



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Senator Helming Recognizes Hunger Action Month With Foodlink Tour

JONATHAN MONFILETTO - 315-568-9816 September 25, 2017



Senator Pamela A. Helming (R,C,I-Canandaigua) visited the Foodlink regional food hub in Rochester on Friday, Sept. 22 as part of her Hunger Action Month outreach during September. Foodlink's 10-county territory includes Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, and Seneca counties, and the regional food hub partners with more than 60 shelters, pantries, soup kitchens, backpack programs, daycare centers, group homes, adult day cares, and other agencies throughout the 54<sup>th</sup> District. Senator Helming's tour comes after Foodlink Chief Programs Officer Mitch Gruber spoke at the Food Access and Health in Rural NY Roundtable

that she hosted in July in which Gruber spoke about the food hub's goal of becoming more involved in rural communities.

As part of the tour, Senator Helming met with Foodlink Director of Community Engagement Heather Newton, Communications Manager Mark Dwyer, and Member Services Manager Morgan McKenzie. She saw the food preparation, distribution, and storage processes that Foodlink uses to deliver 4,000 nutritious meals a day to children throughout its coverage area and 19 million pounds of healthy food annually to its partner agencies. Of particular interest to Senator Helming was Foodlink's apple-slicing operation in which workers wash, slice, sort, and package more than 50,000 pounds of apples annually through a special machine in its community kitchen. Most of the apples come from Wayne County, and they are sold to distributors to provide healthy meal options for children in schools across the area and generate income to support Foodlink's other programs. Senator Helming also learned about Foodlink's curbside markets, which sells fresh produce out of a delivery truck in communities around its area and focuses on inner-city neighborhoods and rural towns that experience issues with food access. After asking about the possibility of bringing that service to even more communities, particularly in her rural district, she learned that Foodlink is always trying to expand its services and serve more families.

"There are 123,600 people and nearly one in five children in Monroe, Wayne, Ontario, and Seneca counties who are considered food insecure, meaning they do not have access to enough nutritious food to lead a healthy life. That is an astounding figure in itself, but it is even more alarming when you consider that the total population of the 54<sup>th</sup> District is a little less than 300,000 people. That is why it is critical to raise awareness of this issue and support

organizations like Foodlink and its partner agencies who strive to ensure that all of our residents can access fresh produce and other healthy foods. It was great to recognize Hunger Action Month with Heather, Mark, and Morgan, but I know that the real work lays in spreading awareness of food access issues and advocating for resources so that Foodlink and similar organizations can fulfill their mission. I look forward to working with my colleagues to address the problem of hunger across our state,” Senator Helming said.

*Senator Helming represents the 54<sup>th</sup> Senate District, which consists of Seneca and Wayne Counties, parts of Cayuga and Ontario Counties, and the towns of Lansing and Webster. For more information, please visit Senator Helming’s [website](#), or follow @SenatorHelming on Facebook or Twitter.*

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