

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



SO WHAT ELSE, INC.

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2024

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MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As I reflect on this past year at So What Else, I'm filled with deep gratitude and renewed hope. What began as a simple idea to give back to the community has grown into a powerful movement of service, compassion, resilience, and transformation that would not have been possible without your support.

In 2024, our mission to provide youth development, emergency hunger relief, and community empowerment reached more families than ever before. Together, we distributed more than 15.5 million meals, served 2,768 youth through after-school and summer programs, and mobilized hundreds of volunteers. These aren't just numbers – They are stories of children discovering their potential, families finding stability, and neighborhoods rising together. Each meal, each program, each moment spent showing someone they matter. These are the building blocks of a brighter future.

Every food distribution, every after-school program, every moment spent showing someone they matter – that's what So What Else is all about. In every space we entered, we listened, we learned, and we showed up with love.

Our work is not just an act of service– it's a way of life. And as we look ahead, we are more committed than ever to expanding our impact, strengthening our programs, and continuing to walk alongside the communities we serve with humility and heart.

On behalf of our board, staff, volunteers, and, most importantly, the hundreds of thousands of people we serve each year, thank you. Your support fuels everything we do. I hope you'll stay close to us as we move forward together... because the best is yet to come.

With deep appreciation,



Dave Silbert
Executive Director & Co-Founder
So What Else



Dave “ Silbert

It takes a community to serve the community. The work doesn't really begin until it gets challenging. Then you know you're on to something!

2024: YEAR IN REVIEW

2024 was a remarkable year of growth for So What Else, marked by expanded program reach, strengthened community partnerships, and increased volunteer engagement. We served more youth, distributed more meals, and deepened our impact across the region, proving what's possible when compassion meets action.

In addition to our outward-facing growth, So What Else spent the year looking inward – focusing on how we measure our impact, establishing an appointment system, and improving our internal operations to better serve our community with efficiency, dignity, and care.

PEOPLE SERVED

420,000

DOLLARS RAISED

\$3.14 MILLION

VOLUNTEER HOURS

30,000

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME (OST) HOURS

400,000

LBS. OF FOOD RESCUED

15.7 MILLION

VALUE OF RESCUED FOOD*

\$30,720,000

*Feeding America has valued each pound of rescued food at \$1.92.



APPOINTMENT SYSTEM

In late 2024, So What Else implemented a new appointment-based distribution system to create a smoother, more dignified experience for the communities we serve. In previous years, our high-demand services led to overwhelming traffic congestion, sometimes backing up cars for up to two miles and causing disruptions for local residents. By establishing scheduled time slots, we significantly reduced wait times, improved traffic flow, and ensured a more organized and respectful process for both our neighbors and the hundreds of families who rely on our support each week.

The appointment system also allowed us to distribute food more equitably throughout the week, ensuring that every family, regardless of the day they came, received a more complete and nutritious package. With better control over the flow of visitors, we were able to consistently offer a balanced variety of items, including meat, dairy, legumes, fresh produce, and shelf-stable staples. This shift not only reduced food waste and logistical strain but also helped us better meet the nutritional needs of the communities we serve.

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In just four months, So What Else served more than 50,000 members of our community through 12,800 appointments.

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SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

MONTGOMERY COUNTY OFFICE OF FOOD SYSTEMS RESILIENCE

At the heart of a strong community is a resilient food system—one that ensures equitable access to nutritious food for all, regardless of income, zip code, or circumstance. In Montgomery County, the Office of Food Systems Resilience (OFSR) plays a pivotal role in shaping that vision into reality. By fostering collaboration among government agencies, nonprofit organizations, local farmers, and grassroots leaders, OFSR is working to strengthen the entire food ecosystem. Through innovative programs and strategic investments, they are tackling the root causes of food insecurity and laying the groundwork for a healthier, more sustainable future.

So What Else is proud to partner with the Office of Food Systems Resilience in advancing this vital mission. With support from OFSR's School-Based Food Assistance and Cold Storage Infrastructure Grant Programs, SWE has been able to significantly expand its emergency hunger relief programming, reaching thousands of local families and strengthening partnerships with key community centers. These resources have allowed SWE to distribute a wider variety of fresh, refrigerated, and shelf-stable foods to thousands of local families while deepening partnerships with Montgomery County Public Schools and other key community hubs.

The investment in cold storage infrastructure has been particularly transformative, enhancing SWE's capacity to safely store perishable food, reduce waste, and respond more quickly and flexibly to emerging needs in the community. With these tools in place, SWE has strengthened its ability to serve as both a reliable partner and a rapid responder during times of heightened food insecurity.

The OFSR's unwavering commitment to resilience and equity is deeply aligned with So What Else's belief that no family should ever have to go hungry. Together, we are not only addressing urgent needs—we are working to build a stronger, healthier Montgomery County where every neighbor has access to the food they need to thrive.

SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

ALICE AND EUGENE FORD FAMILY FOUNDATION

The Alice and Eugene Ford Foundation is dedicated to creating lasting change by investing in initiatives that strengthen communities and improve lives. With a deep commitment to education, health, and economic opportunity, the Foundation supports organizations that address critical needs and foster resilience in vulnerable populations.

So What Else is deeply honored to partner with the Alice and Eugene Ford Foundation in our mission to serve communities in need. The Foundation's generous, sustained support has helped us expand our youth development programs, increase access to nutritious food for families facing hardship, and provide vital resources to those who need them most. Through the Foundation's investment in our work, we can reach more children, engage more volunteers, and make a tangible difference in the lives of thousands.

MANNA FOOD CENTER

For more than four decades, Manna Food Center has been a cornerstone of food security in Montgomery County, working to eliminate hunger through food distribution, education, and advocacy. By providing fresh, nutritious food to thousands of families each year, Manna's goal is to ensure that no one in our community has to choose between paying for essentials and putting a healthy meal on the table.

As a trusted partner of So What Else, Manna plays a vital role in our hunger relief initiatives. Their partnership allows us to reach more families with nutritious food, expand our food distribution efforts, and work toward long-term solutions to food insecurity. Whether through food recovery programs, community collaborations, or direct support, Manna's impact is immeasurable. Together, we are ensuring that Montgomery County families not only have access to food today but also the resources and education needed for a food-secure future.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS



Montgomery County, MD

MoCo Youth Development serves over 440 students by offering 18 programs and 6 summer camps, keeping students safe and engaged in enriching activities such as STEM, sports, fine arts, and literacy.



Baltimore City Programs

Our Baltimore Chapter partners with organizations like *For My Kidz* and *The Food Project* to host 14 programs and 3 summer camps per year, including gardening, literacy, and career skills programs.



Team Of Stars Theater Camp

This one-of-a-kind musical theater camp hosts 5 weeks of camp, offering performing arts opportunities.



Student Leadership

The Student Board empowers 200+ teens to serve their communities throughout the year. The Student Leadership Institute engages 40 youth each summer to participate in service learning projects like community cleanups and gardening. Honoring our original mission of serving the kids, serving the community, and getting the kids we serve to serve the community.



Washington, DC

We currently host 12 programs and 12 summer camps, primarily in Ward 8. DC programs include homework help, literacy, fine arts, sports, & student service.

SO WHAT ELSE: SUPPORTING COMMUNITIES FROM THE INSIDE, OUT

Our Youth Programs serves an average of 3000 children per year through facilitating 51 total after-school programs, summer camps, youth leadership clubs, and family-friendly events. The Youth Development Programs' primary aim is to offer a safe environment, food security and academic enrichment during out-of-school time (OST).

Number of
Meals Served in
2024

30K

Number of
Youth Service Hours
in 2024

3,674

Number of Students
Served in 2024

2,768

LOVE ONE ANOTHER



Service Challenge

Inspired by the crucial need for unity and the power of giving back, So What Else, in partnership with Manna Food Center, The Farmlink Project, The Food Project, and Mentoring Through Athletics, launched the **#LoveOneAnotherChallenge** to spark a movement of love, action, and peace.

The nationwide challenge invited participants to serve in their communities, challenge others to do the same, and share their experiences on social media using the hashtag **#LoveOneAnotherChallenge**. Whether individuals choose to volunteer or donate with So What Else or one of their incredible nonprofit partners, the heart of the challenge lies in spreading kindness and engaging others in meaningful service.

The ripple effect of these acts multiplied goodwill, connected people across the country, and encouraged everyday individuals to become part of the vital work of mission-driven organizations. People got involved, came together, led with love, helped grow a more compassionate human family, and uplifted communities through collective action.

“

**THE ‘LOVE ONE ANOTHER
SERVICE CHALLENGE’
SHOWS THAT WHEN WE
LEAD WITH LOVE, EVEN THE
SMALLEST ACT OF SERVICE
CAN SPARK A RIPPLE OF
CHANGE.”**

*Dave Silbert, Executive
Director*



FIVE-POINTED FOOD ACCESS MODEL

So What Else's innovative Five-Pointed Food Access Model is designed to eliminate barriers to healthy food for low-income populations by rescuing and redistributing food to create direct, community-based access solutions. Each year, this model supports hundreds of thousands of individuals through the following five modalities:

MOBILE NEIGHBORHOOD DISTRIBUTION

Staff and volunteers deliver food weekly to 85 underserved communities through a mobile pantry system. This community-based approach ensures consistent food access in areas without a permanent pantry, including Prince George's County and Washington, D.C.

FOOD PANTRIES

So What Else operates a central food warehouse in Rockville, MD, taking more than 120 appointments per day and providing food, clothing, diapers, and essential supplies. A second location, the Baltimore Resource Center at 424 S. Pulaski Street, serves local residents twice weekly.

HOME DELIVERIES

Each week, staff and volunteers prepare and deliver pre-packaged grocery boxes to over 600 households, ensuring access for families with transportation or mobility challenges.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

More than 150 community organizations pick up recovered food from So What Else locations for redistribution, each feeding up to 250 families. We also deliver food in bulk to Montgomery County's eight food hubs, as well as multiple partners across Maryland and D.C.

OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME MEALS

So What Else serves 30,000 nutritious meals annually to students enrolled in its after-school programs and summer camps, throughout Montgomery County, Washington, D.C., and Baltimore – providing vital support to children who may otherwise go without consistent meals when school is out.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: THE FARMLINK PROJECT

In the fall of 2023, So What Else noticed something special about the produce arriving at our warehouse. Beautiful squash, juicy watermelon, crisp cucumbers, and perfectly ripe tomatoes were coming in consistently, and in large quantities. When we asked our partner where it was coming from, the answer surprised and excited us: Farmlink.

Founded in 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, The Farmlink Project began as a student-led movement to address two urgent problems: massive food waste on farms and growing lines at food banks. What started as a few college students making calls quickly grew into a national nonprofit that has now delivered over 250 million pounds of fresh produce to communities across the country, all while reducing methane emissions caused by food waste.

Through this partnership, Farmlink provides more than just access to food - they help with transportation, allowing So What Else to pick up donations it might otherwise miss. Thanks to Farmlink's logistical support, So What Else has been able to secure items like apple juice, applesauce, and quinoa, dramatically expanding the types of nutrition we can provide to our community.

At the end of 2023, thousands of pounds of apples came through our doors each week for 2-3 months straight. People from all over the region came to pick them up. "It felt like a perfect match between community need and seasonal abundance," said a So What Else team member. We continued to receive apple shipments into 2024, and while the distribution landscape has changed, the demand for fresh, healthy food remains.

Whether it's cucumbers, tomatoes, or a mountain of apples, our collaboration with The Farmlink Project helps us close the meal gap, support families, and do our part for the planet. We are deeply grateful for this growing partnership - and for what it makes possible.



PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

FINANCIALS

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2024 was a record-breaking fundraising year for So What Else. Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, the organization surpassed the \$3 million revenue mark for the first time.

The slight deficit is reflective of increased need and demand combined with the timing of year-end philanthropic support.

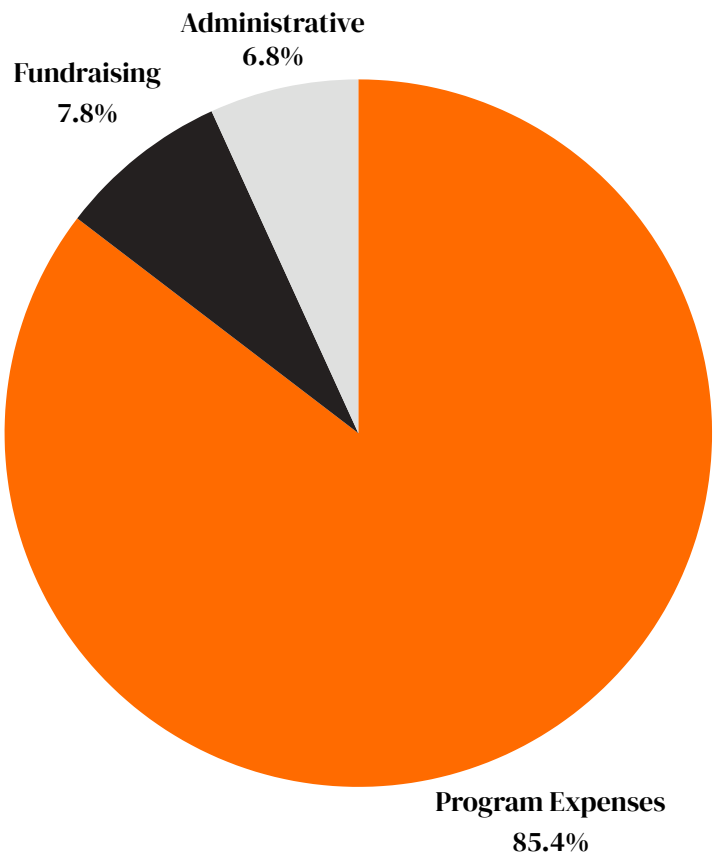
Revenues: \$3,145,151

Expenses: \$3,269,452

Net: (\$124,301)

ALLOCATION OF EXPENSES

So What Else is committed to being a good steward of donor funds and is proud to have spent more than 85% of revenues on program expenses. This far exceeds the “best practice” metrics set by Charity Navigator.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

So What Else is deeply grateful for our dedicated Board of Directors, whose leadership, vision, and unwavering support make our mission possible every day.

Brian Abramson
Brett Bernstein
Bradley Blanken
Michelle Cooper
Nicolle Davis
Jane Dunigan
Tosha Dyson
Amy Holmwood
Amy Embrey
Jimmy Fragoyannis
Bob Gordon
Barbara Guterman
Farrah Javid
Susan Loring
Ann-Marie Luciano
Michael Meers
Scott Mendelson
Gregory Minkoff
Leroy Pingho
Josh Ross
Andrew Sachs
Robert Schless
Jennifer Snyder
Emily Stephenson
Barrett Ware



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WAYS TO GIVE

Your generosity helps So What Else provide essential food, educational programs, and emergency services to children and families in need. Explore the many ways you can give and be a part of building stronger, more resilient communities.



GIVE ONLINE

[WWW.SOWHATELSE.ORG/
DONATE](http://WWW.SOWHATELSE.ORG/DONATE)



GIVE BY PHONE

240-602-0486



VOLUNTEER

[WWW.SOWHATELSE.ORG/
VOLUNTEER](http://WWW.SOWHATELSE.ORG/VOLUNTEER)



OTHER WAYS TO GIVE

PLEASE EMAIL ALLIE BONNEY, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT, FOR MORE INFORMATION ON OTHER WAYS TO GIVE: ABONNEY@SOWHATELSE.ORG

DONOR-ADVISED FUNDS (DAF)



REQUIRED MINIMUM DISTRIBUTIONS (RMD)



STOCK TRANSFERS



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