

FALL 2024

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE UNIVERSITY DISTRICT FOOD BANK

## Annual charity auction raises almost \$500,000

Thank you for “Stepping Up to the Plate” this year in a big way! Our 29th annual benefit auction raised nearly \$500,000!

These funds will directly benefit our ability to feed more families and individuals each week in NE Seattle and beyond.

As our Executive Director Joe Gruber shared at the auction, we are 80% busier than we were just two years ago. We’ve been working hard to raise more funds to keep up with demand.

Our Fund-A-Need raised \$265,000 to directly benefit our food budget which is a staggering \$1.5 million this year. This total includes matches from the community and local businesses, as well as generous donations from our auction guests.

A huge THANK YOU to everyone who attended, sponsored, donated

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



Attendees at the Take A Bite Out of Hunger Auction check out items in the Silent Auction. | **More photos on page 6.**

## Budget shortfalls are looming

We’re 80 percent busier than we were in 2022 – yes, 80 percent. Our total operating budget is now at \$3.9M for the current fiscal year and \$1.5M of that is just for food purchasing.

Please make a donation, any size large or small helps. If you’re con-

sidering making an end of year gift to the Food Bank and have the ability to make a larger gift, it will go very far in helping our programs thrive and feed as many families as possible this Fall and Winter.

Donate at [udistrictfoodbank.org/donate](https://udistrictfoodbank.org/donate) or scan the code.



University District Food Bank assists low-income individuals residing within Zip Codes 98102, 98103, 98105, 98112, 98115, and 98125.

Food for Thought is published quarterly by University District Food Bank for our volunteers, donors, and public at large.

University District Food Bank is a program of the University District Service League, a registered 501 (c) (3).

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chris Schenck, President  
Kristina Smith, Vice-President  
Casey White, Secretary  
Matt Painley, Treasurer  
Cathy Petito Boyce  
Alicia Howard  
Elizabeth Kennedy

#### STAFF

**Christine Bagley**, Development Coordinator  
**Liz Benko**, Program Coordinator  
**Thomas Bernardi**, Pantry Coordinator  
**Shanelle Donaldson**, Farm Manager  
**Lilly Durham**, AmeriCorps  
**Arra Ebersten**, Café Coordinator  
**Joe Gruber**, Executive Director  
**Abby Herrick**, Program Coordinator  
**Holly Johnson**, Accountant  
**Tyler Karas**, AmeriCorps  
**Margot Kirby**, AmeriCorps  
**Ron Levich**, Weekend Food Recovery Specialist  
**Cherie Liberty**, AmeriCorps  
**Bill Lowie**, Assistant Director  
**Jak McKool**, Warehouse Manager  
**Christine McMahan**, Program Coordinator  
**David Mills**, Operations Support  
**Kirsten Ourada**, Pantry Coordinator  
**Jason Phillippi**, Warehouse Assistant  
**Sam Plascencia**, Community Connector  
**Sarah Rowley**, Volunteer Manager  
**Jordan Saibic**, Pantry Coordinator  
**Kristopher Samaniego**, Pantry Coordinator  
**Claire Sanchez**, Pantry Coordinator  
**Cameron Van Horn**, Community Coordinator  
**Max Vumbaca**, Pantry Coordinator  
**Eric Wirkman**, Grocery Rescue Manager  
**Paul Yunker**, Director of Development and Communications

#### ADDRESS

5017 Roosevelt Way N.E.  
Seattle WA 98105

#### WEBSITE

[www.udistrictfoodbank.org](http://www.udistrictfoodbank.org)

#### EMAIL

[udfb@udistrictfoodbank.org](mailto:udfb@udistrictfoodbank.org)

#### PHONE

206-523-7060

# Letter From The Director

Dear Friends,

As social justice advocates have always known, particularly when funds are tight, budgets are moral documents.

As we consider our spending each year at the Food Bank, as the city council and congress deliberate budgets this fall, and as the state legislature convenes budget negotiations in January, that lens serves as a reminder that our choices and investments should reflect our perspectives about how we want to support one another. Government has some necessary functions, sure, but even those can and should be shaped by our values.

In years of budget abundance, this is an easy task. In difficult budget years, as it is today, this task is much harder. It is in these difficult years when we must participate the most. When we must question the underlying values that shape our budget and our investments, as we navigate our budget challenges. It is now when we must remind ourselves and our electeds how our communities can be bettered and made more inclusive, how generational inequities can only be diminished through intentional action, and how those actions must be maintained even in the face of austerity.

In her most recent book “The Painful Truth About Hunger in America,” Dr. Mariana Chilton reminds us that hunger grows through our indifference. It grows as we individually become more disconnected from those around us. It grows as we ignore suffering, especially that imposed by generations of racist and sexist policies and practices. It grows as we internalize the pain from this suffering and make it part of our own narrative and our country’s history. It grows because we allow it to.

As we work through the tough budget years ahead at the city and state, and think about the road ahead for our nation, we must remain aware of the moral choices we are making and those we are avoiding. We must reflect on our shared past and be honest about the policy choices we’ve made for the “me,” indifferent to pain and hunger of our neighbors. A pain of our own creation.

In the past two years, the food bank has grown to be 80 percent busier across all our programming. While your generosity sustains our work and keeps our neighbors fed today, we need better solutions for tomorrow. We cannot sustain this indefinitely.

During the deepest days of the pandemic, we saw policy choices move us towards food security. The choices we made to strengthen SNAP, school meals, childcare subsidies, housing, and child tax credits worked. Rates of childhood hunger and child poverty both fell significantly. We brought low income families closer to opportunity. Now, as we’ve moved away from these investments, hunger and poverty have returned at alarming rates.

Let us collectively work to resist and change budgets and policies that don’t lift us all up. That willfully perpetuate suffering. That reinforce a community of indifference. Let us connect with everyone around us – to celebrate, to grieve, to struggle as one. To make choices guided by a reality that we are here together, that our collective fortunes are intertwined even when we don’t recognize that ourselves or want to simply ignore it because that is the easier way.

We must set forward on a path that recognizes and grows from our past to build a safety net that supports and sustains our neighbors and builds opportunity for us all. We remain committed to doing this work. I ask that you remain committed to it as well.



In peace,  
Joe



# Meet Claire Sanchez, pantry coordinator

Meet Claire Sanchez our hard-working Pantry Coordinator! Get to know more about her and how she helps keep the Food Bank running smoothly.

**Q. Where did you grow up?**

A. Phoenix, AZ

**Q. What is your background?**

A. Before I worked at the Food Bank, I worked in arts and education non-profits, marketing, and in the field of psychology.

**Q. When did you start at University District Food Bank?**

A. January 2024, so about 8 months.

**Q. What is your title and role within the organization?**

A. I'm a Pantry Coordinator. My work supports customers, volunteers, and broader pantry functions.

**Q. What is the most fulfilling aspect of your work?**

A. Building a nurturing community and connecting over shared needs for food and relationship leaves me feeling very fulfilled and keeps me excited about this work.

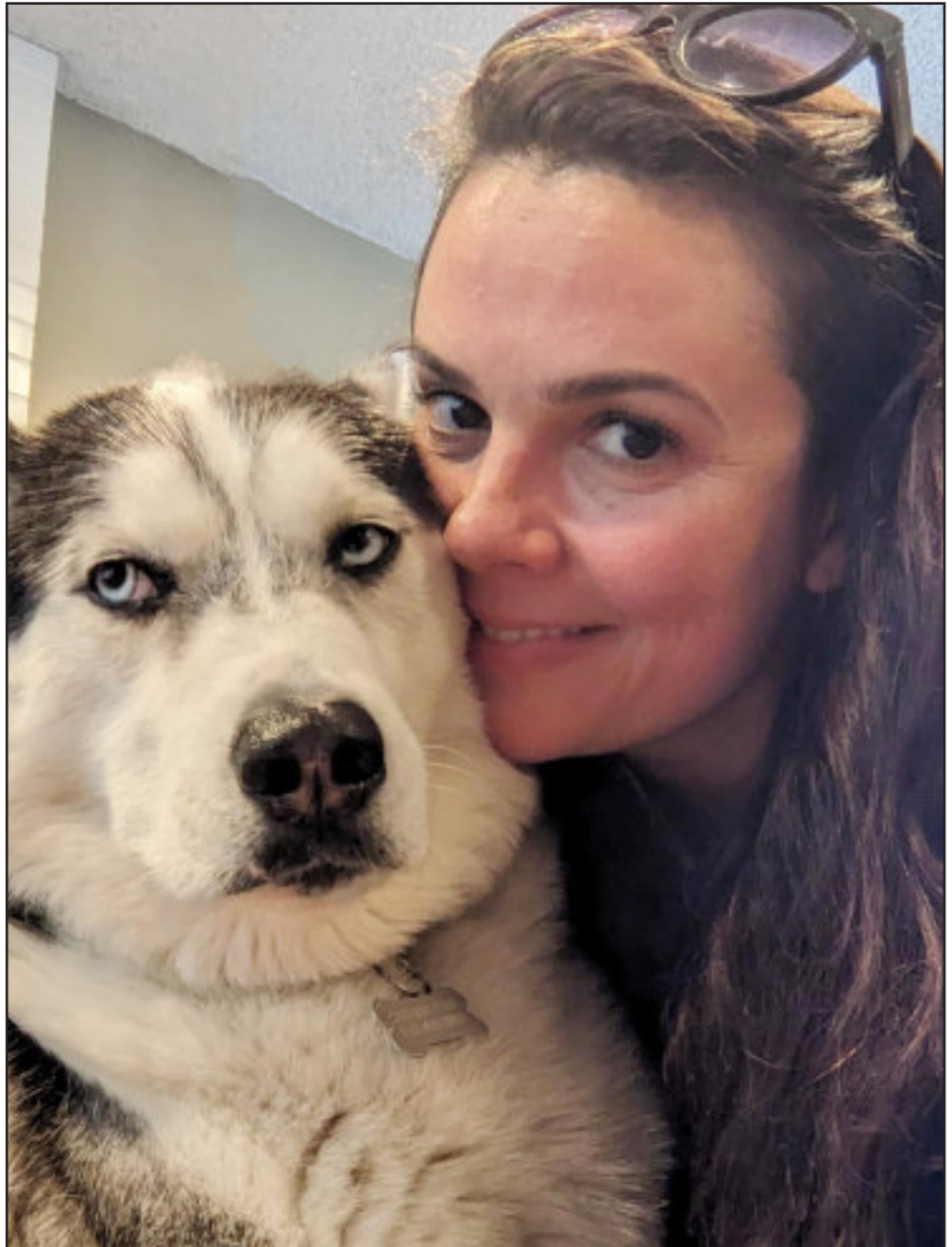
**Q. What would you like our donors and volunteers to know about the Food Bank?**

A. The love, care, and attention that our staff and volunteers put into the Food Bank are, in my experience in non-profits, unparalleled. I would like donors and volunteers to know – and believe that they likely already do have some sense of – what a very special place the University District Food Bank is. It nourishes customers and volunteers alike, and is a cornerstone of the U District community.

## Quick Round Questions:

**Your hometown:** Phoenix, AZ

**First concert:** I was lucky, as a



Claire Sanchez is pictured with her dog, Monster.

kid, to be taken to a lot of wonderful concerts. My parents took me to see Linda Ronstadt, George Clinton, James Brown, David Bowie. The first concert I elected to attend on my own was a stadium show with Garbage, The Distillers, and No Doubt.

**Coffee or Tea:** Yes!

**Favorite Pizza Topping/s:** Any-

thing spicy.

**What's your dream vacation:** I don't have a dream vacation, but in general, I like hiking new mountains and swimming in new bodies of water.

**Favorite place to take out-of-towners in Seattle:** The Arboretum, Discovery Park, or maybe Golden Gardens.

# Thanks for all of your auction help!

## Auction Sponsors

### **PRESENTING:**

Wellpoint

### **PREMIER:**

Corient  
KeyBank  
Shook, Hardy & Bacon L.L.P.

### **STAR:**

Seattle Green Earth Cleaning  
University Kiwanis  
WSECU

### **SUPPORTING:**

Arrivty Financial Planning  
BECU  
Beneficial State Bank  
Center for Spiritual Living  
Seattle Children's Hospital  
University of Washington -  
Office of External Affairs  
Seattle Interiors

### **PATRON:**

Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton  
Kinetic West  
Molly Cartwright Homes  
Pacifica Law Group  
UW Medicine

### **FRIEND:**

Community Health Plan of Washington  
Lee & Hayes  
Lovrovich Orthodontics  
Seattle Interiors  
Sellen Community Foundation  
University Book Store

### **IN-KIND DONORS:**

Ladd & Lass Brewing  
Republic of Cider

Auction proceeds  
will help many

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

items, volunteered, decorated the venue and more – we are so lucky to have such an incredible community!

If you couldn't attend and want to contribute, you can make a donation to the Food Bank to support our food budget at [udistrictfoodbank.org/donate](http://udistrictfoodbank.org/donate)

### **THANK YOU:**

**Volunteers** – You made this all possible with your hard work and dedication to set up, run the event, and take down/clean up. We are so grateful!

**Auction Item Donors** – We received 468 donated items valued at \$101,000

**Sponsors** – We had a record number of sponsors this year - huge thank you to all of them for supporting our work in the community!

**Dessert Dash** – Thank you to all of the incredible bakers who donated treats to our dessert dash! It was a beautiful table and we couldn't be more appreciative of your sweet talents.

**UW Foster School of Business** – Their student volunteers helped with registration, entered sales in the auction database, and recorded live auction bids.

**National Charity League** – Mothers and daughters decorated St. Demetrios, worked the silent and live auctions, and helped with item retrieval.

## Auction Volunteers

### **AUCTION COMMITTEE:**

Cathy Petito Boyce,  
Auction Chair  
Christine Bagley  
Kristina Smith  
Casey White  
Paul Yunker

### **FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS:**

Hannah Cecena  
Tyler Gehr  
Shaurya Handa  
William Howie  
Harika Jayanthi  
Travis Johnson  
Prithvi Krishnan  
Eric Lee  
Edrian Madyatama  
Feroz Rizvi  
Debjyoti Samanta  
Aarushi Singla  
Brein Sitohang  
Jipsa Rao Vankayala  
Nathanael Winata

### **SETUP VOLUNTEERS:**

Peg Balachowski  
Joe Balachowski  
Leah Ball  
Rick Bentley  
Emily Bingham  
Carol Cabe  
Louise Cole

Dick Conway  
Randolph Daniels  
Caroline Drake  
Susan Ephron  
Kimberly Gregory  
Linda Haba  
Danyel Hacker  
Alicia Howard  
Lesley Jacobs  
Karen Ko  
Linda Lau  
Jess Levine  
Cherie Liberty  
Victoria Martinsen  
Cindy May  
Jeremy Newton  
Matt Painley  
Amy Payne  
Kristina Smith  
Stephanie Stoffer  
Clara Thielke  
Lisa Vhugen  
Casey White  
Susan Williams  
Ken Yu

### **NATIONAL CHARITIES LEAGUE:**

Nancy Anibarro  
Siena Anibarro  
Heather Brandling-Bennett  
Payton Childs  
Emily Crandall  
Vivienne Crandall

Brynn Curley  
Debbie Dreis  
Reagan Dreis  
Alexandra Evans  
Blythe Evans  
Elaine Glant  
Ella Glant  
Caroline Jaquet  
Avaani Khanal  
Ellie Laskey  
Shannon Laskey  
Lela Lee  
Petra Lee  
Ruthie Nelson  
Angela Patterson  
Lucy Patterson  
Lindsay Romey  
Avery Romey  
Lindsay Romey  
Alison Scott  
Hannah Scott  
Stacie Siebrecht  
Erica Simonds  
Macey Simonds  
Ara Sleeth  
Emily Sleeth  
Courtney Story  
Harper Story  
Alice Warden  
Samantha Warden

### **GRAPHICS VOLUNTEER:**

Curt Milton

# Thanks to our 2024 auction item donors!

2BAR Spirits	Curt Milton	Jess & Rachael Bouma	New Roots Organics	STRENGTH studio
Abeja Winery	Daniel's Broiler – Prime	Jessica & DJ Powers	Nielsen's Pastries	Suncadia Resort
Acorn Street Shop	Steaks & Seafood	Jessica Sanchez	Night Light Nails Salon	Susan Slater
Adamant Cellars	Darkalino's	Jet City Device Repair	Nintendo of America	Susan Williams &
AF Landscape Design/ Build	Darlene & Jared Moses	JM Cellars	Northwest Outdoor Center (NWOC)	Dick Conway
Alaska Airlines	Dawn & Matt Couch	Joe Krukowski & Randy McChesney	Old World Tasting Room	Swansons Nursery
Albert and Ellen Yunker Family	DeLille Cellars	Jonathan & Marissa Cats	OOLA Distillery	Sweet Natty Cakes
Alderbrook Resort & Spa	Derby Salon	Judi Chapman	Pacific Science Center	Syncline Winery
Alison Wobbrock	Dick's Drive-In Restaurants, Inc.	Karen Drumheller	Pagliacci Pizza	Taco Time NW Home Office
All The Best Pet Care	Dino Haak	Karen Ko	Paint the Town	Tacoma Art Museum
Alyssa Grundmeyer Fine Art & Illustration	Doe Bay Resort & Retreat	Karin Paula Philomin	Pasta Casalinga	Tacoma Rainiers
Anna & David Kinney	Doug Beach	Kelly and Ruby Grebinsky	Patty Minzel	Tai Tung Chinese Restaurant
Anthony's Restaurants	Due' Cucina	Ken & Lesley Yu	Paul Yunker	The 5th Avenue Theater
Aqua by El Gaucho	Duke's Seafood	Ken Johnson	Peg Balachowski	The Burke Museum of Natural History and Culture
Armstrong Family Winery	Dunham Cellars	Kobayashi Winery	Piatti	The College Inn Pub
Arra Ebersten	Dunham Cellars	Kontos Cellars	Pie Bar	The Courtyard by Marriott Seattle- Bellevue Downtown
Avennia Winery	Dusted Valley	Kristina & Kent Smith	Project 9 Brewing Company	The FINCH Hotel
Baer Winery	DW Distilling	Kuma Coffee	Queen Anne Book Company	The Herbfarm Restaurant
Bakery Nouveau	Earshot Jazz	Ladd & Lass Brewing	Queen Anne Frame & Gift	The Mountaineers
Barbara Roller	Efeste	Latta Wines	Rain City Burgers	The Museum of Flight
Barrage Cellars	Ellie Alexander	Laura Collins & Greg Doerge	Rainglow Airbrush Tanning & Lashes	The Pantry
Bedrooms & More	Eltana Wood-Fired Bagel Cafe	Leonetti Cellar	Ray's Boathouse	The Pastry Project
Beecher's Handmade Cheese	Emerald City Chimney	Leslie Kelly	Republic of Cider	The Showbox
Ben's Bread Co.	Ethan Stowell Restaurants	Letterpress Distilling	Restaurant Homer	The Westy
Best Western Pioneer Square Hotel	Eureka! Seattle's University Village	LetThemEatSoap.com	Rick Steves' Europe	Theresa Haynie
Beverly Hunnicutt Studio	Everett AquaSox	Linda Rethke	Rotie Cellars	Third Place Books – Ravenna
Bloedel Reserve	Ever-Green Tree Care	Little Water Cantina	Saffron Grill	Thomas Dentistry
Bloomer Estates	Ezell's Famous Chicken	Long Chiropractic Center	Saint Bread	Three Sacks Full
Book Larder	Finnriver Farm & Cidery	LULUMIÈRE	Salty's On Alki	Thurston Wolfe Winery
Boon Boona Coffee	Float Seattle	Macrina Bakery & Cafe	Sand Point Grill	Tilth Alliance
Bottleworks	Full Pull Wines	Madison Kitchen	Saviah Cellars	Tirridis
Brenda & Dan Clark	Funko	Mamnoon Restaurant	Sea Creatures Restaurants	Tom Douglas and Company
Brown Bear Baking	Gayle Browning	Marination	Seattle Aquarium	Top Pot Doughnuts
Buckley's Queen Anne	Gayle Childers & Rebecca DiNino	Matt & Jessica Painley	Seattle Art Museum	Total Wine & More
Burgermaster Restaurants	Georgetown Brewing Company	McCarthy & Schiering Wine Merchants, Inc.	Seattle Children's Museum	Trophy Cupcakes
Burke-Gilman Brewing	Georgetown Liquor Company	McMenamins Pubs and Breweries	Seattle Green Earth Cleaning	Tutta Bella Neapolitan Pizzeria
Cafe Hitchcock	Great State Burger & Sandia	Mercer Estates Winery	Seattle Interiors	University of Washington Rowing
Cameron Catering	Guardian Cellars	Michael Florentino Cellars	Seattle Mariners	University of Washington School of Drama
Cappy's Boxing Gym	Henry Art Gallery	Mighty-O Donuts	Seattle Seahawks	Wautoma Springs
Carol Cabe	Holly and Jim Johnson	Mike Gleason	Seattle Seaplane	Westland Distillery
Casa Patron	Holly Marklyn	Mioposto Pizzeria	Seattle Select Basketball	William Levine Fine Jewels, L.L.C.
Cedar Grove	Hotel Leavenworth LLC	Modernist Cuisine	Seattle Storm	Wine O'Clock
Celia Donohue	Icicle Brewing Company	MOHAI	Seattle Town Car	Wing Luke Museum
Charlie Burdell	iGottaGuy Seattle	Mojito Latin American Restaurant	Secret Squirrel	Woodland Park Zoo
Cheryl & Scott Washburn	Ira Rose	Molly & David Hancock	Serafina	Young Oh
Chris Landman	Irene Holroyd & Patrick Perkins	MTN Gear	Shanelle Donaldson	Zeeks Pizza
City People's Mercantile	Irwin's Bakery & Cafe	München Haus Bavarian Grill & Beer Garden	Shultzzy's Bar & Grill	
CJ & Erin Hawkinson	Isenhower Cellars	Museum of Pop Culture	SIFF	
Clare V.	Jackie Patterson	Nancy Nugent	Sleight of Hand Cellars	
Clay It Forward	Jane Lamb	Nathan Yeager	Space Needle LLC	
Clive Pursehouse & Gwynne Junkin	Jeanette Ferguson	National Nordic Museum	Spinnaker Chocolate	
Cloud City Coffee	Jeanne Whitlow	Neighborhood Farmers Markets	Spud Fish & Chips	
Columbia Hospitality	Jeremy Hu	Neighborhood Grills	Starbucks	
Copperworks Distilling Company	Jess & Mary Levine		Ste. Michelle Wine Estates	





Left: There was lots to bid on in the Silent Auction. Below: Food Bank Board President Chris Schenck welcomes everyone to the event.



## Night of fun, food, giving at auction



Left: Paul Chandanabhumma grabs a cake for his table during the Dessert Dash. Above: Volunteers from the National Charity League helped out at the auction.

# BRIDGES program helps older students hone life skills

At the University District Food Bank, we are much more than a hub for food distribution. Our core purpose is to build a healthy and thriving community. We are fortunate to work with many organizations to further job skills and empower community members.

BRIDGES (Building Real-life Independent Daily Living and Gainful Employment Skills) is designed for young adults with disabilities, ages 18-21, who continue to need special education services once they have completed grades 9 through 12 to meet their unique post-secondary transition goals.

At University District Food Bank, BRIDGES students work with their job coach, Ashleigh Greenwood, and staff to develop and hone their job, life, and independent living skills to launch them into a successful and meaningful future. This partnership provides hands-on learning opportunities that build vocational, social, and independent living skills. The connections students have made with staff and volunteers over the years is impactful. They are part of the community and insert joy and great value into the work of the University District Food Bank.

In conversation with Ashleigh Greenwood she discusses the importance of this partnership.

**Q: Can you tell us about the history of BRIDGES and how long students have been involved at the food bank?**

**A:** Our program has been working at the food bank for about five years.

**Q: Staff and volunteers at the food bank always enjoy their time working alongside the BRIDGES students, can you tell us about how those relationships impact**



Students in the BRIDGES program, above and left, work with their job coach and staff at the Food Bank to develop their job, life and independent living skills.

**your students?**

**A:** The relationships students have at the food bank are crucial building blocks to teach interpersonal skills with coworkers. This is a safe space for students to

practice interacting and problem solving in real time with other volunteers. Students have developed a positive rapport with staff and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



# Turkey Trot to benefit Food Bank

Join in the fun with Montlake's 8th annual Turkey Trot 5K and Kids Run on Thanksgiving Day! Sign up the whole family to walk or run on Thursday, November 28 and know you are benefiting a great cause.

One hundred percent of net proceeds will be donated to the University District Food Bank, so the more

who register the more we can raise! Register at [Montlake.net](http://Montlake.net).

Come out to run, jog, or walk at your own pace. The race course takes you through the scenic Washington Park Arboretum, always a visual treat in the Fall!

If you're not interested in running or walking but want to help, we're looking for volunteers on race day!



Turkey Trot participants

## Food Bank is a safe place for students to learn and grow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

volunteers that they look forward to seeing on their shift.

**Q:** After students complete the BRIDGES program how does their work at the food bank impact their future opportunities? Can you give us an example of what comes after BRIDGES?

**A:** The work at the food bank helps students build experience in the work place and gives them an opportunity to try a variety of tasks. This helps students figure out work they enjoy and can be successful with for seeking employment when they finish our program. It is also a tremendous help to have a reference for students when they apply for jobs in the future. We are also grateful for the students the food bank has hired from our program to give them employment.

Students after Bridges have multiple paths they can take depending on their desires and ability. We have students who get supported employment through state run programs, they can get employment independently, or go to community college. Those are the most common outcomes of our students.

# WSECU

## Proud to support

**University District Food Bank**  
in their mission to build a hunger-free  
Northeast Seattle by providing our  
neighbors with reliable access to healthy  
food and life-changing resources.

[wsecu.org](http://wsecu.org)  
800.562.0999

