

JULY NEWS - WE THRIVE TOGETHER



Let's reflect on another school year of fueling the future! This past June concluded the **2025-2026 school year** and our **Backpack Nutrition Program's 20th year** of serving.

Year after year this food access program keeps the health of Hartford's school aged children it's priority. With **1 in 6 children facing food insecurity**, and limited access to district-offered free & reduced lunches on the weekends, our Backpack Nutrition Program steps in to fill this gap.

The tradition of showing up where it counts means partnering up with **7 schools in Hartford** and delivering **230 backpacks full of nutritious food** each week throughout this school year. Every bag was packed with easy-to-make meals, fresh fruit, shelf-stable milk, hearty snacks, 100% fruit juice, and more!

Class may be out for the summer but our impact is still present!

- **Over 8,590 backpacks distributed**
- **More than 75,870 lbs. of food given out**
- **14,922 fresh oranges served**
- **Resource enhancements added every month**
 - Mini First-Aid Kits
 - School supplies
 - Literacy Kits

These numbers mean so much more than reach. This impact shows how many kids showed up to school every Monday morning, ready to learn instead of thinking about hunger. **Nutrition is a necessity** for our kids who hold the future in their hands. Tomorrow becomes brighter when our children are **happy, healthy, and refueled!**



PARTNERSHIPS IN ACTION

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT!

We are honored and excited to announce that our friends at **Aetna, a CVS Health company**, recently gifted us a very generous **\$25,000 grant** to support our kid's weekend **Backpack Nutrition Program** for the **2026-2027**

school year! This is such INCREDIBLE support! These funds will help us to purchase kid-friendly meals, snacks, shelf-stable milk and fresh produce to **support 230 students facing hunger** from seven Hartford schools throughout the school year.



COMMITTED TO CARING

Talk about teamwork! We are so grateful for our new partnership with **Swiss Re!** They have committed to a yearlong partnership throughout 2026 to support **5 vital projects**, 3 of which involve collaborative work with our nonprofit partner, **Levo International**, and 2 of which are **outdoor beautification** projects right here at Hands On Hartford!



So far, we've loved their hard work, fun spirit, and commitment in tackling many tasks, from cleaning, planting and **assembling hydroponic** units to support access to healthy foods in the North End of Hartford, to **planting gorgeous flower arrangements** in our patio planters, which have been a wonderful way to welcome guests to our restaurant and administrative offices. **Thank you**, Swiss Re, for your **dedication in uplifting the Hartford community**.

HOH IN ACTION



FARM FRESH FOOD ACCESS

Every week, families visit our **Community Pantry** seeking healthy, nutritious food. While donated shelf-stable items are essential, **fresh fruits** and **vegetables** are often the most requested. In response, our food access team has partnered with **local farmers** to secure donations of any seasonal abundance and/or surplus produce. These partnerships **support our local agriculture, reduces food loss**, and ensures **more fresh food** reaches our community.

You can catch us at the Wethersfield Farmer's Market on Thursday, July 16 and July 30th.

Gather55 Guest Chef



July Menu

Head Chef Jeremy Williams and
Sous Chef Cristina "Patti" Meza

Crispy Stuffed Yucca

Steak Chaufa Rice Dish - GF

Croissant White Chocolate Bread Pudding

FAITH IN ACTION

GATHER TOGETHER

This past month, our dear friends at **Immanuel Congregational Church** have given the word "**Gather**" extra special meaning. Thanks to a generous gift of **\$10,000** made in support of the free and reduced cost breakfast and lunch we provide at **Gather55**, our tables have extended even further. We are so grateful for generosity that keeps food on the table and smiles on everyone's faces!



Hands 
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