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**EVERY SPOONFUL COUNTS: RACHEL’S TABLE  
FOOD DRIVE AT THE BIG E PROVES A SUCCESS**

The Big E in West Springfield, Mass., facilitated a food drive among its concessionaires this year, which generated more than 3,000 pounds in donations to Rachel’s Table. Rachel’s Table of Western Mass. (RTWM) is a Springfield-based food rescue service that distributes donated and specially purchased foods, without charge, to agencies that feed hungry families and individuals in the greater Western Mass. region.

Rachel’s Table also provides training programs on food safety and information on efficient distribution, establishes a network of community support systems that work collaboratively to counter hunger and advocate, where and when it is appropriate, for food insecure people.

In 2023, Nancy Delson, director of the Eastern States Exposition (ESE) Fund, approached RTWM about gathering food donations during the Fair. She then called upon food vendors at The Big E to pack unserved food and prepare it for donation to the food rescue service.

“I reached out to Rachel’s Table because feeding the hungry is so well aligned with ESE’s mission to support agriculture and our community,” shared Delson.

Now in its second year, this partnership is an extension of ESE’s commitment to improving lives in our region. ESE donates to RTWM outside of fairtime, too, providing food from year-round events.

Through its connection with ESE, RTWM was able to secure a relationship with Performance Food Group (PFG) within the last year. PFG is also a Springfield-based business; they cater to many food service and food delivery needs, including stocking restaurants, national chains, vending, convenience, concessions and more.

“The collaboration between Eastern States Exposition and Rachel’s Table of Western Mass. supports food security in our community,” said Jodi Falk, RTWM’s Executive Director. “This year

we picked up 3,138 pounds of delicious surplus food from the vendors at The Big E and distributed it to 10 local agencies that service those among us that may not know where their next meal is coming from.”

“These days, food prices are high,” continued Falk, “so saving food from landfills and bringing it to feed people makes much more sense. We are grateful the The Big E for this partnership that encourages stewardship among members of our community and the greater world.”

ESE’s statement of purpose emphasizes a need to use its regional facilities to best serve the interests of the Northeast. In accordance with this mission, ESE looks forward to a long partnership with RTWM and hopes to further its impact in the years to come.

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The Big E is America’s only multi-state fair celebrating the rich history, culture and traditions of the six New England states. As the principal event of Eastern States Exposition, The Big E has presented the finest livestock; agriculture; innovative commercial, industrial, and artistic developments; and the highest caliber of varied entertainment to the people of the northeastern United States for over a century. The 17-day event has grown to become the largest fair in the Northeast.