose. Martha’s Kitchen then redistributes the donated food to other food banks and soup kitchens in the area. Since last May, Makena and Paloma, with the help of some 25 other FRN volunteers, have donated over 3,000 pounds of food to Martha’s Kitchen.

“Willamette students recover food for homeless”³ (Willamette University)

[Maya Kaup] recruited 20 classmates to volunteer, found two shelters willing to take the food and secured grants from Food Recovery Network to buy food storage tubs. It’s the first Food Recovery Network program in the Northwest. Since then Kaup and her team have delivered more than 3,100 pounds of meat, vegetables and pasta to Union Gospel Mission and Women at the Well Grace House in the first two months of the program.



FOOD RECOVERY CERTIFIED

Food Recovery Certified, the first and only certification that recognizes businesses that donate their extra food to those in need, wrapped up its first year with great success. We've certified over 60 businesses so far, including some major corporate headquarters like Starbucks, Google, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and Best Buy. In April, Bon Appétit Management Company made the first public company-wide commitment to food recovery: getting 80% of their accounts Food Recovery Certified by 2018. FRC is accredited by Food Recovery Network and provides a way for food businesses, including those already working with our students, to let the public know about the fantastic work they're doing to fight hunger in their local communities.



Thanks to the federal Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Act, all good faith donors in the country are protected from liability when they donate food to those in need, so there's no reason your local food businesses shouldn't have food recovery programs. Make sure you see the FRC sticker on the window in every restaurant and at every catered event you go to, and if you don't then let them know: you have the power to help food businesses do the right thing by donating their surplus food to people instead of sending it to landfills!



STAY CONNECTED

with us year-round!



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info@foodrecoverynetwork.org



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report was written by Sara Gassman, Stephen Demarais, Cam Pascual, Mika Weinstein, and Sarah Gross.

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