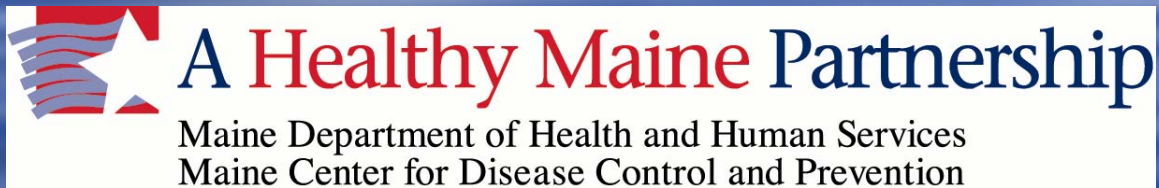


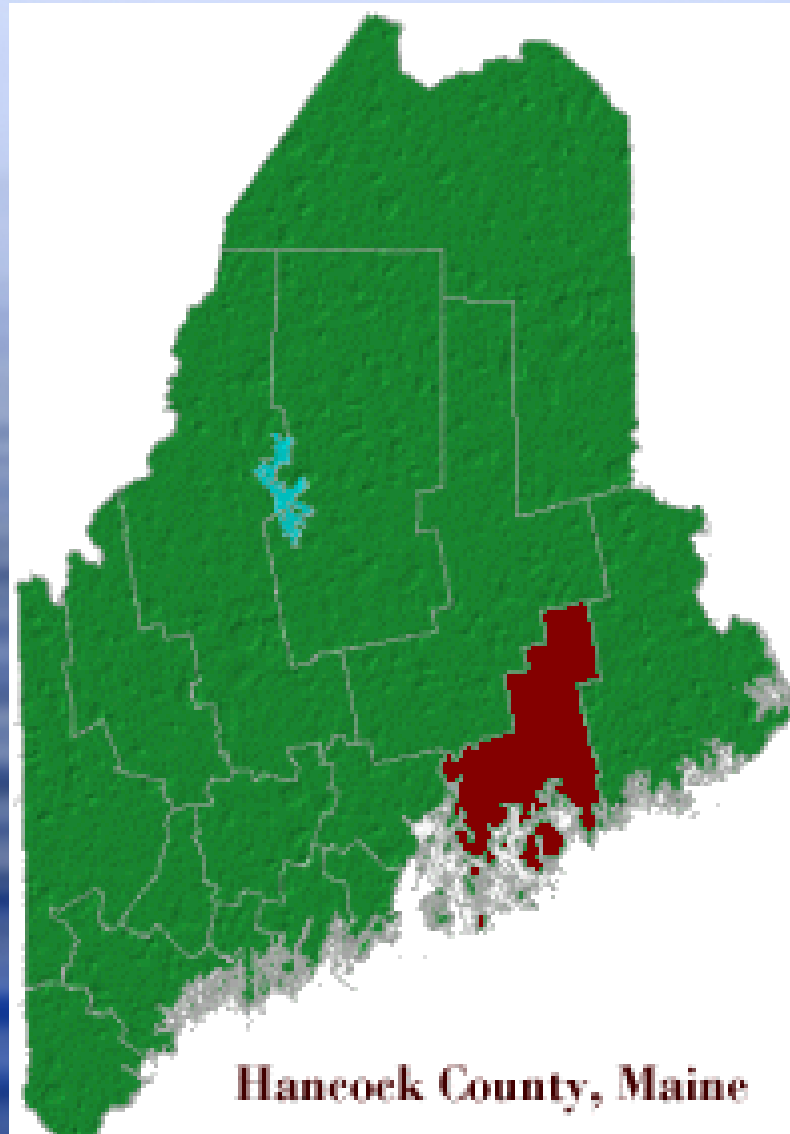
# Building a Food Pantry Network to Improve Food Systems in a Rural Coastal Region

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- ◆ Our Public Health Partners
- ◆ Welcome to Hancock County, Maine!
- ◆ Food Pantry Network :
  - ◆ Evolution
  - ◆ Lessons Learned
  - ◆ Shared Accomplishments
- ◆ Beyond the Pantry
  - ◆ Moving from Individual to Community Food Security
- ◆ Parting Thoughts





**Hancock County, Maine**

# Children of the Dawn...



Photo Courtesy Bryan Gagner

Rural & Coastal  
Disparities: Some Have,  
Some Have Not.



Bar Harbor Housing:  
Two Worlds ½ Mile &  
Millions of Dollars Apart

# Making Ends Meet

Livable Wage	$\geq$	\$46,030
Federal Poverty Level	$\leq$	<u>\$18,850</u>
difference	=	\$27,180

Approximately half of Hancock County families do not earn a livable wage

Federal Poverty Level is not a reliable indicator of food security

# Increasing Food Insecurity?

- ◆ Food stamp participation increased dramatically in Hancock County, up 60.1% between 2002 and 2005, compared with an increase of 49% across Maine
- ◆ Food pantries around the state, and in Hancock County, report a trend of increased numbers of clients -- while food supplies grow more limited
- ◆ JAMA Oct 24/31, 2007; Food Insecurity Harms Health. 12.6 Million (11%) of US population Food Insecure at times during 2005.



# Origins of the Food Pantry Network

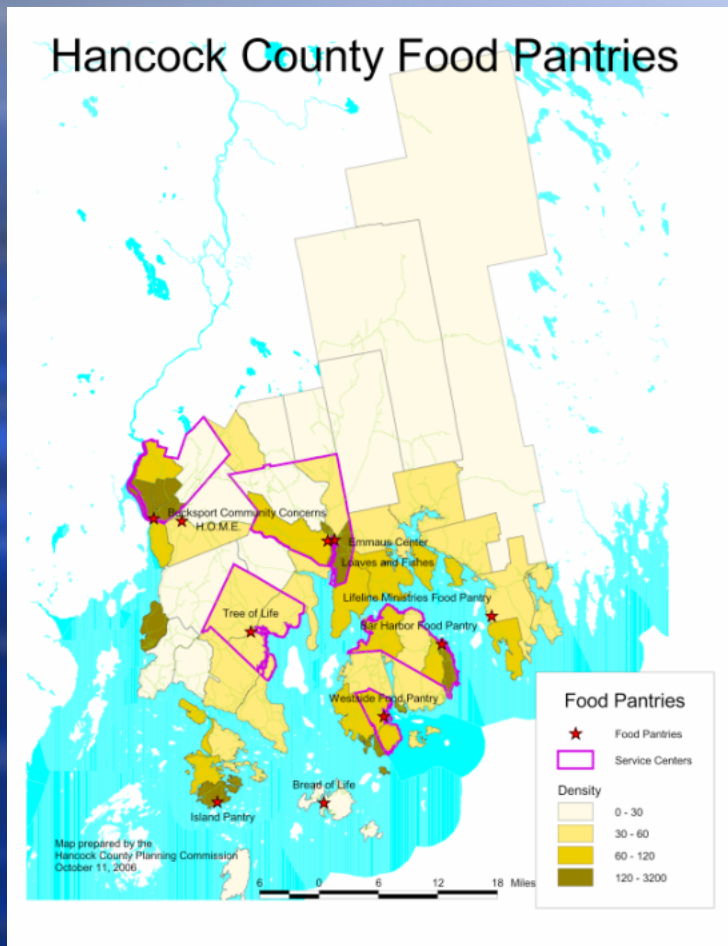
- ◆ 2002 Q?: How interested were food pantries in working with us to improve nutrition?

A: Not very!

- ◆ Re-think our approach:

2003 Q?: What services do you provide, to whom, and what's keeping you from serving your clients well ?

# What We Learned



- ◆ 12 food pantries
- ◆ Serve 900+ households / month
- ◆ Very limited supply of fruit and vegetables

# What We Learned



- ◆ Transportation is a barrier for some rural pantries
- ◆ Lack of information about other resources including other food pantries
- ◆ Potential opportunities for collaboration - including distribution of USDA commodities

# Hancock County Food Pantry Network



# Collective Advocacy

'Low Hanging Fruit'

70,000 lbs of additional USDA commodities delivered



# Food Pantry Network Timeline

**2003**  
Dialogue  
Interviews



TA and Professional  
Development

**70,000 lbs** USDA  
Commodities  
Distributed

**2006** Client Interviews and  
Food Security Research



Community Supported Agriculture

**2007-2008**  
Community  
Nutrition  
Action Plans

**2004 --**  
Food  
Pantry  
Network  
Begins

Plant-A-Row  
Program –  
**600 lbs**  
Vegetables

Cooperative Ordering

Legislative Advocacy

**2002** Failed  
Attempt to Partner  
with Food Pantries



# Plant-a-Row Program Implemented

600 lbs of fresh vegetables distributed to pantries in first year



# Community Supported Agriculture

Pantry purchases share of vegetables from local farm





# Cooperative Ordering



# Beyond the Food Pantry Network



# Local Stories

2006 Interviews with 71 food pantry client households

Published: Food for Thought, Food for Action report

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



2007 - 2008

# From Individual Food Assistance to Community Food Security

Community Nutrition Action Plans

Legislative Advocacy



# Parting Thoughts



- ◆ Meet partners where they are (Ask & listen first)
- ◆ Public Health has a primary role in convening
- ◆ Peer Support Networks can be powerful agents of change

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