

Press Release: Gluten-Free Food Bank Receives Local Grant

The Gluten-Free Food Bank, part of the newly formed National Celiac Association, is delighted to announce that it has been awarded two grants by the Foundation for MetroWest Hunger Relief Fund. The grants will be used in the pilot program based in Eastern Massachusetts that provides gluten-free food staples to food pantries for distribution to food insecure individuals with a medical need for gluten-free food. This includes people with celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivity. The first grant is for the purchase of a freezer and shelving units, the second to support general operations.

The Gluten-Free Food Bank has several partner food pantries in the Boston MetroWest area that are supported by the Foundation for MetroWest. These include Acton, Ashland, Medway, Natick and Wellesley. Many of their partner pantries serve people from surrounding communities.

For those with celiac disease or non-celiac gluten sensitivity, eating gluten-free is a medical necessity. Failure to comply with the diet can result in numerous medical side effects, from digestive disorders to cancer and infertility. However, eating gluten-free is complex, expensive and often socially isolating. It excludes a large amount of readily available and cheap food items such as bread, pasta and most breakfast cereals. Replacement products are expensive and rarely available at food assistance programs. Therefore for those with financial constraints a diagnosis requiring a gluten-free diet can present a real challenge to food security. The Gluten-Free Food Bank seeks to ameliorate this issue through a combination of awareness raising and, within Eastern Massachusetts, provision of gluten-free staples to partner food pantries.

About Foundation for MetroWest

Established in 1995, the Foundation for MetroWest is the only community foundation serving the 33 cities and towns in the region. We promote philanthropy in the region, help donors maximize the impact of their local giving, serve as a resource for local nonprofits and enhance the quality of life for all our residents. Since inception, the Foundation has granted more than \$14 million to charitable organizations and currently stewards more than \$18 million in charitable assets for current needs and future impact. To learn more, please visit foundationformetrowest.org or call 508.647.2260.

About the National Celiac Association:

The National Celiac Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to educating and advocating for individuals with celiac disease and non-celiac gluten sensitivities, their families, and communities throughout the U.S. NCA provides education, awareness, and outreach for persons with CD and NCGS and the medical community through in-person events and the online community.

“The National Celiac Association is a leading support group nationwide in providing cutting edge information, organizing events for patients and families and in networking with academic celiac centers in order to provide the best support possible to the celiac community.”

Dr. Alessio Fasano, Medical Director, Center for Celiac Research at Harvard Medical School and Chief, Division of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition at Massachusetts General Hospital.