



**FALMOUTH  
SERVICE CENTER**  
*more than a food pantry*

## Our Fall 2021 Newsletter



### A MESSAGE FROM FSC'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR KERIN DELANEY

Running and I generally don't get along. I have run after toddlers certainly, but I can't say my running career stretched much further than that. And yet, this year, I decided to join our Falmouth Road Race team and had to quickly begin fundraising and also training to run 7 miles – in a row!

I set two major goals for myself – to finish the race and not come in last. My daughter helped me set up a running chart where I could track my progress with stickers. I will say that coming in from a training run and putting a shooting star on my chart was a big motivator! I trained for months and as race day neared, I continually tweaked my plan. I opted to go with a "Run 4 minutes, walk 2 minutes, run 4 minutes, ... etc." plan that felt manageable and might actually allow me to finish. I am proud to say that I officially finished my first Falmouth Road Race and helped TEAM FSC raise over \$24,000!

I share this story because FSC is on a similar journey as we are now in the midst of creating a new strategic plan. Much like my plan to run a major race, our organization is filled with hopes and dreams for all that we might be able to accomplish. We are also being thoughtful and using careful planning as we set big goals for our organization.

We had hoped to start strategic planning last year but obviously faced several "bumps in the road" as we navigated the pandemic and all that we needed to do to stay operational and serve our client households. Since March 2020, we have had to 'pivot' nearly constantly as we had to figure a way to keep distributing food and critical services while still keeping all of our volunteers and staff safe. We are very proud that we have been able to provide financial assistance for Falmouth households struggling with rent and utilities in addition to providing high quality, nutritious food for any household in need from any zip code, on and off the Cape.

Our goal is to come up with a 3 to 5 year comprehensive strategic plan even as we continue to navigate during the pandemic. Over the last few months, we conducted surveys with both our clients and our volunteers soliciting their feedback on our programs and needs; we interviewed all of our staff and board members and reached out to numerous community partners, both local and regional, and hired a professional strategic planning consultant to help us with this comprehensive plan.

We have begun to review all of the data that we have collected and expect to have a robust discussion at our Strategic Planning Retreat in mid-September where we hope to develop consensus around the planning priorities for the next several years. As we chart our course for the future of FSC, we are looking at all of our programs and resources; what we do well in our community and what others do well; and how best to continually partner with other organizations to offer a very strong safety net for households on Cape Cod.

We are very excited about this thoughtful work and as we move forward, we will continue to keep all of you informed. Just as I crafted a plan that allowed me to actually finish the Falmouth Road Race, we will be crafting a comprehensive strategic plan that will enable us to strengthen our foundation and continue to expand our opportunities in order to meet the growing needs of our community. Stay tuned!

# JOINED IN SERVICE TO OTHERS

## The first FSC scholarship in honor of Brenda Swain is awarded

When the FSC Board of Directors decided to create a college scholarship in honor of Executive Director Emeritus, Brenda Swain on the occasion of her retirement, we never imagined that it would be awarded to one of our own volunteers.

Trevor Hodgson, who graduated from Falmouth High School last spring and is now a first-year student at Bentley University in Waltham, MA, is the first recipient of the Falmouth Service Center Community Services Scholarship in honor of Brenda Swain. Trevor, who is undecided about his academic major, is taking a selection of courses at Bentley. In keeping with his long commitment to community service, Trevor will also participate in a yearlong in-service learning program mentoring young students in an after-school program for at-risk youth.

While volunteering for many Falmouth organizations and causes, much of Trevor's involvement has been through the National Honor Society, as well as Falmouth High School's Interact Club. The Club's purpose is two-fold: to support the school community and to promote international understanding.

At FSC, Trevor's presence is a welcome and familiar one where he volunteers for our Fresh Start back-to-school program and our holiday

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programs. Most recently, Trevor spent last summer volunteering at our Hand in hand Thrift Shop. He accepted donations, sorted and prepared donations for sale and always brought his willingness to work hard. His strong commitment to giving back to his community and his winning smile were always evident.

We recently spent some time with Trevor at Hand in hand and had an opportunity to ask him what inspired him to volunteer for the Falmouth Service Center. Without missing a beat, he said "the mission of the Service Center, as well as the important work of the organization in helping neighbors in need." He added quickly, "as an educator, my mother is my inspiration because she has been my constant guide for giving back, for bringing joy to others, and for making a difference in people's everyday lives. I can only hope to do as much for others some day."

When asked what it meant to him to receive the first ever FSC scholarship named in honor of Brenda Swain, Trevor said "any thought or any sentence that has my name connected with both the Falmouth Service Center and Falmouth's Citizen of the Year, Brenda Swain, is an honor and a privilege. I hope that I am able to continue Brenda's life-long dedication to giving back to our special community of Falmouth."

Like Trevor, Brenda Swain grew up in a household where the example for community service started at a very early age. Her parents modeled volunteerism and inspired Brenda's own predisposition for helping others. Even now, after retiring from nearly two decades of service as FSC's executive director, Brenda is happy, enjoying each day with her family and serving our community. Not only is Brenda volunteering regularly at the Falmouth Senior Center, but she also can be found working alongside her son, Andy, in his new food truck business venture, The Filling Station.



# TREVOR CONTINUED



Brenda's distinguished career on the Upper Cape began in the 80's at Cape Cod Child Development where she was the Director of the Falmouth Pre-School and served as the Cape-wide Head Start Director. Brenda later served for seven years in a Massachusetts Department of Education funded program, "Young Children First!" In 2002, she was selected by a committee of board members, volunteers and clients to serve as the executive director of the Falmouth Service Center where she worked tirelessly with support from her family, staff and many scores of volunteers.

In addition to her work life, Brenda's service to the community includes organizations such as the Samaritans, the Audible Local Ledger, the Council on Aging and serving as a Falmouth Town Meeting member.

Always reflected in Brenda's work and service are her values: leading from the heart and setting an example of compassion for others; sharing her dreams and bringing others along; creating communities within communities among individuals and agencies; nurturing

a culture of friendship, respect, support, inclusiveness, and love; and erring – always – on the side of generosity.

For the FSC Board, naming the pantry "Brenda's Fresh and Healthy Pantry" on the occasion of Brenda's retirement seemed important given her determination to provide neighbors in need with healthy and nutritious grocery choices. Displaying a plaque and photograph in the Pantry noting Brenda's years of service and extraordinary accomplishments seemed equally fitting. But the Board was searching for something permanent and lasting, something that would recognize and inspire young people to carry on in her footsteps, something that would ensure that Brenda's legacy of community service and generosity of spirit would continue in perpetuity.

Thus, at the annual Falmouth High School Scholarship & Awards Night this spring, the Scholarship Association of Falmouth (SAF) had the opportunity to present the newly established FSC scholarship. This \$2500 annual scholarship is designed to recognize a senior who most embodies the values by which Brenda lives her life. "I am delighted that Trevor Hodgson is the recipient of the very first Brenda Swain Scholarship. The Board is proud of his accomplishments and believes that he is the perfect choice to receive the first Scholarship," said Catherine Kligler, president of the FSC Board of



Directors, when she heard the good news. In early August before Trevor headed off to Bentley, Brenda and Trevor met for the first time at the Service Center. Each was so grateful for the opportunity to meet the other. Brenda was eager to learn more about Trevor's service, his dreams for the future, and the examples his mother and older brother set as his role models. Trevor's smile radiated admiration, respect and honor as the first of "Brenda's Scholars."

It warmed our hearts – as we hope it does yours -- to see these two together smiling and joined in service to family and community with compassion for others.

*"The Board is proud of his accomplishments and believes that he is the perfect choice to receive the first Scholarship," said Catherine Kligler, president of the FSC Board of Directors, when she heard the good news.*



COVID-19 continues to offer ongoing challenges as we approach the 2021 holiday season. Last year we asked for and received good feedback from clients and volunteers about what worked well and not so well. We have incorporated many of these ideas and suggestions into this year's planning.

Our clients tell us they love the new Client Choice Food Distribution Program, which allows them to choose exactly what they want; often with unusual extras, such as olive oil, haddock chowder, Maryland crab chowder or fresh produce received from the Falmouth Farmer's Market! People also appreciate the anonymity the new distribution allows them. Walking through the front doors at FSC isn't always easy, particularly for the first time. Client feedback included:

*"Great programs." "Extra helpful during COVID nervousness." "Offering help with dignity and respect." "Everyone is always so kind and helpful: especially during the Pandemic, you all found a way to help the needy."*

We were interested in what our families thought about our Holiday Programs, so we surveyed them this year to learn about their experiences. The responses overwhelmingly showed that families utilized our Thanksgiving basket program and appreciated the assistance at the holidays for their children. Clients noted that they appreciated the gift cards they received as it allowed them to make their own choices. They told us that being able to shop for their children's gifts themselves added a sense of normalcy into what otherwise was a very stressful year.

*"I enjoyed being able to use the gift cards to buy presents for my children." "I am so appreciative of this program! It really helped me out being a single parent." "My child had such a wonderful Christmas thanks to FSC! Thank you so very much."*

With this feedback, we have created a plan for the upcoming holiday season that will meet the needs of our client families, engage our community, and allow FSC to stay open safely as we serve our neighbors in need. Please see holiday pages for important dates and information, but here are key highlights:

## **1** Annual Turkey Drop Off Day Sunday, November 21 (noon - 3 pm)

**We are in need of FROZEN TURKEYS ONLY.**

We will be getting all other Thanksgiving items, such as stuffing, cranberry sauce, gravy, as well as fresh veggies, from the Greater Boston Food Bank for our clients.

## **2** Community Involvement

We have several ways you can help this season!

For Thanksgiving, we have a VERY LIMITED number of volunteer slots to help us prepare the week before Thanksgiving. These will be one-hour shifts for groups of four (first-come-first-served basis). Please contact Elyse DeGroot if you or your group are interested in volunteering. (elysed@falmouthservicecenter.org) In addition, you can also help us by collecting the non-perishable items listed on the holiday pages.

Please assign one person as the "Drop Off Designee" who will deliver these items the weeks of November 8 - 12 or December 6 - 10 (10 am - noon).

## **3** Our Children's Holiday Program

Our clients truly appreciated the gift cards we distributed last year so that they could choose gifts for their families. This year, in lieu of you purchasing gift cards, we are asking specifically for monetary donations so that we can order gift cards in the quantities and values we need. If you wish to donate to our Children's Holiday Program, please indicate this on your check or online donation.

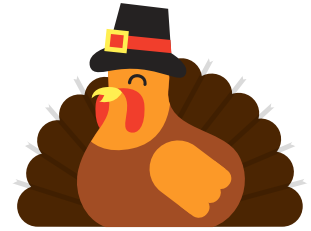
## **4** Children's Winter Coats

We need new winter coats for children ages infant to 10 years in a range of sizes so that we can provide a coat to each enrolled child. We know our client families will appreciate this generous donation. If you wish to help us to provide coats, please contact us with any questions you may have. We again ask that you please appoint a "Drop Off Designee" to deliver the coats the week of December 6 - 10 (10 am-noon).





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# Thanksgiving 2021

## Donation Days for the Community:

## Community Volunteer Days:

## Turkey ONLY Donation Day:

## Thanksgiving Distribution for Client Families:

### Nov. 8 - 12 (10 am-12 noon)

- We are gratefully accepting:
  - Non-perishable items: toiletries, laundry detergents, soups (particularly low sodium), cereals, & quick bread mixes
  - Dog and cat food
  - Monetary donations
- Further details about donations appear in this newsletter or call 508-548-2794 with questions.

### Nov. 15 (3-5 pm)    Nov. 16 (3-5 pm) Nov. 18 (3-5 pm)    Nov. 19 (3-5 pm)

- This year we are limiting our number of COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS due to COVID-19. Please contact Elyse DeGroot ASAP to secure a volunteer position at 508-548-2794.
- 1 hour shifts for each volunteer or groups of four.
- Volunteer minimum age requirement: 16 years old.
- Masks, gloves and social distancing will be required.

### Nov. 21 (12 noon-3 pm)



- We are accepting FROZEN TURKEYS ONLY this year.
- 10 - 18 lbs. turkeys are needed.

### Nov. 22 & Nov. 23

- 900 families will receive a Thanksgiving Basket with all the "fixings."
- If needed, up to 100 additional families will receive a turkey ONLY.

**Your financial support and turkey donations make a difference in our community.**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL 508-548-2794 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
FALMOUTHSERVICECENTER.ORG

**THANK  
YOU!**



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# Children's Holiday Program 2021

## Donation Days for the Community:

### Dec. 6 - 10 (10 am-12 noon)

- We are gratefully accepting:
  - New winter coats for children ages infant to 10 yrs.
  - Non-perishable items: toiletries, laundry detergents, soups (particularly low sodium), cereals, & quick bread mixes
  - Dog and cat food
  - Monetary donations
- Due to COVID-19, masks are required during donation drop-off days, particularly when entering the FSC building.

## Children's Holiday Program Distribution Days for Client Families:

### Dec. 13 - Dec. 15

- During our distribution days, clients will receive a holiday package that will make it possible for them to purchase gifts for their children and to select a new winter coat for their younger children.



**We are unable to accept donations of toys  
or gift cards this year.**

**Your financial support and gift of winter coats will help offer holiday cheer to a family in need. Thank you for helping us!**

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CALL 508-548-2794 OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
FALMOUTHSERVICECENTER.ORG



# 2021

## FRESH START by the numbers

**174** backpacks distributed      **132** families served

**300+** gift cards distributed

**1** great partnership with Eight Cousins Books

Thank you to our volunteers, donors and local organizations who once again supported FSC's Fresh Start back to school program.



## STRONG FINISH FOR OUR 2021 FALMOUTH ROAD RACE TEAM



Team FSC had a total of 21 runners this year. We had runners participating in person on the Falmouth course and some participating at home - or even overseas! Our 2021 team did an incredible job of raising over \$24,000 to help support our neighbors in need.

**THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM MEMBERS AND ALL WHO HAVE DONATED IN SUPPORT OF OUR RACERS!**



Congratulations to our Volunteers and Staff!



FSC MAILING ADDRESS:

**611 Gifford Street  
Falmouth, MA 02540**





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### **Falmouth Service Center**

611 Gifford St. Falmouth  
Phone: 508-548-2794  
Falmouthservicecenter.org

### **Hand in hand Thrift Shop**

141 Sandwich Rd. East Falmouth  
Phone: 508-457-0770  
Handinhandthriftshop.org



**Our mission is to ease stress, reduce hunger and improve the quality of life for our neighbors in need. The Falmouth Service Center (FSC) works to increase self-sufficiency by helping to build networks among clients, neighbors and agencies.**

#### FALMOUTH SERVICE CENTER—BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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#### FALMOUTH SERVICE CENTER—STAFF

Kerin Delaney, Executive Director; Mary Casey, Administrative Assistant, Elyse DeGroot, Deputy Director; Linda Dias, Client Intake Coordinator; Steve Dreher, Thrift Shop Warehouse Associate; Brian Dugan, Warehouse/Operations Manager; Libby Hearne, Development Associate; Sharon Howard, Volunteer Coordinator; Arlene Hoxie, Development Associate; Joy Paruch, Thrift Shop Manager; Cynthia Syverson-Mercer, Thrift Shop Assistant Manager; Crissy Torruella, Administrative Assistant; Bill Walker, Warehouse Associate.

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