

Each year in Maine over **40 million meals** are missed because families do not have the resources to put food on their table. Learn about the hunger issues in your community, and make a plan to make a difference.



Food From the Heart Patch Program

Food from the Heart is a community service project to help Girl Scouts investigate hunger and food insecurity and how it impacts their community. Girl Scouts discover how cooperation and community outreach is a life skill that can be used every day, and how they can inspire others to make a difference to end hunger. The Food From the Heart patch program may be completed at any level, Daisies – Ambassadors.* Girl Scouts and their leaders are encouraged to challenge themselves by selecting age-appropriate activities that will help them discover something new about hunger and food insecurity, and feel inspired to take action in a meaningful way around an issue they are passionate about.

* The *Food from the Heart Patch* is earned the first year the program is completed. Small heart patches are earned for subsequent years.

Step 1: Learn more about the resources available for people who may need help

Step 2: Learn about hunger and food insecurity in your community

Step 3: Learn about food nutrition

Step 4: Choose a project based on what you have learned

Step 5: Make a plan and take action

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STEP 1: Learn more about the resources available for people who may need help

Choose One:

- ☐ Learn about the federal SNAP program and what items cannot be purchased with these funds.
- ☐ Learn about the federal WIC program and why it's important to pregnant mothers and young children.
- ☐ Learn about other Child Hunger programs in Maine such as those from The Good Shepherd Food Bank.

STEP 2: Learn about hunger and food insecurity in your community

Talk to someone at your local food assistance program or free meal site and find out:

- ☐ How many people use their services each month?
- ☐ What foods/resources are most needed?
- ☐ What time of the year is help needed most?
- ☐ If possible, take a tour.

STEP 3: Learn about food nutrition

Choose One (Younger girls):

- ☐ Check out the nutrition labels on foods you eat. How much is one serving? Create a chart or display to compare the calories, fat, sugar, and protein in a serving of at least 3 foods.
- ☐ Check out [MyPlate](#), and make a collage of healthy foods for a meal following these guidelines. Post it in the cafeteria at school or in your kitchen at home.
- ☐ Help plan and prepare healthy snacks for you or your troop for five days or meetings following the guidelines from MyPlate.

Choose One (Older girls):

- ☐ Check out the nutrition labels on foods you eat to see what a serving is. Create a chart or display to compare the calories, fat, sugar, and protein in a serving of at least 5 foods.
- ☐ Find out how many calories someone your age needs each day according to the USDA. Plan a daily menu for a week following these guidelines and those from [MyPlate](#).
- ☐ Find out what a typical family of 4, in the state of Maine, receives from SNAP for a month. Keeping nutrition, cost, and food access in mind, plan a menu to feed a family of 4 for a month.

Where do I find my local food assistance programs?

Here are some places to look:

- Good Shepherd Food Bank of Maine Food Map <https://www.gsfb.org/food-map/>
- Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry www.maine.gov/dacf/ard/tefap/index.shtml
- Maine's 211 Directory www.211maine.org
- Your local town office



Step 4: Choose a project

Because food insecurity is a year-round concern, the ***Food from the Heart*** patch program is designed to allow girls to choose a time of year and project that will make the most impact in their community. There are periods of time when the food cupboards receive lots of support (around the holidays for example), but in other times of the year shelves are bare. Here are some example projects you might consider:

Organize a food collection – Check with your local food cupboard/pantry to see when the need is greatest. With permission, girls can place decorated boxes in local businesses, in their schools, in their churches, in municipal buildings, and in recreation centers. If boxes are placed in public buildings, someone needs to make a plan to make a weekly pick up from these boxes. Individual girls and their families could handle this responsibility. Girls may ask local groups to join them, (Women's Club, Rotary Club, Lions Club, VFW, American Legion, Masons, Rebecca's, etc).

Support a local Child Hunger Program – Programs like school weekend backpack and summer meal programs provide thousands of meals to children each year. Partner with your local program to collect food, stuff backpacks, or get the word out about local summer meal programs... maybe even provide fun activities at local summer meal sites while children wait for meals.

What will make a longer lasting difference?

- Think about starting a community garden or hold a workshop teaching families how to preserve food grown in the summer to last all winter.
- Some larger and ongoing projects may even qualify as a Bronze, Silver or Gold project.

Plant seedlings – Help families grow food for themselves by planting seedlings in the spring, and to give away to local families or seniors to grow over the summer.

Sponsor a Local Senior – Help a local senior plant and/or maintain their garden. Many seniors love to garden and preserve their food for the winter. However, they may no longer be able to do as much as they once did. By adopting a local senior, you help them ensure the food they need over the winter will be available.

Make A Donation – While Girl Scouts cannot raise money for another organization, you can make a donation of your troop funds to a local charity. Example: Donating money to food banks allows them to buy food in bulk at lower prices, ensuring a more balanced and nutritious selection that meets community needs. A \$9 donation to your local cupboard can purchase nearly 50 pounds of food! (***Please remember to adhere to the Girl Scout policy around donations and media. If you have questions about the policy, please contact GSME.)***

Step 5: Make a plan and take action

Every project needs a plan.

Plans should be written. What do you need to think about when planning a project? Here are some questions you can begin asking and you can add others that will help you complete your project.

- What are we going to do?
- Who can help us?
- What supplies or materials do we need?
- How much money do we need to get this project off the ground?
- Are there enough of us to do this project well?
- Goals and charts are an important part of planning.
- Set your goals, and then decide if they are realistic.
- Create a chart of who will do what and when. A sample chart:

Task	Who is in charge?	Who is going to help?	Date to be completed

More To Explore!

Did you enjoy the activities in the Food From the Heart patch? Continue to develop your skills and learn more about food, hunger and nutrition with the following badges, journeys, and patches:

- **Daisies** - Daisy Petal badges
- **Brownies** - Snacks badge
- **Juniors** - Get Moving journey, Gardener, and Simple Meals badges
- **Cadettes** - New Cuisines badge
- **Seniors** - Sow What journey, and Locavore badge
- **Ambassadors** - Dinner Party and Public Policy badges

Upon completion, patches can be purchased at our council shop. Small heart patches are available for participation beyond the first year.