



MARYLAND  
FOOD BANK

JUNE 2021

# Helping Marylanders Get Back to Work





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Maryland Food Bank

In the 18 months since we were first introduced to the word “coronavirus,” the pandemic has fundamentally changed the lives of most Marylanders.

Unemployment rates unthinkable just a few years ago remain historically high, and the road to economic recovery will be long.

But throughout all of the chaos that COVID-19 has created in our communities, one thing has remained constant — the Maryland Food Bank’s commitment to improving the lives of our neighbors in need.

While we’ve been able to provide critical relief by providing access to a steady supply of nutritious food, a lot of unanswered questions remain as to how Maryland is going to reset, rebuild, and reestablish itself.

Thankfully, the Maryland Food Bank has a number of solutions to help struggling Marylanders, including a workforce development initiative with a decade of success in placing graduates in good paying jobs.

Since 2010, FoodWorks has established itself as a transformative, 12-week culinary training experience unlike any other to individuals seeking a new direction in life.

FoodWorks helps address the ongoing economic effects of the pandemic by combining traditional culinary training with comprehensive career development assistance, springboarding professional chefs ready to succeed in any hospitality position.

This is what separates FoodWorks from similar workforce development programs, and why it matters so much not only to our students, but the companies that hire graduates, and ultimately the people of Maryland at large.

This is why we’re expanding FoodWorks — to help more Marylanders get back to work with good-paying jobs, helping fuel our state’s recovery.

And with your support, FoodWorks will write a new, hopeful chapter in Maryland’s rich history.

**CARMEN DEL GUERCIO**

PRESIDENT & CEO, Maryland Food Bank



# A New Idea for the Old Line State

Over the past year, we've broken down, retooled, and reconfigured just about every aspect of the way we provide consistent access to food for all Marylanders. And during that time, Maryland has shown itself to be a state where neighbors help neighbors.

While the incredible kindness you've shown by supporting the Maryland Food Bank has allowed us to meet this historic need, 2020 has crystallized the fact that food alone is simply not going to resolve hunger in our state.

Prior to COVID-19 hitting "pause" on the world, our long-term strategic plan was gaining momentum. We were engaging in new partnerships to provide more holistic solutions; identifying regional root causes of hunger; tactically distributing more food; increasing access to nutritious foods; and strengthening our partner network, all in an effort to open more pathways out of hunger for more Marylanders.

FoodWorks has been helping expand the possibilities for more than a decade, and we're excited about the possibilities that expanding this program will bring.

## PRE-HEATING: THE GENESIS OF FOODWORKS

Ten years ago, we launched the FoodWorks Program during a time eerily reminiscent of today's climate of uncertainty — the Great Recession.

In 2008-09, unemployment skyrocketed, leaving more and more of our neighbors to turn to the Maryland Food Bank for food assistance. We were faced with the growing reality that we would need to do more than distribute food to keep pace with the growing demand.

"Helping people become food secure starts with improving their income levels, improving their job security, and improving their career potential," said Executive Director of FoodWorks Tim Regan.

Fortunately for us, Deborah Flateman, who served as the Maryland Food Bank's CEO from 2008-16, oversaw a similar training program in Vermont. She believed it would have great success in the Baltimore area, and the recession further cemented her vision.





# An Impactful Investment



**F**oodWorks' founding wouldn't have been possible without the generous support of the City of Baltimore, corporate donors, and hundreds of individuals who recognized and invested in the program's potential to address limited employment opportunities, one of the primary root causes of hunger in Maryland.

One such donor who saw FoodWorks' potential was the Charles T. Bauer Foundation — whose name adorns the wall of the community kitchen space.

The first class of nine students graduated from the then 14-week program in November 2010. Despite the lingering economic effects of the recession, one hundred percent of the students were placed in careers in the local hospitality industry — hospitals, school cafeterias, restaurants, grocery stores, banquet facilities, and more.

By the end of its first year, FoodWorks had offered culinary training and job placement services to 28 men and women who were willing to take the first step on their individual path to bigger opportunities.

"FoodWorks has been a blessing for all of us. It will allow us to change, and better ourselves. We thank you for today, the beginning of our culinary lives," said Dhuhaa A., FoodWorks Class 6, during the graduation ceremony in November 2012.

## MORE THAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Although training professional chefs was its primary use, we realized the Community Kitchen had the potential to do even more to combat hunger, so we expanded it to allow volunteers to work with FoodWorks students to create and package meals that are distributed to hungry Marylanders by our Network Partners.

We also sponsor two federal feeding programs: CACFP and SFSP (better known to Maryland children as Summer Clubs and Supper Clubs) which support out-of-school programs where kids stay engaged with homework and social activities. When not in use for training purposes, MFB chefs use the Community Kitchen to create fresh meals daily to make sure children like Lily have the fuel they need to thrive.

"I really like the celery, but I also like the wrap. They're healthy for me, and they're just really, really good!" said Lily, a Summer Club member at the Cumberland Salvation Army.

Our success in feeding kids was recognized by the Family League of Baltimore, which recently selected MFB to provide healthy meals and snacks for their "Out-Of-School Time" programs this year.





“Job training for people in the Baltimore area has always been an important part of the Bauer Foundation’s philanthropy. FoodWorks was a natural fit for us. We liked the idea of training individuals for work in food service, an important industry.”

— Janet Bauer, Charles T. Bauer Foundation



## THE FUTURE OF FOODWORKS

For several months now, MFB has been working diligently to make sure we can meet the increasing demand for hospitality workers as the pandemic’s grip lessens. We’ve continued helping students realize their dreams of becoming professional chefs — and are glad to have supporters like McCormick & Company, which saw FoodWorks’ potential back in 2010, and continues to believe in its relevance today.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has pushed more Marylanders into unemployment and underemployment – two of the leading causes of food insecurity in Maryland. One way to help our state recover is to provide marketable skills in fields where a trained work force is in high demand,” said Brendan Foley, Chairman, McCormick & Company, and MFB Board Chair.

“Maryland’s restaurant and hospitality industry is already bouncing back, but it will need help through its recovery process – help that the expanded FoodWorks Program can supply through its graduates. We believe that the FoodWorks program will help Marylanders find employment and support the recovery of Maryland’s workforce – during the pandemic and beyond,” Foley continued.

Generous donors, state funds and private support have allowed us to realize this current expansion and position FoodWorks to have a powerful impact. With your partnership, FoodWorks can provide more opportunities for more people, help increase the amount of nutritious food available to hungry neighbors and accelerate our state’s economic recovery.





## MORE PATHWAYS MEANS MORE SUCCESS

**A**t the Guinness Open Gate Brewery, just two miles from the Charles T. Bauer Kitchen, Joe Rodriguez, FoodWorks Class 33 is quickly making a name for himself.

"A Chef from FoodWorks did a demo at my school about quinoa. As he was cooking, and talking about the versatility of FoodWorks, I was hooked on the idea that I could be just like him," said Rodriguez.

At the time, Rodriguez was nearing the end of high school. His family didn't have a lot of money, and the thought of them going further into debt scared him. Rodriguez saw FoodWorks as his path forward.

"While it might sound strange, I'm glad I was struggling then, because I now know how it feels to grind from the bottom up and be in the great place I am in now," he continued.

The program's fast pace suited Rodriguez well. "There was never a dull moment — even in classroom time where it was hard, it was still fun. I've always wanted

to learn many different things and this program has helped me out with that," said Rodriguez.

Shortly following graduation, he began his career at Guinness. As many new employees do, Rodriguez began by preparing simple "bar food," and doing prep work, but his supervisor saw greater potential.

"Joe came to us with solid teamwork and leadership skills. He is the type of peer that leads his team with his head and his heart, and his versatility makes him invaluable around here," said Josh Toney, Sous Chef, Guinness.

Now on track to become one of the youngest sous chefs in the history of Aramark (which manages Guinness' in-house hospitality), Rodriguez recently came back to FoodWorks, to share some of the lessons he's learned in the real world.

Rodriguez envisions a bright future for himself, built on the solid foundation of culinary and professional skills he earned in FoodWorks.

**"My dream is to open my own Puerto Rican food truck, then a restaurant, and I have FoodWorks to thank for it."**

— Joe Rodriguez, FoodWorks Class 33





# Expanding Our Impact Begins in the Kitchen

Just as the kitchen is the heart of the home, our Charles T. Bauer Community Kitchen is the heart of the Maryland Food Bank. Training ground for the FoodWorks Program for more than a decade, the kitchen has reached its capacity for students, volunteers, and meal production.

Simply put, post-pandemic Maryland needs more from FoodWorks than it can currently provide. That's why

we're so excited to announce that we're renovating and expanding FoodWorks' original footprint.

Renovation plans include literally doubling the size of the existing kitchen (from 1,175 sq. ft. to 3,350 sq. ft.), allowing us to welcome 120 students to our Halethorpe location each and every year, effectively offering pathways for twice as many students to gain employment opportunities.

**"As a FoodWorks student, I was given the opportunity to not only hone my skills, but also give back to the community, and feed hungry Marylanders. Now, as a Culinary Arts instructor for FoodWorks at the UA House, I am able to help others follow their passion and have the same positive experience I did."**

— Chef Christina Wanner, FoodWorks Class 27



*Chef Christina*

## FOODWORKS FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS, IN THE CITY

Since its inception, partnerships have been a key driver of FoodWorks' success. As of April 2021, we're thrilled to partner with the American Heart Association (AHA) to launch a new FoodWorks location for 18- to 24-year-olds in their Simple Cooking with Heart Kitchen at Living Classrooms' East Baltimore community center (a/k/a UA House), primarily recruiting students from the Baltimore Target Investment Zone.

Combining the strengths of both organizations, this partnership will provide the opportunity of choice for an additional 25-30 professional chefs each year.

"Launching this second location in the heart of Baltimore City will play a critical role in our efforts to broaden our reach and help positively influence some of the factors that we know disproportionately affect Communities of Color," said MFB President & CEO Carmen Del Guercio.

The new site will feature the same life-changing instruction currently provided at our Halethorpe location, just in the heart of Baltimore. And leading the charge is Chef Christina Wanner, who graduated from FoodWorks just three years ago.





# A Recipe for Success: Transforming Students into Professional Chefs

**F**oodWorks students are not simply enrolling in a culinary training school. They are double majors receiving instruction that improves their kitchen skill set while taking classes that further their personal and career development. From guest lecturers helping with digital and financial literacy to FoodWorks staff assisting with interviewing skills, students are immersed in holistic education, resulting in graduates ready to succeed in and outside the kitchen.


## CLASS IS IN SESSION(S)

Prior to the pandemic, the vast majority of FoodWorks instruction took place either in the kitchen or the on-site classroom.

Once COVID emerged, the FoodWorks team — made up of Executive Chef Monique “Moe” Jordan, Chef Cristina Wanner, Workforce Development Manager Darcy Sullivan, and Case Manager Rebecca Johnson — worked together to develop a hybrid distance and in-kitchen learning model to keep the students engaged.”

A key tool in this successful hybrid training was and continues to be rouxbe.com, an online culinary training platform that augments in-person training.

“Two days each week, Rouxbe supports our efforts to take students progressively through things like scaling recipes; proper knife skills; fish, chicken, and beef fabrication — even baking techniques, soups, sauces, and pan reductions,” said Chef Moe.



“FoodWorks has had a huge impact on my life. I now see food differently. It’s not just about eating food but how food can bring people together. FoodWorks is instilling values and work ethic, giving you the life skills to go back and make something of yourself.”

- Maryann Njoku, FoodWorks Class 37



### Distance Learning Day

**Morning**  
Financial Literacy  
Grains Unit (Rouxbe)

#### Lunch Break

**Afternoon**  
Digital Literacy  
Goal Setting  
Best Practices for Resume Writing

### In-House Instruction Day

**Morning**  
Proper Uniform Etiquette  
Knife Technique Practice (poultry fabrication)

#### Lunch Break

**Afternoon**  
Recipe: Lemon Chicken  
Recipe: Buffalo Wings





While there was a definite learning curve for everyone involved, the students found the model had some unexpected benefits.

"Classes were good before, but I think online is better sometimes. We can ask questions without worrying if other people are in a rush, we can take notes without disruption, and Chef Moe helps us with very specific questions when going over stuff for our tests," said Sabrina T., Class 35.

Based on its success, Chef Moe plans to continue using a hybrid model going forward to approach learning from multiple angles.



## Signs of Excellence

While graduation and job placement are the end goal, success for FoodWorks students is measured and acknowledged in a number of ways. Similar to belt color in martial arts, Chef Moe designed a recognition system representative of students accomplishing key FoodWorks milestones. The scarf colors represent a flame growing stronger:



**Yellow** = student has passed the ServSafe® Food Handler exam, demonstrating their basic food safety knowledge



**Orange** = student has conquered the Phase-Up Test and has proficient culinary skills



**Red** = student has earned their ServSafe® Manager Certification, confirming advanced food safety knowledge



## MEASURING THE INGREDIENTS

While FoodWorks had been successful in its initial years, we knew it had the potential to integrate even more deeply with Maryland's culinary industry. So in 2018, we consulted with Catalyst Kitchens, a culinary training program built on the backbone of industry leader FareStart's expertise in the job training and social enterprise areas.

"The FoodWorks Program truly 'shortens the line,' providing access to economic mobility and self-sustainability," said Renee Martin, Director, Catalyst Kitchens.

We are also a proud member of the Baltimore Culinary Enterprise Alliance, a group of committed culinary job training programs dedicated to establishing a national standard for collaboration through community engagement.

Although we know what great looks like — having been recognized by Catalyst Kitchens as a "Model Member" of their national network — we're changing

the way we assess FoodWorks' true impact, as we are doing with other MFB programs, using data to make better, more informed improvements.

"We're building on sharing simple outputs, such as the number of meals produced or the number of meals consumed, and moving toward a deeper understanding through outcomes — things like how FoodWorks is making more graduates, more children, and more families across Maryland food secure," said Meg Kimmel, MFB's Executive Vice President, Chief Strategy Officer.

In addition to tracking things like enrollment, completion, graduation, and placement rates, we'll explore the hourly wage and responsibility progression of graduates in their jobs — staying with them for up to two years. We also want to illustrate FoodWorks' larger social impact — just how much the program is changing the landscape of Maryland for the better.

## FoodWorks by the Numbers

**2010**

YEAR ESTABLISHED

**387**

GRADUATES

**1.6 M**

MEALS PRODUCED  
BY STUDENTS

**3.4M**

SUPPER/SUMMER  
CLUB PRODUCTION

We're proud to say that 85% of our graduates are placed into jobs that pay above minimum wage, at places like: Atwater's, Woodberry Kitchen, Centerplate, The Johns Hopkins Hospital, University of Maryland Medical System, Brightview Senior Living, Baltimore City Public Schools, Baltimore County Public Schools, and Guinness Open Gate Brewery.



**"I used to go to the Shady Spring Pal Center, which is one of the sites that we provide meals for, and now I've come full circle — because I'm providing the meals that I used to eat."**

— Jamal Braxton, FoodWorks Class 31



## Scaling Up FoodWorks, Lifting Up Maryland

If the FoodWorks Program only trained students to become professional chefs, it would be a success. If its sole focus was to help increase available healthy food for hungry Marylanders, it would be a success. If FoodWorks' kitchen simply provided MFB chefs the space to create kid-friendly meals, it would be a success.

But FoodWorks is all of this, and more.

From the recently unemployed single father relying on Grab & Go Meals to feed his children to the individual seeking a new path in life by enrolling in the program,

this program touches the lives of many Marylanders, every single day.

Knowing how impactful this program is on Maryland now, imagine our state with double the working FoodWorks-trained professional chefs, twice as many children thriving from healthy diets, and more Marylanders finding relief from the stress of finding food, allowing them to focus on what's next.

Turn the page and find out how you can help us expand our reach, and make sure that food works for more Marylanders.



# HELP *Fuel* FOODWORKS' FUTURE!

This expansion is just the beginning of FoodWorks' increased impact on Maryland.  
Now, let's make sure students are positioned to thrive!



## SPICE UP THE EDUCATION GARDEN | \$75

Helps maintain the fresh herbs & spices that FoodWorks students use to learn flavor profiles.



## FUND THE FLEET | \$100

Can make sure a FoodWorks van is always available for students lacking transportation to get to and from class.



## HELP KEEP THEM SHARP | \$500

Ensures students have a proper knife set to achieve their culinary dreams.



## DRESS FOR SUCCESS | \$1,000

Keeps students outfitted in professional chef uniforms that help ensure food safety.



## SPONSOR A STUDENT | \$5,000

Provides a life-changing scholarship to one FoodWorks student.

If you would like to explore additional funding opportunities for our FoodWorks program, please contact Elise Krikau at [ekrikau@mdfoodbank.org](mailto:ekrikau@mdfoodbank.org).



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