Your Every Step is a Lifeline

Thank you for joining us for this year's March for the Food Bank with Monte Belmonte! Your commitment, combined with our community partners' dedication, is a powerful force in our battle against nutrition insecurity. Together, we confront the underlying causes of food insecurity, and every step you take, every dollar you raise, propels us closer to our goal: a hunger-free Western Massachusetts.

**Food insecurity is rising.** In 2023, we've witnessed a 21% increase in the number of households we've assisted, compared to the previous year. This year, we've supported 110,000 households, up from nearly 87,000 in 2022. Several factors have contributed to this increase:

**The conclusion of pandemic relief benefits:** Last December, the Child Tax Credit increase ended, causing hardship for many families. This spring, SNAP increases concluded, reducing vital food assistance dollars.

**Inflation:** Despite a slowing inflation rate, the cost of food remains high.

**High housing costs:** Massachusetts boasts the 3rd-highest home prices and the 6th-highest median rental prices in the nation, not to mention the expenses of heating and utilities.

**Childcare:** Massachusetts has the 2nd-highest average childcare costs in the country.

**Every dollar you donate provides three nourishing meals.** Your support ensures that fresh, nutritious food reaches the tables of our neighbors today and tomorrow. Thank you for your unwavering commitment as we work together to end hunger in Western Massachusetts.

We look forward to seeing you at the March this November and activating the power of community!