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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Harold Alfond Foundation Grants \$1M to Good Shepherd Food Bank for COVID-19 Response

Auburn, ME – The Harold Alfond Foundation has awarded Good Shepherd Food Bank, Maine’s largest hunger-relief organization, a \$1,000,000 grant to support hunger relief efforts that are underway across the state of Maine in the face of the COVID-19 crisis.

Good Shepherd Food Bank, a member of the Feeding America network, is working with its partner food pantries, meal sites, shelters and schools across the state to meet the needs of Mainers who are struggling to provide enough food for their families.

“The impacts of COVID-19 in Maine have created a perfect storm for our food bank and our community hunger-relief partners,” said Good Shepherd Food Bank President Kristen Miale. “Our food supply is down, our operational processes have been upended by social distancing, and the need is growing as more Mainers are facing unemployment and other challenges. Weighing all of these factors, we estimate our expenses related to the COVID-19 response will exceed \$6M over a six-month period.”

“The grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation comes at a perfect time, and we are so grateful for the Foundation’s foresight and generosity,” continues Miale. “One hundred percent of this funding will be deployed across the state in the form of food and funds for our partner hunger-relief agencies.”

“We all know that access to healthy food is critical for good health, learning, and growing, and that many Mainers are struggling to put food on the table at this unprecedented time,” said Greg Powell, chairman of the Harold Alfond Foundation. “The innovation and teamwork at Good Shepherd Food Bank and across the charitable food network in Maine is as inspiring as it is in need of support. So, the Foundation is honored to help provide that support.”

Good Shepherd Food Bank annually distributes 25 million meals per year, about 70 percent of which is donated food from retailers. In these times when consumers are stocking up on supplies and eating at home instead of dining out, the Food Bank expects retail donations to diminish substantially and is

actively purchasing nutritious shelf-stable food at wholesale prices to make up for the difference. Crops like potatoes and apples are also being purchased from Maine farmers.

In the first month of its COVID-19 response, the Food Bank has purchased more than two million dollars' worth of food, which is nearly double what the organization spends on shelf-stable purchased food in an entire year.

While all of the purchased food is going out to food pantries and other hunger-relief partners at no cost, Good Shepherd Food Bank knows that its community partners need more support.

"We are passing on a portion of the grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation directly to our statewide partners who are on the frontlines of fighting hunger," said Miale. "Based on survey results, we know our pantries are experiencing increased expenses for labor, cleaning supplies, and gas for food deliveries. These community partners have a long road ahead as Maine recovers from this crisis, and we hope that this flexible support will help them continue to meet the needs of our most vulnerable neighbors."

A recent survey conducted by Good Shepherd Food Bank indicated that 90 percent of the food pantries it serves are seeing an increase in people seeking help.

"We just don't know what the tail end of this crisis looks like," speculated Miale. "We are estimating that Maine's food insecurity rate could grow by as much as 39 percent in 2020, but how long will that last? And when might our traditional retail donations come back? There are many variables and we're responding to the changing information daily. We're innovating every day."

"We have been buoyed over the past few weeks by the incredible generosity of our philanthropic supporters, including this most generous grant from the Harold Alfond Foundation," continued Miale. "Mainers are helping Mainers. All of us are working together—that's how we'll make it through this."

About Good Shepherd Food Bank

As the largest hunger-relief organization in Maine, Good Shepherd Food Bank provides for Mainers facing hunger by distributing nutritious food to more than 500 partner agencies across the state, including food pantries, meal sites, schools, and senior programs. Together with its network, the Food Bank leads a statewide effort to combat the root causes of hunger by engaging in advocacy, nutrition education, and strategic partnerships. In 2019, the Food Bank distributed more than 25 million meals to families, children, and seniors in need throughout Maine.

About the Harold Alfond Foundation

The Harold Alfond Foundation honors and promotes the values of its founder through transformative investments for the benefit of Maine in education, health care, and youth and community development. To learn more about the Foundation, please visit www.haroldalfondfoundation.org.