"There but for the grace of God, go I"

Philoxenia Times

Winter 2024-2025

Philoxenia's volunteers at our annual Thanksgiving Pop-Up Pantry. Details on page 2.

President's Message

We're fast approaching the end of another year. 2024 was a highly productive time for Philoxenia, as we held a record number of community events where your generosity translated into direct aid to our New York City and Westchester County neighbors in need.

This edition of the *Philoxenia Times* captures notable highlights from the second half of the year and includes insights from those who devote their time to our Pop-Up Pantries and programs. We feel it's essential for you to hear the "voice of the volunteer," as these caring, hardworking friends are the lifeblood of our organization.

On behalf of our board and volunteers, we thank you for your continued support and wish you the happiest of holidays. We'll see you in 2025!

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Philoxenia Times - Winter 2024-2025

Scenes from Philoxenia's Fall 2024 events.

Down the Stretch: Fall 2024 Events Help Hundreds

Philoxenia capped off a year of record activity with two highly subscribed events this fall.

We were grateful to our East Harlem neighbors for another successful Pop-Up Pantry on October 5. Deepest thanks to our volunteers and to the extraordinary generosity and kindness of the team at **Sisters of Charity of New York LEFSA** for working together to give out 140 bags of essential food and **Bombas** socks to the community on Lexington Avenue.

Just several weeks later, we reconvened in East Harlem for another successful Thanksgiving Pop-Up Pantry. We provided our neighbors in East Harlem with 150+ bags of groceries and 150+ bags containing whole turkeys and fresh greens.

Deepest thanks to our generous hosts at **Goodwill Industries of Greater New York and Northern New Jersey Harlem PROS** and to the extraordinary support from our donors, including **BakerHostetler** (including its New York team who held a food drive that filled our bags), **Bombas**, the **New York State Dental Foundation** , **Beth Huffman** (for beautiful crocheted hats) and — critically — every person who has taken the time to contribute to Philoxenia. We asked volunteers from **Infinite Global** and **BakerHostetler** for their insights into what makes this program special and why they volunteer their time each November.

"One of our core values as an organization is compassion—it motivates the way we do business and inspires us to make a positive impact on the communities we inhabit. Philoxenia embodies that ideal, and its pop-up pantries are a perfect opportunity to uplift others in a city we call home. We're grateful to our friends at Philoxenia for including us in their efforts, and we are proud to support its mission."

— **Infinite Global Team**

"I love knowing that I helped 150 families have a full Thanksgiving meal. They are always so appreciative. The volunteers bring a great energy, rain or shine, every year."

— **Brian Song, BakerHostetler**

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Philoxenia Times - Winter 2024-2025

Down the Stretch *(continued)*

"The pantry was a heartwarming experience. It was uplifting to be part of a volunteer crew with such teamwork, dedication and generosity. I was proud to be side by side with colleagues committed to serving New Yorkers in need. The warm smiles and joy of the folks receiving turkey and fixings was a sight to see. I will definitely be back next year!"

— **Ferve Khan, BakerHostetler**

"It's pretty hard to put into words how important Philoxenia's work is and what it means to me to be able to help out with your food pantries, even in my very small way. The importance of your work really hits home we you see it. When you are out there in the community and handing out food and clothes to those who really need it, especially during the holidays, and to see how much the help is appreciated. Yours is the work that's really important, that really makes a difference. And the opportunity I had this past Thanksgiving to bring my daughter was also an invaluable experience for her. She is also passionate about helping those who are less fortunate than her and being able to hand out food and clothes at the pantry and see how much people needed and appreciated the help was an experience that she'll never forget. Please keep up your vital work, the community really needs you. And I'm looking forward to continuing to contribute in any way I can. Thank you for all you do."

— **Patrick Campbell, BakerHostetler**

Community Conversations: Melissa Hansen

During the past year, Philoxenia was very fortunate to be nominated as a recipient nonprofit for community giving programs run by **Stop & Shop** in Westchester County. To learn more about their philanthropic activities, we spoke with **Melissa Hansen**, Stop & Shop's Program Manager.

1. Could you please tell us about the Stop & Shop Community Bag and Bloomin' 4 Good Programs, including how they work and who they benefit?

The Stop & Shop Community Bag Program makes it easy for shoppers to support their communities and the environment by simply buying durable, reusable shopping bags. For every $2.50 Community Bag sold, a $1 donation is sent to a local nonprofit organization focused on education, civic, health, hunger relief, or military and veteran affairs.

The Bloomin' 4 Good Program was created to help alleviate hunger and follows a similar structure. Each time a shopper purchases the specially marked $10.99 Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet, $1 is donated to a local hunger organization selected to benefit for the month.

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Community Conversations *(continued)*

Both programs are designed to support organizations that make a difference in the communities that Stop & Shop shoppers call home. The Community Bag and Bloomin' 4 Good Programs help nonprofits advance their missions, raise cause awareness, and connect with their local community.

2. What's been the impact of the programs so far?

The Community Bag Program launched in 2019 and has donated $3,117,135 to 7,299 unique organizations to date. Simultaneously, this program has made a positive impact on the environment by preventing the use of 93,513,060 single-use bags.

Following the success of the Community Bag Program, the Bloomin' 4 Good Program was conceptualized during the pandemic, when the need in our local communities was greater than ever. We were able to launch this new initiative in stores in 2021. Since then, the program has raised $1,508,330 in donations, provided approximately 15,082,600 meals, and supported the work of 2,596 hunger relief organizations.

3. Tell us a little about your background. How did you come to your current role managing the programs?

I graduated from the University of New Hampshire, where I worked in the restaurant industry to support myself throughout my studies. While I enjoyed the fast-paced nature of that work, I always felt a pull toward making a more meaningful impact in my community. After graduation, I wasn't exactly sure where to start, but I knew I wanted to contribute in a way that went beyond my previous experiences.

The opportunity came when I reconnected with an old friend who was already involved with local nonprofits. They shared that there was an opening in a community program they knew of, and it felt like the perfect fit. I took a leap and joined the team, and that's where I started to build my career in program management.

Over time, I've had the privilege of working with many unique organizations. It's been an incredible journey. I'm passionate about the work I do and am excited to continue growing in my role and making a positive difference every day.

4. What's been the most rewarding part of your job?

The most rewarding part of my job is seeing the direct impact that participating organizations within these programs have on people's lives in the community. Whether providing access to resources or building partnerships that drive positive change, each organization we work with makes a unique impact on its local community. It is incredibly fulfilling to hear stories from our nonprofit partners about how the Stop & Shop Community Bag and Bloomin' 4 Good Programs have helped them further their missions and increase cause awareness.

5. How can Stop & Shop customers participate in the programs?

To support an organization within your local community, all shoppers need to do is make a small purchase! At each Stop & Shop location, new nonprofits benefit from the Community Bag Program and the Bloomin' 4 Good Program every month. By simply purchasing a reusable Community Bag or a Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet, shoppers send the nonprofit partner of the month a $1 donation to support their efforts. Here in this office, we truly believe every little bit counts.

Community Bags are available at all Stop & Shop locations. Look for them at registers and on the reusable bag rack. If you can't find them, just ask a staff member where they are. They'll be happy to show you!

Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquets are available at all Stop & Shop locations as well. Look for the specially marked bouquets in the floral section of the store.

If there is an organization you would like to see benefit from either the Stop & Shop Community Bag or Bloomin' 4 Good Program, we welcome you to submit the organization for consideration. To submit an organization, you can visit our website at:

https://stopandshop.2givelocal.com/submit-your-organization/.

Philoxenia Times - Winter 2024-2025

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