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THE BIG E DONATES CREAM PUFFS AND MORE FOOD SURPLUS TO LOCAL SHELTERS FOLLOWING THE FAIR

The Big E is proud to be known as a food mecca and culinary destination, but being a courteous neighbor is also at the forefront of the mission of its producer, Eastern States Exposition (ESE). Following the Fair, the organization coordinated the delivery of Cream Puffs, E-clairs and more food surplus to five shelters to combat food insecurity in Western Mass.

Nearly 48% of households in Hampden County experience food insecurity, and 16.3% of families live at or below the poverty level. ESE is grateful for the concessionaires and vendors that generously contributed to this food drive to assist those in need.

The Big E Bakery had a record-breaking year of sales with 115,363 Cream Puffs and more than 38,000 E-clairs sold. Producing enough pastries to meet high demand meant having pastries left behind and local hunger relief organizations were the beneficiaries.

The bakery partnered with ESE to coordinate six pickup trucks to deliver to multiple food pantries throughout the region, donating approximately 3,485 Cream Puffs and E-clairs. Recipients included Lorraine's Soup Kitchen of Chicopee, Mass.; Friends of the Homeless in Springfield, Mass.; Salvation Army of Springfield, Mass.; The Parish Cupboard of West Springfield, Mass.; and Rachel's Table of Longmeadow, Mass., which is a food distributor that helps ensure food surplus is received by the organizations in greatest need of donations.

"Lorraine's is so thankful for this donation from The Big E," said Kim Caisse, executive director of Lorraine's Soup Kitchen. "We received more than 200 E-Clairs and Cream Puffs, and they could not have arrived at a better time, as we had no desserts today for our dinner guests. They will be so lucky to come to dinner tonight and receive one of these amazing pastries. This is why community relationships are so important to us—I can't thank Eastern States Exposition enough for thinking of Lorraine's and delivering to our meal site."

The Moses Building's 4-H dormitory saw more than 6,300 4-H and FFA members throughout the run of the 17-day Fair. Each day, multiple meals are prepared for these youths and their chaperones and guardians. Leftover food from the kitchen included bread rolls, crackers, condiments, margarine, honey ham, sour cream and more, equating to 420 lbs. of excess food. This donation was graciously received by Captain Stacy McNeil of the Salvation Army Springfield.

“The Salvation Army is grateful for the donations we received,” said McNeil. “The number of families we have seen in our pantry has doubled since this time last year. This donation will help us continue to serve our community.”

Chris and Wendy Bayle of Lakewood, Ohio, are the owners of BoardWok Noodles, a staple of The Big E located in The Front Porch section of the grounds, near Gate 5. Their business makes delectable lo mien bowls in deep pans right before your eyes, pairing your choice of protein with fresh-cut vegetables and pouring them over a bed of noodles, rice or lettuce. At the end of the Fair, they had crates of broccoli, zucchini, bell peppers and mushrooms left behind. The total donation weighed 144 lbs., and it was delivered to Bob Fastie, Executive Director of The Parish Cupboard.

ESE expresses sincere gratitude to the runners who made these deliveries possible: Zach Jediny and Tony Yacovone, Jr., of ESE Operations; ESE Communications and Public Relations Coordinator Elizabeth Gourde and her father, Robert Gourde, of Holyoke, Mass.; ESE Director of Sales Tim Gartska; and Stephen Bohn of Rachel’s Table.

This is just one of the efforts that ESE has coordinated to support the battle against food insecurity. During The Big E, Wayne Steed, director of the Ohio division of Shredding Hunger, presented to representatives from local pantries on the Farm-A-Rama Stage on Friday, Sept. 25. Shredding Hunger is a Wisconsin-founded hunger-relief initiative that rescues and redistributes excess food. This educational presentation armed representatives with resources to strengthen their efforts in our community.

At the heart of ESE’s impact is the people that make The Big E and the rest of our year-round events so successful. As an authority of agriculture, entertainment, innovation and industry, we have a responsibility to do our part in providing for those that perpetuate our mission by sustaining our programming so we can continue our mission to contribute to youth development, historic preservation and the livelihood of farmers in New England and beyond.

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About The Big E

The Big E is the only multi-state fair in North America, celebrating the rich history, culture and traditions of the six New England states. As the principal event of Eastern States Exposition, The Big E presents the finest in agriculture, innovative, commercial, industrial and artistic developments, and the highest caliber of varied entertainment to the people of the United States for more than a century. The 17-day event has grown and become the largest event on the East Coast, recognized as the fourth largest fair in North America by its recent record annual attendance of 1.6 million fairgoers and counting. Head to TheBigE.com or follow us on social media to see what all the buzz is about.

Find a photo gallery from food donations HERE.