Title: Big Impact for Food Banks

Company/Organization: Hanover Co-op Food Stores

Type of Organization: For profit

Number of Employees: 100+

Category: Community

Challenge or Opportunity: Food Banks typically buy-in extra food from local grocery stores to supplement donations received. The Hanover Co-op team identified ways to help our local food banks improve their ordering, save them money, and make food-bank-service to clients better for all. Our observations stemmed from our long-time partnership with the Upper Valley Haven. Such collaboration and solutions are the result of our practice of giving our Hanover Co-op team members the leeway to suggest and pursue solutions.

Approach or Solution: Being a good community partner means always looking for new ways to assist non-profits, which first means listening to what they feel their needs are. Then, and only then, can a workable solution be proposed. Through that process, our team made multiple visits to our food bank partners to craft solutions. The Co-op crew reduced a backlog of inventory that previously clogged limited space. Then, they created a store-like layout for pantry clients. Finally, we donate our margin to the food bank.

Impact: We made a basic Excel sheet for the food banks to place weekly orders. It doubles as the invoice, so it is easy for all. And instead of offering them a nice discount off retail like we used to do, they buy special orders at our cost! Yup. Food banks get our buying power. The result has saved partners nearly a half million dollars. And, their clients select products in a space that feels like a store, which builds dignity via personal choice. Efficiency + Savings + Self-esteem = Big impact.