

# Ways to Make a Difference in Your Community

Thank you for your interest in learning more about how you can address hunger and food insecurity in your community and beyond. The COVID-19 pandemic made these issues even more acute across the nation and around the world.

As of March 2021, Feeding America projected that 42 million American's, including 13 million children, may be faced with food insecurity in 2021.

Many Americans most deeply impacted by COVID-19, including those who were experiencing or at high risk of experiencing food insecurity before the pandemic's start, are facing even more significant challenges today. Hunger and food insecurity have no limits and touch every community, including your own.

**Below are some resources that can help you stay connected to the causes of hunger and food insecurity 365 days a year.** Whether it's by engaging in conversations about these issues, volunteering with a local organization, or reducing food waste in our own life, we hope you will find this information useful.

Drexel Alumni would like to thank the [Lindy Center for Civic Engagement](#) and the [Center for Hunger-Free Communities](#) for making this guide possible. Additionally, gratitude is given to the [Drexel Food Lab](#) for providing us with ways to utilize food waste and the recipes you will find below.

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# CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS

It might seem simple, but an important way that you can get involved and address hunger and food insecurity is by engaging in conversations with your friends and family, children included! It's never too early to become an advocate.

Below are a few articles and links designed to assist you in talking to your kids about hunger and encouraging them to get involved.

[feedingamerica.org/take-action/talk-about-hunger](https://feedingamerica.org/take-action/talk-about-hunger)

[littlegreenthumbs.org/2018/04/17/hunger-and-food-security-local-and-global](https://littlegreenthumbs.org/2018/04/17/hunger-and-food-security-local-and-global)

[doinggoodtogether.org/dgt-newsletter/food-insecurity-in-us](https://doinggoodtogether.org/dgt-newsletter/food-insecurity-in-us)

## PHILADELPHIA-AREA ORGANIZATIONS

**Fooding Forward** connects the dots between people who have food that might often go to waste with those who need food. The organization works with food partners ranging from restaurants and hotels to corporations and farms, to reduce food waste and fight food insecurity simultaneously. [foodingforward.com](https://foodingforward.com)

**Manna** provides medically tailored food and nutrition education to those with serious health conditions. [mannapa.org](https://mannapa.org)

**Philabundance** rescues and distributes food to 90,000 people weekly in nine counties in PA and NJ. 30 percent of those served by Philabundance are children and 16 percent are seniors. Individuals with disabilities, single parents, veterans and students are also touched by the organization's support. Find a member organization in your area: [philabundance.org](https://philabundance.org)

**Share Food** delivers food to one million people in Philadelphia every month. [sharefoodprogram.org](https://sharefoodprogram.org)

**Sharing Excess**, founded by **Evan Ehlers '19**, harnesses the power of college students and community members to distribute food surplus to a network of organizations and food banks in partnership with grocery stores, restaurants, and farmers. [sharingexcess.com](https://sharingexcess.com)

**Small Things** has a very simple goal: to feed some of Philadelphia's hungriest families by supporting local churches and organizations and providing them with the resources to support their communities and connect to their neighbors in a tangible way. The organization believes that small things like packing a box, delivering a meal, or taking time to talk and get to know another person is how change happens. [smallthingsphilly.org](https://smallthingsphilly.org)

**Sunday Breakfast Rescue Mission**, the second oldest rescue mission in the country, serves those experiencing homelessness in Philadelphia, 365 days of the year. [sundaybreakfast.org](https://sundaybreakfast.org)

**Sunday Love Project** focuses on feeding, clothing, and caring for the housing and food insecure while building a sense of community and belonging for those in need — all powered by love. [sundaylove.org](https://sundaylove.org)

**The West Philadelphia Bunny Hop** — established in response to the COVID-19 pandemic — is a community driven mutual aid network. Bunny Hop partners with the local community to distribute produce, prepared foods and other necessities every week. [bunnyhopphl.com](https://bunnyhopphl.com)

## NATIONAL & INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

**Awareness Inc.**, founded by **Patrick Williams '04**, provides food and clothing to those in need from the Dallas/Fort Worth area. The organization was created to give low-income residents an opportunity to thrive. [ourawareness.org](https://ourawareness.org)

**Family Assistance Ministries (FAM)** is a faith-based charitable nonprofit organization assisting those in need in Orange County, CA with resources for food, shelter, and personalized supportive counsel and aid, helping clients bridge the gap from dependency to self-sufficiency. FAM has provided a growing continuum of services in response to the changing needs of those at-risk in their community and places heavy focus on prevention efforts. [family-assistance.org](https://family-assistance.org)

**Feeding America** is the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization. Learn more about hunger, find a food bank in your area, and learn how you can become an advocate in your community. [feedingamerica.org](https://feedingamerica.org)

**Food Not Bombs** is a volunteer-led movement recovering food that would otherwise be discarded. The organization provides free vegan and vegetarian meals to those facing hunger in more than 1,000 cities in 65 countries in protest to war, poverty, and destruction of the environment. [foodnotbombs.net](https://foodnotbombs.net)

**No Kid Hungry** focuses on fighting childhood hunger in America. [nokidhungry.org](https://nokidhungry.org)

**North Texas Food Bank (NTFB)** is a top-ranked nonprofit hunger-relief organization operating a state-of-the-art volunteer and distribution center in Plano, TX. In 2020, the Food Bank worked hard in partnership with member agencies from their Feeding Network to provide access to more than 97 million nutritious meals across a diverse 13-county service area, exceeding their goal by five years to provide access to 92 million annual meals by 2025. NTFB works to increase food distribution efforts and bridge the hunger gap for children, seniors, and families in North Texas. [ntfb.org](https://ntfb.org)

**World Vision** knows that one in eight people in developing countries do not have enough to eat. The organization partners with communities to address immediate food needs but also to assist in growing sustainable food to power the future. [worldvision.org/our-work/hunger-food-security](https://worldvision.org/our-work/hunger-food-security)

# RECIPES

[The Drexel Food Lab](#) believes that one significant way of addressing hunger and food insecurity is to reduce food waste in our own homes. 40 percent of all food in America is wasted while much of it is still perfectly viable for consumption. Drexel students developed recipes that utilize leftovers and potential food waste. **Full recipes can be found at the end of this guide.**

If you are interested in putting together a plan to reduce food waste in your own home, visit [savethefood.com](https://savethefood.com)

## MAKING AN IMPACT THROUGH DREXEL

Drexel University and its partners work towards fighting hunger and food insecurity in a variety of ways.

From the Food Lab's focus on sustainability to the Center for Hunger-Free Communities and its scientifically tested solutions to the challenges of hunger and economic insecurity, learn how you can address these issues by supporting Drexel.

**[The Alumni Turkey Project](#)** has served as the University's longest-running alumni tradition for nearly 50 years. Made possible by generous donors, all proceeds are used to provide turkeys and holiday sides to community organizations within the greater Philadelphia area. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Turkey Project provided a record-breaking number of holiday meals. In 2021, the Turkey Project expanded its reach to also help communities in Texas and California.  
[drexel.edu/alumni/stay-connected/events/turkey-project](https://drexel.edu/alumni/stay-connected/events/turkey-project)

**[Center for Hunger-Free Communities](#)** is a community-engaged research and advocacy center of Drexel University's Dornsife School of Public Health in Philadelphia. The Center offers multi-faceted research and action with the goal of developing innovative, empirically tested solutions to fighting hunger in all forms through the engagement of families, researchers, policymakers, and community leaders.  
[drexel.edu/hunger-free-center](https://drexel.edu/hunger-free-center)

**[The Drexel Food Lab](#)**, founded on the principles of sustainability, health promotion and food access, is open to all Drexel students who want to learn about food product development and focus on solving real-world problems.  
[drexel.edu/cnhp/research/centers/foodbionutritioncore/Drexel-Food-Lab/](https://drexel.edu/cnhp/research/centers/foodbionutritioncore/Drexel-Food-Lab/)

**[The Lindy Center for Civic Engagement](#)** focuses around four interconnected concepts: community-based learning, student civic leadership, community partnerships, and volunteerism. The Lindy Center is part of Drexel University's role as a positive contributor to the quality of life in the region. They work to develop community partnerships so that every Drexel student will recognize the benefits of public service to their education, their career, and to society.  
[drexel.edu/lindycenter](https://drexel.edu/lindycenter)

Drexel also understands that hunger and food insecurity deeply impact college students across the nation. The University is committed to helping provide healthy meals to students and reducing food insecurity among members of the community. The COVID-19 pandemic has made access to healthy meals that much more difficult. Here are a few more ways you can make an impact:

#### **Mario's Market (The Student Food Pantry)**

As a part of the new Feed A Dragon program, Drexel's first on-campus food pantry provides nonperishable food items to any student in need.

#### **Student Meal Swipe Donation Program**

This program gives students facing food insecurity the ability to swipe into the dining hall without a meal plan.

#### **Emergency Fund for Families at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children (SCHC)**

SCHC has developed the Hunger-Free Healthcare Model via multiple innovative initiatives over the past five years in order to help combat food insecurity in the community. St. Christopher's Hospital for Children is situated in an area where children and families have experienced food insecurity. The Hunger-Free Healthcare model enables providers to SPEAC for children/families by:

S-screening for food insecurity and other social determinants of health

P-providing resources for families

E-educating staff/providers/community

A-advocating for patients and families

C-caring for patients in traditional and innovative ways (e.g. creating multidisciplinary teams (Grow Team) to evaluate and treat children with failure to thrive).

Through the Emergency Fund for Families at St. Christopher's Hospital for Children, basic needs, including groceries, are given to patient families who live in poverty and are particularly vulnerable to the health and economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

To learn more about ways to get involved and make a difference, visit our website: [giving.drexel.edu](https://giving.drexel.edu)

## LONG-TERM IMPACT ON FOOD INSECURITY

Most charitable organizations addressing hunger focus on the immediate needs of people experiencing food insecurity by offering emergency meals and food products directly to those in need. However, to make a long-term impact and effectively eradicate hunger, research and advocacy must take place to address the root causes of food insecurity, which share many of the same root causes of poverty in general, including:

- ◆ Lack of access to living-wage employment
- ◆ Inconsistent access to healthy food in all neighborhoods
- ◆ Increased food costs
- ◆ Increased cost of living including [housing](#), [childcare](#), utilities, healthcare, and other basic needs
- ◆ Inadequate public assistance benefits
- ◆ Barriers to applying for and receiving public assistance
- ◆ Lack of individual savings for emergencies
- ◆ [Racism and discrimination](#)

The challenge in addressing food insecurity is that many of the root causes are highly interconnected and complicated. To support the long-term efforts in eradicating hunger, major policy and cultural changes need to take place. In order to do this, political action is necessary. All citizens can support developing a more food secure nation by learning more about the issue of food insecurity and potential solutions and by contacting their political leaders to demand they push forward legislation to enact those necessary changes. See the below for a list of policy topic areas that support food security.

**In order to address food insecurity long term, we must:**

- ◆ Declare access to healthy food a [basic right](#)
- ◆ Embrace [food sovereignty](#) and [strengthen local food systems](#) to increase access to healthy food and reduce costs
- ◆ Implement [basic universal income](#)
- ◆ Demand living wage income policies at a city, state and national level
- ◆ Implement [universal health care](#) and embrace a “[food as medicine](#)” approach
- ◆ Continue to increase SNAP benefits to meet the [average cost of food](#) as outlined in the Thrifty Food Plan
- ◆ Increase [TANF cash grant allotments](#) to meet cost of living increases
- ◆ Exercise the right to vote, particularly for policies that support health and racial equity as well as economic justice
- ◆ Eliminate policies that reinforce the “[cliff effect](#)” (families removed from public benefits as soon as they begin to develop small savings or receive a small boost in income) and transition to a “sloped” approach to transition families off public assistance benefits
- ◆ Ensure access to [affordable housing](#) in the community and expand [home ownership and foreclosure prevention](#) programs for low-income families
- ◆ Make higher education more affordable and address growing burden of [student loan debt](#)
- ◆ Expand access to free childcare for working families
- ◆ Address racism and discrimination in public services and employment

If you are interested in learning more about food sovereignty and local food systems, the Philadelphia Food Policy Advisory Council is a great place to start. The Council connects Philadelphians and our local government to create a more just food system — where all people have the power to access, own and control our food, land, and labor. Working towards a more egalitarian food system, the Council envisions that all Philadelphia residents can access and afford healthy, sustainable, culturally appropriate, local, and fair food. [phillyfpac.org](http://phillyfpac.org)

# DREXEL FOOD LAB RECIPES

## LEFTOVER CORNBREAD SQUASH CASSEROLE



- ◆ 4 cups roasted squash of your choice, cubed
- ◆ 1.5 cups onions, chopped
- ◆ 2 cups cornbread (or vegan cornbread)
- ◆ 2 cups millet
- ◆ 4 oz + 4 oz cheddar cheese (or vegan cheese)
- ◆ 1 cup nutritional yeast
- ◆ 1 + 1 cup crispy onions
- ◆ 1.5 cup vegetable broth
- ◆ 4 gloves of garlic, minced
- ◆ 1 tsp thyme
- ◆ 1 tsp chili pepper
- ◆ Salt and pepper to taste
- ◆ Parsley to garnish
- ◆ Dash of olive oil

### Directions:

1. Break leftover cornbread into crumbs.
2. Mix leftover squash, cornbread, onions, cheddar cheese, millet, nutritional yeast, garlic, thyme, chili pepper, and olive oil together. Add vegetable broth and let sit for 15 minutes or more.
3. Add 1 cup crispy onions into squash/cornbread mix. Pour into a casserole dish. Salt and pepper to taste.
4. Bake for 45 minutes at 350°F.
5. Half-way through baking, take casserole out and top with remaining cheese and crispy onions.
6. Garnish with parsley and enjoy!

## VEGETABLE SCRAP STOCK



- ◆ 4-6 quarts of water gallon size bag of vegetable scraps, kept in freezer
- ◆ Herbs (rosemary, sage, thyme, etc.)
- ◆ Leftover chicken bones (optional)

### Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients in a large pot.
2. Bring to a low boil, then reduce the heat to the lowest setting and cook for 5-8 hours.
3. Strain the scraps from the broth.
4. Store in the fridge or freezer.



## ROAST SQUASH SEEDS



- ◆ Seeds from a squash (about 1 cup)
- ◆ Salt, to taste
- ◆ Pepper, to taste

### Directions:

1. Soak seeds in room temperature water to help remove the squash pulp.
2. Soak seeds further, for about 30 minutes-1 hour.
3. Strain the seeds.
4. Dry the seeds on a towel.
5. Season with salt and pepper.
6. Bake at 400 for 15 minutes until dry and lightly toasted.
7. If the seeds aren't crunchy, turn the oven off and let the seeds dry out in the oven for 15 minutes further.

## POTATO SKIN CRISPS



- ◆ 4 large Idaho potatoes
- ◆ 1 Tablespoon olive oil
- ◆ 1/4 teaspoon salt

- ◆ 1/8 teaspoon smoked paprika
- ◆ 1/8 teaspoon dried parsley

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425°F.
2. Thoroughly wash the potatoes and make sure all dirt is scrubbed off.
3. Peel the potatoes trying to keep the skin in larger pieces.
4. Toss the peels with olive oil and salt and layout in a single layer on a baking sheet.
5. Sprinkle the top with paprika and parsley.
6. Bake for 15 – 20 minutes, until crisp.
7. Serve as potato chips with dip, on a salad to add some crunch, add to the top of green bean casserole, or just eat as snack.