

Zero Waste, Full Plates

“Turning Surplus into Sustenance”

**A PROJECT BY:
VAISHNAVI KHOT**



Who Am I?



President of YPSTEM

Name: Vaishnavi Khot

Education: Junior at WWPHS South



Dance
(specifically
Bollywood)



Chief Operating Officer
(COO) of Mission Impact



ONE Project Scholar 24-25

Helene Cody Scholar
25-26



JV Captain of
Soccer

My Project Inspiration

Every day, thousands of pounds of food are wasted while families go hungry.

I wanted to create a project that would bridge food waste and hunger relief.

Reduce costs and increase profitability by the end of the year.



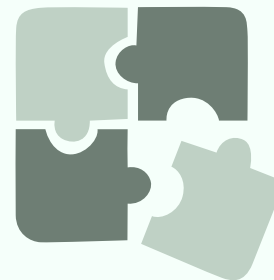
Starting From Scratch



Reached out to **numerous restaurants, hotels, and food shelters** in hopes of recovering food.



Researched the **Good Samaritan Food Donation Act** and state food safety laws.



Faced many challenges: liability concerns, limited responses, and logistics.



It felt impossible to make impact **alone**, until I found Share My Meals.



SMM's mission: rescue surplus food from restaurants, deliver it directly to families in need.

Their purpose aligned exactly with mine, a **passion project** come to life.

Connected with **Laure Verset**, who guided me in shaping an **impactful plan**.

Together, we designed a structured journey where I could contribute to both **research** and **hands-on volunteering**.



My Pivot & Partnership:

Finding Share My Meals (SMM)



About Share My Meals: Who They Are



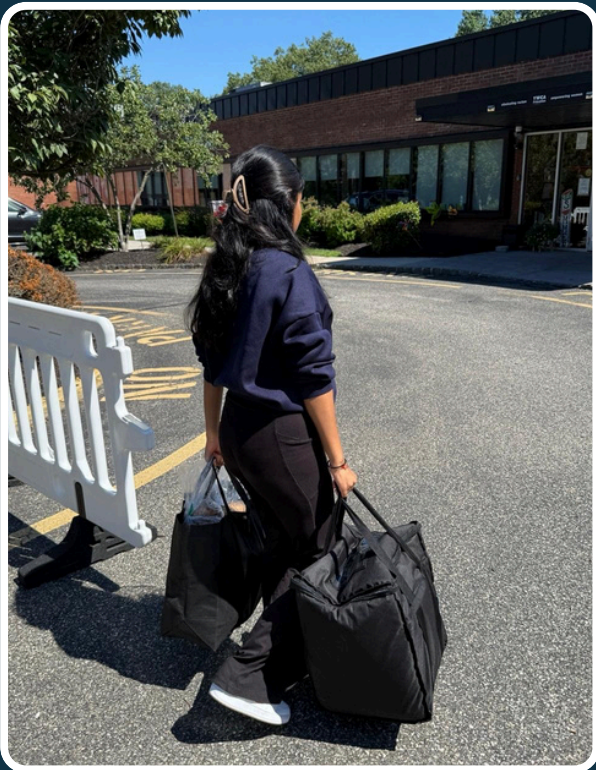
- Nonprofit organization tackling food waste and hunger simultaneously.
- Works with restaurants, corporations, and schools to recover food.
- Ensures meals are safe, fresh, and delivered to vulnerable families.



Three Key Parts of My Work

Groundwork

Volunteered in deliveries → directly contributed to families receiving meals.



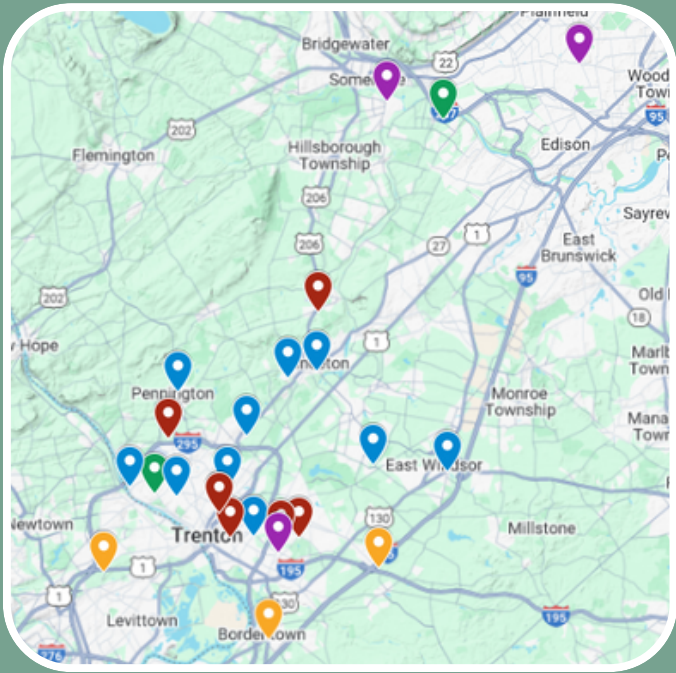
Buffet/Restaurant Research

Investigated 20 restaurants, hotels, and corporate cafés → documented food safety and surplus potential.

	Hot-Held? (Y/N)	Sneeze Guard? (Y/N)	Notes	Location
Indian Restaurant	Yes	No	Buffet dishes are closed lidded, need to be manually opened by eak	Jhopri, 6 Market Street # 904, Plainsboro
Indian Restaurant	Yes	No, only for salad bar	Open buffet dishes	Crown of India, 660 Plainsboro Rd, Plains
Asian/Seafood	No	Partial	Primarily Seafood	Kam Buffet & Kam Cajun Seafood Restau
Indian Restaurant	Yes	No	Very popular for catering and buffets	Rasoi II Restaurant, 1567 Oak Tree Rd, W
Pakistani/Halal	Yes	No	N/A	Zara's Restaurant, 540 Lawrence Square E
Indian Restaurant	Yes	Yes	Full buffet line with proper sneeze guard above food, its in PA, but c	Indian Garden, 676 Stony Hill Rd, Yardley,
Chinese	Yes	Yes	Small restaurant, 10 mins away from TSK	East China Restaurant, 833 W Trenton Av
Chinese	Yes	Yes	Seafood, large buffet	101 Marketplace Blvd Trenton, NJ 08691
Asian and Cajun	Yes	Yes	buffet restaurant, seafood	635 S. Clinton Ave, Trenton, NJ
Hotel	No	Yes	Small Hotel, 2 star	Comfort Inn Bordentown near NJ Turnpike
Hotel	No	Yes	Breakfast buffet with hot items	153 West Manor Way, Robbinsville, NJ 08
Corporate cafeteria	Yes	Yes	There are 4 types of food sources: The Capitol Café, Jazzman's Caf	750 Brunswick Ave, Trenton, NJ 08638
University	Yes	Yes	Numerous dining locations around Princeton university: https://dini	Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544
Restaurant	Yes	Yes	Famous for seafood	1051 Whitehorse Mercerville Rd, Hamilton
Restaurant	Yes	Yes	Asian fusion buffet	126 N Main St, Manville, NJ 08835
Restaurant	Yes	Yes	Mixed cuisine buffet with steam trays	690 Oak Tree Ave, South Plainfield, NJ
Restaurant	Yes	Yes	A well maintained hotel, some hot hold, most sneeze guards	3101 West Cabot Blvd, Langhorne

Expansion Research

Created a ranked map of 25 potential Trenton donors (schools, hospitals, corporations) → foundation for 2026 expansion.



Community Impact:

My efforts contributed to sustainable, long-term impact, not just short-term service.

Direct Impact

Families received fresh meals through my volunteer deliveries.

Research Impact

Provided valuable data to guide SMM in approaching restaurants and ensuring food safety.



Long-Term Impact

Expansion research = a roadmap for feeding more families in Trenton in coming years.





To whom it might concern,

This letter certifies Vaishnavi Khot's successful completion of a research and service project with Share My Meals. From the moment she enquired about an opportunity, until the timely submission of this project, she demonstrated outstanding initiative, reliability, and a deep commitment to social impact through her thoughtful and thorough work.

Her contributions included a thorough research on local buffet operations, where she explored the practices of approximately 20 local food establishments, including restaurants, hotels, and corporate campuses. Her mission was to assess and report on their handling of buffet-style food, hot-holding equipment, and food safety infrastructure. This research will support future initiatives aimed at safely recovering prepared meals that would otherwise go to waste.

The second part of the project consisted of supporting Share My Meals' 2026 expansion. As part of our long-term vision for growth, she conducted a targeted analysis of potential food donor organizations across the Trenton area, where the demand for our delivery program is high but we severely lack food donors. She developed a comprehensive database categorizing prospects by type and donation potential, and created a detailed interactive map to help visualize and prioritize outreach efforts.

Her dedication, analytical skill, and attention to detail have produced resources that will directly impact Share My Meals' operational planning and expansion efforts. We commend her for her thoughtful work and her role as a responsible, community-driven student.

Awarded this day, October 9, 2025.

Warm regards,

Laure Verset
Program and Advocacy Associate
laure@sharemymeals.org

120 John Street
Princeton, NJ 08542
info@sharemymeals.com
(609) 337-2415

www.sharemymeals.org

Beyond the Project

Lessons in Leadership & Service

- **Adaptability:** learning to pivot when initial plans didn't work.
- **Collaboration:** partnering with nonprofits to amplify impact.
- **Persistence:** continuing despite challenges and slow responses.
- **Leadership:** taking ownership of a project that creates lasting value.



Looking Back

Reflection and Closing



This project was more than volunteering, it was building a foundation for future hunger relief.

I am proud that my work will continue to support families beyond this year.

Not everything goes as planned, but setbacks can open new doors to even greater opportunities.

When individuals and organizations work together, the impact becomes stronger and longer-lasting than anything one person could achieve alone.

I realized that creating real community impact is never easy, but with persistence and effort, the results eventually show.



A photograph of a man in a light-colored sweater handing a bowl of food to an elderly man in a dark jacket and beanie. The image is overlaid with a green tint. The text is white and centered.

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