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—Format.....Opinions
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42545

Notes from editor (not for publication):

Very little changed. So well written. Thanks so much, Robyn.

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

Why do so many people rely on SNAP?

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

This isn't about laziness or 'handouts.' It's a reflection of
a deeper reality.

####END SUBHED####

TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

DURING THE Great Depression, hunger was visible.
People stood in long breadlines, and the government began
buying surplus food from farmers to feed struggling families —
the first steps toward what we now call SNAP.
As someone who runs a modern day breadline, I have a
few thoughts and questions.

11 Over 40 million Americans — about 12% of our
12 population — rely on SNAP benefits each month. That’s one in
13 eight people you pass in the grocery store. One in eight children
14 in our schools. One in eight families trying to make ends meet.

15 * * *

16 THIS ISN’T ABOUT laziness or “handouts.” It’s a reflection
17 of a deeper reality — where the cost of living has outpaced
18 wages, where housing swallows half a paycheck, and where even
19 full-time workers can’t always afford a full cart of groceries.

20 SNAP isn’t just a safety net. It’s a mirror showing us how
21 many are walking a financial tightrope in what some are calling a
22 Silent Depression.

23 And 17% of all Americans use a food bank to help put
24 food on the table. Many of them unable to qualify for SNAP
25 benefits but still need help. Many are retired seniors or veterans,
26 but mostly they are people just trying to feed their families.

27 * * *

28 SO ONE OF my questions is, “Why are so many on
29 SNAP?”

30 And “why are so many working class families still
31 hungry?”

32 Americans is in a depression, and no one is talking about
33 it .

34 The Great Depression taught us that community and
35 compassion can get us through the hardest seasons.

36 Maybe it’s time to remember that again.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

37 **ROBYN STIRES** is the director of Mercy Ministries Food
38 Pantry at Agape Christian Fellowship in Brattleboro, where she
39 has run the program for the past 12 years. She also hosts a
40 podcast, “Blooming in a Cage.”

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

41 #####BEGIN MAXISSUE#####
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LINKS:

42 #####BEGIN LINKS#####
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VIDEO:

43 #####BEGIN VIDEO#####
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LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

44 #####BEGIN LOGLINE#####
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