

# 20 YEARS

working as your voice for safe food



dedicated to  
**THE PEOPLE  
WHO GIVE  
MEANING TO  
OUR MISSION**

*20th Anniversary Report  
1993-2013*

This publication is dedicated to the people who give meaning to our mission.

To those who've been impacted by foodborne illness—people who've lost their lives and endured unspeakable pain and suffering. To the children, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, grandparents, friends, playmates and loved ones who've shed tears, sat by bedsides and seen lives forever changed. To our volunteer advocates, board members, staff and partners in government and industry who work tirelessly to promote food safety, bring about policy change and assist those affected.

***Your stories inspire us every day and your involvement, care, compassion and support make our life-saving work possible.***



contents

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A Special Tribute to Nancy Donley	4-5
Message from the Chair and CEO	6
About STOP	7
About Foodborne Illness	7
Lauren's Story	8
Rylee's Story	9
Diana's Story	10
Anna's Story	11
Dana's Story	12
Impact of Foodborne Illness	13
What We Do: Our Programs and Services	14-15
Timeline: 20 Years as Your Voice for Safe Food	16-17
Major Milestones Toward Safer Food	18-23
Preventing Foodborne Illness	24-25
We Need You: How You Can Help	26-27

# a special tribute to Nancy Donley

Alexander Thomas, a beautiful young boy with strawberry-kissed red hair and soft gray eyes that sparkled with a love for life, died a brutal death in a hospital bed at just six years old on July 18, 1993.

Hamburger contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7 that Alex ate claimed the life of Nancy Donley's only, long-awaited and much beloved son, Alex.

From then on, an **actionist** was born.

## Alex's Story

Nancy Donley felt truly blessed that cold day in January when her son, Alex, entered this world. He was healthy. He was beautiful. He was perfect. And as he grew, Nancy and every person whose life he touched knew he was special.

Sure, Alex was a typical young boy who loved anything with wheels. He'd play with cars for hours at a time. He looked forward to climbing on his bike and taking a ride anytime he could. He was passionate about drawing. And bonding time with Dad during garage sale adventures was at the top of Alex's fun list.

But Alex also had an unusual and endearing sensitive side. An inner beauty not usually found in six-year-old boys. Alex was always more concerned about the feelings of others than about his own.

When he was just three, Alex befriended a child with Down syndrome at his preschool. He'd patiently teach him to play and enjoyed the time they shared together. At five, Alex comforted his grandma's friend with Parkinson's disease. Putting his chubby little hands on her shaking ones, he told her he loved her, bringing her to tears. And at six, when his kindergarten teacher returned to class—sobbing after just learning her aunt had died—it was Alex who ran up to her, hugged her and said, "Don't cry Miss Cody. She's in heaven now."



It would be shortly after finishing that kindergarten class that Alex would no longer be around to comfort and console with his compassionate voice and touch.

One month after Alex graduated kindergarten, Nancy and Tom Donley's worst nightmare became reality. After eating *E. coli* O157:H7-tainted hamburger on that seemingly normal day in July 1993, their sweet son Alex suffered through an excruciatingly painful foodborne illness that proved fatal.

Because of the deadly *E. coli* O157:H7 toxin winding its way through Alex's body, he was terrorized during four days in the hospital filled with tormenting abdominal cramps, vomiting, screams, delusions and tremors. Nancy and Tom watched helplessly, and in horror, as their son slipped away from them.

Nancy sat with her only child as the monitors registered organ failure after organ failure. She watched as his body swelled uncontrollably as his kidneys shut down. Alex's brain waves began to flatten. His poignant last words to Nancy were, "Don't worry, Mommy." His last gesture before slipping into a coma was to mouth a kiss to his father.

Nancy's vibrant little boy—with that gorgeous red hair and heartwarming smile—was gone.

## A Mother No More on a Mission

Nancy was devastated.

The deep sadness and grief she felt day after day was crippling and unbearable. From the depths of her being, cries of overwhelming pain and agony came pouring out as she mourned Alex's passing. Her sense of happiness and security had been stripped away when Alex was taken from her. She felt empty, hollow, lost.

But Nancy was not about to let all of what Alex went through—and the heartache everyone who loved Alex was enduring—be forgotten. Alex would not die in vain. Alex was a child who deserved to be alive in a world that would be better off by his presence. His life mattered.

Nancy—a mother no more—would make it her business to become educated about food safety. Indeed she would become an authority on the subject. She'd figure out just how cattle feces contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7 could ever make their way into a hamburger that was supposed to be safe for her son to eat. And she made up her mind to do everything she could to make sure that more children never suffered the way Alex did.

## STOP Starts Nancy on the Road to Change

In 1994, one year after she lost Alex, Nancy joined forces with STOP. She was left feeling heartbroken, angry, and abandoned after trying to bring about change on her own. She learned that government and industry were well aware of the deadly *E. coli* O157:H7 presence in the cattle population since the early 1980s. But nothing had been done to address the problem.

Nancy knew that government and industry could do better. And she knew that STOP could help.

It didn't take long for Nancy to roll up her sleeves and get to work with STOP on vital policy advocacy needed for stricter standards and stronger enforcement of government regulations. From farm to fork, Nancy has tirelessly advocated for changes and education needed at every level to save lives and prevent foodborne illness.

Nancy has been instrumental to the tremendous progress STOP has made over the last 20 years. Her contributions are truly innumerable.

Nancy's passion, wisdom and work are behind every major accomplishment you'll read about in this report. Nancy came on board with STOP in the early days; everything from our work to influence the passing of the first scientific evaluation of food safety production practices through HACCP (Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points) to the release of our groundbreaking report in 2004 "Why Are People Still Dying from Contaminated Food?," to the signing into law of the Food Safety & Modernization Act in 2010, has been achieved with Nancy's help.

### *Thank You, Nancy*

While we wish that you never had a reason to come together with STOP, we're so deeply grateful to you for all you've done.

Thank you, Nancy, for the countless hours you've devoted to our cause.

Thank you for sharing your story and inspiring so many.

Thank you for your sacrifice and your support. Thank you for your near-constant advocacy, action and education.

You've been at the very heart of STOP's mission and the work we do every day to promote sound food safety policy, build public awareness, assist people affected, and prevent foodborne illness.

***Thank you, Nancy, for leading the way in realizing our vision of a safe food supply for all.***

## message from the Chair and CEO

As STOP Foodborne Illness celebrates its 20th year in 2013 working as your voice for safe food, we're so humbled and proud to present this 20th Anniversary Report.

In this special publication, you'll step inside the stories of those affected, learn about where we started, how far we've come and where we're headed to realize our vision of a safe food supply for all. You'll also see highlights of how food safety has changed over the years, the key strategic and legislative issues, the impact of foodborne illness and how, together, we've got the power to deliver more positive outcomes.

**One thing that was true back in 1993 when we began and remains the same today: You have made all of our progress possible.**

You – as an interested reader, a passionate advocate, a supporter of our work and perhaps as someone who's been personally touched – have given meaning to our mission and fueled all the work we do every day.

And speaking of passionate advocates, we're so pleased to be honoring through this report someone who's been at the heart of our work from the beginning: Nancy Donley, mother to Alex, a boy whose life tragically ended at the age of just six when he ate a hamburger tainted with *E. coli* O157:H7. Take one look around our website or in our communications and you'll quickly see that Nancy's been instrumental in growing STOP into the highly-respected and results-driven organization we run today.

**To all of our volunteers and supporters, thank you.**

Although we've made meaningful progress in making food safer during the past two decades, we know there's so much more for us to do. So many people dear to us—our children, mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, and loved ones—have lost their lives and suffered unspeakable pain because of eating contaminated food.

And, sadly, these heartbreaking stories continue to play out across our nation with unacceptable frequency. This year in America, 3,000 people will die and 1-in-6 will get ill from food poisoning. **This is why we need you and your involvement and your support more than ever before.**

Together, we can greatly reduce these statistics and save more people from ever having to suffer from illness or death from eating poisonous food.

Building awareness about food safety, steadfast advocacy for sound food safety policy and assisting those affected are cornerstones to our work. With a new strategic plan in hand, the work we need to do is even clearer. And we look forward to having you with us as we travel together down the path we're paving for more progress in preventing foodborne illness.

With deep gratitude and sincere thanks,



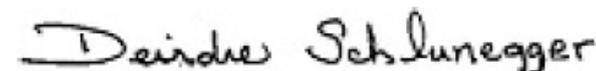
Trabue Bland, Chair



Trabue Bland  
Chair



Deirdre Schlunegger  
CEO



Deirdre Schlunegger, CEO

# ABOUT



STOP Foodborne Illness is a national nonprofit public health organization dedicated to the prevention of illness and death from foodborne pathogens by:

- Advocating for sound public policy;
- Building public awareness; and
- Assisting those impacted by foodborne illness.

## STOP's vision is a safe food supply for all.

STOP was founded in 1993 in California (under the name S.T.O.P. – Safe Tables Our Priority) after the West Coast *E. coli* Outbreak that killed four children and sickened over 600 others. Grieving and ready to rally for positive change, food safety advocates including mothers, fathers, siblings and children affected by the outbreak came together to form STOP. A new movement then began across the nation to make food safer. A movement fueled by memories of loved ones lost and those who endured unspeakable pain and suffering. A movement that would help save lives and transform the United States food safety system.

## About Foodborne Illness

Foodborne illness, commonly referred to as food poisoning, results from consuming contaminated food.

Bacteria and viruses are the most common causes of food poisoning. The onset, symptoms and severity of illness vary depending on which bacteria or virus has contaminated the food.

Typical symptoms are flu-like, including nausea, vomiting, fever and diarrhea. Because of this, many people may not recognize that their illness is actually caused by harmful pathogens in food.

**Foodborne illness is a public health issue that causes an estimated 48 million illnesses and 3,000 deaths each year in the U.S. In addition, severe cases result in 128,000 hospitalizations yearly.**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the pathogens that cause the most illnesses, hospitalizations and deaths in the United States are *Salmonella*, *Norovirus*, *Campylobacter*, *Escherichia coli*, *Listeria*, and *Clostridium perfringens*.

While everyone is at risk for getting a foodborne illness, some are at a greater risk for experiencing serious illness or death including infants, young children, pregnant women and their unborn babies, older adults and people with compromised immune systems.

Although consumers can't prevent contaminated foods from entering their homes, they can use safe food handling practices to help minimize the risk of becoming sick.

## Lauren's story

On December 28, 1992 Lauren Beth Rudolph died in her mother's arms while on life support after eating just three bites of an undercooked, *E. coli* O157:H7-tainted hamburger from a fast food restaurant near San Diego, CA.

No mother should ever have to tell this story. But Roni Rudolph Austin has been telling it for the past 20 years. And Lauren's story is one of the first that would be woven into the story that is STOP Foodborne Illness.

At age six, before *E. coli* O157:H7 food poisoning took Lauren's life, she was a beautiful, healthy little girl. Never in a million years did Roni imagine that a short visit to a nearby fast food place would render Lauren the latest victim of what's known today as the West Coast *E. coli* Outbreak—one that would eventually sicken over 600 and kill four children.

Just three days after Christmas back in 1992, Lauren's once perfectly healthy body was destroyed by kidney and liver failure, heart attacks and brain damage. The excruciating pain that Roni watched her sweet young daughter suffer through was simply heartbreaking.

And when Lauren fell into a coma and was taken away from Roni's arms forever, she was inconsolable. From the extreme sadness and sorrow came all the questions: Why? Who? How? What can I do?

Indeed, there was a lot that Roni could and would do. Galvanized by grief and the promises she made to Lauren, Roni went on a quest for answers. She researched and cross-referenced. She told Lauren's story to lawmakers, regulators and fellow parents who lost their children to food-borne illness. She decided that she would take on the world of food safety and she wouldn't stop until children like Lauren—and people across the nation—could be confident that the food they ate was safe.

So, just how would Roni help do all of this?

In the summer of 1993, Roni—along with the passion and dedication of about 20 other devastated parents—formed S.T.O.P. – Safe Tables Our Priority, the organization we know today as STOP Foodborne Illness. Not willing to accept the unacceptable, these parents got to work. Keeping the stories of Lauren and all of their loved ones at the heart of their advocacy, they dared to challenge the powers that be and the mediocrity that permeated our nation's food safety system.



**Lauren Beth Rudolph**  
West Coast *E. coli*  
Outbreak victim

Reform was desperately needed and became a top priority. Through hard work, determination and tenacity, important progress was made. As one of the founding members of STOP, Roni helped lead the way in STOP's efforts to pass new and groundbreaking legislation. One of the most important—and closest to Roni's heart—is the Lauren Beth Rudolph Food Safety Act of 1997, which made it illegal for Californians to be served undercooked food of animal origin in retail food facilities.

Roni was also instrumental in getting the National Meat and Poultry Act signed into law by President Bill Clinton on July 6, 1996. This sweeping reform to meat and poultry inspection was the first of its kind in 100 years.

Although 20 years has passed since her precious daughter Lauren's passing, Roni remembers everything like it was yesterday. And she's still very much the passionate food safety advocate that was born back in 1992. "I believe that if legislation like the Lauren Beth Rudolph Food Safety Act was in place before Lauren took those three bites of a hamburger, I'd still have my daughter with me today," says Roni.

Roni believes participation in making change happen is how we can best help save the lives of fallen children like Lauren and everyone whose lives are at risk because of a food safety system that's failing us. She feels it's important for consumers to keep asking tough questions. And she's always believed that it's better to be part of the solution than part of the problem. Lauren would approve.

## Rylee's story

Imagine, as a 15 year old, feeling a little panicked every time you ate. Imagine feeling that panic grow in a big way anytime the food you were eating looked or tasted even a little "off."

That's what Rylee Gustafson deals with every day.

And that's how you'd probably feel, too, if just days after your ninth birthday you suffered kidney failure, hallucinations, temporary loss of vision, high blood pressure, voice problems and a diabetes diagnosis later in life—all from eating packaged spinach contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7.

It was back in August 2006, on what was to be a wonderful family vacation to San Francisco from their home in Las Vegas, that Rylee fell ill with food poisoning. It was a painful, debilitating sickness that put her health in a downward spiral and her young life in jeopardy.

On that special trip to celebrate Rylee turning nine, she complained of terrible stomach pain and diarrhea one morning during breakfast. After seemingly endless visits to the bathroom and with the symptoms getting worse, tears were streaming down Rylee's face. And she was doubled over in pain. Rylee and her family headed back to their hotel and her pediatrician back home was called immediately.

Rylee needed medical care right away. Her parents rushed her to an urgent care facility and then off to the University of California San Francisco (UCSF) Children's Hospital. Her kidneys began to fail. Dialysis was started. Before long, Rylee's little body was hooked up to countless IVs, machines and monitors.

What was happening to their little girl, thought Rylee's parents, Kathleen and Matt, and why?

They would later find out from doctors at the hospital that Rylee had become a victim of a nationwide *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak that was traced back to spinach.

Today, six years after she was released from a 35-day admission at UCSF, Rylee is doing O.K. She's a well-rounded high school sophomore who spends most of her time studying, enjoying time with friends, listening to music, playing viola and watching Korean dramas.

But, Rylee also battles serious health issues like diabetes, which doctors believe to be a result of pancreatic damage she endured from the *E. coli* O157:H7 food poisoning.



**Rylee Gustafson**  
*E. coli* O157:H7 food poisoning survivor,  
with Senator Harry Reid of Nevada

Counting carbs, carefully monitoring her blood sugar and watching what she eats are all part of her daily routine.

In 2007, Kathleen Chrismer, Rylee's mom, came upon some STOP information and contacted us. Along the way, Kathleen became involved and now serves on STOP's Board of Directors. And Rylee isn't one to sit on the sidelines. She and her family are active advocates, particularly in the area of food safety reform. They've made many trips to Washington, D.C., met with legislators around the country, spoken at press conferences and shared their story in several TV interviews.

Raising awareness about foodborne illness and raising funds for STOP's mission are very important to Rylee and her family.

Rylee thinks that the most important thing STOP does is educate people about the causes, effects and consequences of foodborne illness. She worries about the public's general lack of knowledge and the attitude of "it will never happen to me."

"We all have to eat, so I challenge you to get involved with STOP, become more aware of how your food is produced and speak up to ensure the food you eat is safe," says Rylee.

## Diana's story

"We have to really understand the danger of antibiotic resistance as it relates to our food supply. There are precautions we can take on our own behalf, but it's also vital to speak up to government and others in authority. Wouldn't they do it for their own families?"

When it comes to saving lives and preventing sickness from antibiotic resistant strains of foodborne illness, Diana Goodpasture is one passionate advocate.

Diana is someone who loves life. She's self-employed, an early riser and one of those rare people who'll tell you that she loves her job. Diana's a proud mother of three with two grandkids that help keep her happy, busy and enjoying every day.

But, in early 2011, something happened to Diana that made her very sick.

After cooking up a turkey burger one evening, Diana started suffering from diarrhea that made her feel weak, dehydrated and very uncomfortable. She wanted to brush it off thinking it was the flu. But, when her son came to see her the next morning, he insisted that she get care right away.

Good thing, too.

When Diana arrived at the local health and wellness center, the medical team was alarmed. Diana was in bad shape. They promptly called an ambulance and Diana was rushed off to the hospital.

Five long, agonizing days in the hospital followed.

During her hospital stay, Diana was conscious, but her body wasn't functioning. She was so sick that she couldn't even lift her head off the pillow, and she was fighting through severe pain. But, true to her optimistic self, Diana kept positive. Her only thought became: "I have to get through this."

And get through it she did.

Although she was coping with compromised gastrointestinal and immune systems—and it was weeks before she could stomach solid foods—Diana thanks God for being able to finally go home.

The day after she came home, Diana got a call from the health department. She received news about what made her so ill: It was an antibiotic resistant (ABR) strain of *Salmonella* Heidelberg in her turkey burger.



**Diana Goodpasture**  
Antibiotic resistant *Salmonella*  
food poisoning survivor

Diana is doing much better today, but that harrowing time back in 2011 still haunts her. Diana's appetite for food has dwindled. And when she goes out, she can't help but wonder if the food she eats will be safe. Diana's recovery, overall, has been slow. With an immune system that's still struggling, she seems to catch every illness that comes along.

As Diana learned more about the growing problem of the misuse and overuse of antibiotics in food animal production—and after coming close to death because of her own ABR infection—she joined forces with STOP to push for positive change.

Donning her advocate hat whenever she can, Diana speaks on Capitol Hill to help educate legislators about the severity of foodborne illness and ABR. She's often baffled by the lack of awareness.

"Until our government representatives understand and act with urgency on the rise of antibiotic-resistant 'superbugs' that could one day render antibiotics useless—one of the most life-threatening issues we face today—I'll keep telling my story."

## Anna's story

"My tummy hurts. My tummy hurts. My tummy hurts."

Laurie Girand's three-year-old daughter, Anna, cried these words over and over one Tuesday in October 1996. This was unusual. It was not like Anna to complain about pain of any kind. In fact, whenever she fell down, she would simply leap up and say, "I'm OK!"

When Anna first became ill, Laurie and her husband Scott were on a rare vacation together so Grandma was in charge. Concerned, Anna's grandmother took her to the pediatrician. The doctor diagnosed it as "probably the flu," and said that Anna would likely feel better tomorrow.

If only that diagnosis were correct. Instead, Anna got worse.

It turned out that, while her parents were away, Grandma had given Anna a new drink—a popular, brand name apple cider—that would later become known as the culprit of Anna's terrible pain, chronic diarrhea, anemia, high blood pressure and kidney failure to come.

On Wednesday, with her symptoms worsening, Laurie took Anna back to the pediatrician. He was concerned it could be food poisoning, so he ordered a panel of tests for gastrointestinal illnesses.

By Thursday, Anna had endured diarrhea for six straight days and she hadn't eaten in four. When she wasn't running to the bathroom, she was lying in Laurie's arms whispering "My tummy hurts."

With no sign of improvement, Laurie took Anna to the doctor again for intravenous fluids to help keep her stable. The doctor encouraged a lot of fluids for Anna, so Laurie picked up more of that apple juice that Anna loved.

Laurie and her mother, Nita, started to think more about where Anna could have gotten food poisoning. They closely reviewed what she'd been eating. They thought about her recent visit to a petting zoo. Could her nursery school be the source?

After results for *Shigella*, *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella* all came back negative, Anna's condition worsened. She was hospitalized, and a frightening diagnosis of hemolytic-uremic syndrome (HUS) was eventually made. Doctors then knew that toxins from *E. coli* O157:H7 were causing Anna's condition. Doctors said that Anna would probably get worse before getting better and that dialysis might be needed.

As Anna's parents waited helplessly in the hospital, a friend called and mentioned a recall of some apple cider in the state of Washington. It was for *E. coli* O157:H7 contamination that



**Anna McGregor**  
*E. coli* O157:H7 food  
poisoning survivor

had affected 10 to 13 people. And it was the same apple juice Anna had been drinking.

Anna was not tested for *E. coli* early on. Though it was a test the doctor had ordered in the blood panel, the lab decided against it because her stool "wasn't bloody enough." Had it been found from the start, Anna would have been hospitalized earlier and received more attentive care.

Thankfully, after nearly a week of hospitalization, Anna turned a corner. Her high creatinine levels were down (showing that her kidneys were regaining function), and her platelet and red blood cell counts were up. Anna would soon be going home from Stanford Children's Hospital.

At age 19, Anna's now doing well. But her long-term health consequences could include higher blood pressure and progressive kidney failure.

Laurie has worked with STOP for years since Anna's ordeal. She advocates passionately for change to improve notification and investigation systems and for *E. coli* to be included for blood testing whenever any food poisoning is suspected. Laurie says emphatically: "If you can learn anything from Anna's situation, it's that you're playing Russian roulette with your child's life if you give your child unpasteurized juice or milk. Don't make that mistake. And when your child is seriously ill, be persistent. Her life could be at stake."

## Dana's story

So early in her life at age 15, Dana Dziadul knows what it feels like to come close to death and live her days with debilitating arthritis. The reason? *Salmonella*-tainted cantaloupe, Dana's favorite food as a three-year-old that she excitedly enjoyed with her family at brunch on Easter Sunday in 2001. It was at this lovely meal at a beachfront resort near her home in Connecticut that Dana's life—and the lives of her family—would change forever.

The Monday following their wonderful Easter celebrations, Dana came down with a headache and stomach ache. Over the next few days Dana's symptoms worsened. She was now suffering with a high fever, severe stomach cramping and bloody diarrhea.

Colette, Dana's mom, knew something was terribly wrong. An emergency room visit and four days of tests, consults, ultrasounds and a negative *E. coli* culture didn't show anything conclusive. Her condition improved some, so Dana was able to return home.

But, unfortunately, that wasn't the end of the story.

Just two hours after they were discharged from the hospital, Dana's parents received news that no parent should ever have to get: Dana had contracted *Salmonella* Poona blood poisoning, a potentially deadly foodborne illness that could result in severe, long-term health issues or end Dana's young life.

Immediately Dana was rushed back to the hospital, a 15-minute drive that felt like an eternity for Dana's parents as they wondered if their little girl would live or die.

After an aggressive course of antibiotics and a long week at the hospital filled with poking, prodding and pain, Dana was finally able to go home for good.

Although Dana's days in the hospital are over, *Salmonella* food poisoning has taken a big toll on her health and lifestyle. At age 11, Dana was diagnosed with reactive arthritis, which resulted from her foodborne illness. This chronic condition causes a great deal of pain in her toes, ankles and knees. Because of this, Dana has just one option for sports—swimming—which she enjoys on her school's Varsity swim team.

Dana says she's got good and not-so-good days. Despite her health challenges and not being able to do everything her



Dana Dziadul

*Salmonella* food poisoning survivor, pictured far right with her mom Colette, dad John, and sister Jenna

friends do, she's an active teenager and loves doing anything with her younger sister, Jenna.

After STOP heard about Dana's experience, we contacted the Dziadul family. We wanted to offer any assistance we could, provide support and give them avenues to share Dana's story.

Through STOP, Dana's found new friends her age who understand what it's like to live with a foodborne illness. And Dana's parents find comfort and strength with fellow parents of children who've suffered. These connections are what Dana puts at the top of the list of what STOP does to help.

When it comes to the issues around foodborne illness, Dana is a passionate advocate. "I worry every day that people are still dying and getting sick. I don't ever want my sister to go through what I go through every day. All because I ate cantaloupe," says Dana.

Dana hopes that all of STOP's friends will take action to bring about changes we need for a safe food supply. Her message? **Commit** to STOP's mission, **Contribute** to the cause and **Connect** with those who've suffered from a foodborne illness.

# the **IMPACT** of foodborne illness

Lives lost.

Families devastated.

Children suffering severe, long-term health consequences.

People plagued with life-altering pain, disease and disability.

## The impact of foodborne illness is, quite simply, huge and heartbreaking.

According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, foodborne disease is a serious public health issue that causes tens of millions of acute illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths each year in the U.S.

The statistics are staggering. In America, every year:

48 million people become ill  
128,000 people are hospitalized  
3,000 people die

This means that 1-in-6 Americans become ill each year and an average of 8 people die each day from eating contaminated food.

Beyond the statistics are the faces of foodborne illness. The precious children who die painful, agonizing deaths. The grieving parents who must say an early goodbye to their young sons and daughters. The grief-stricken spouses who've lost life partners. Children who are now living without a parent or grandparent. The survivors of all ages who live with debilitating diseases, diminished abilities and daily discomfort. The family members, friends and loved ones who struggle right alongside those they care for and console.

The statistics above grow exponentially when you factor in the suffering, grief, loss and economic toll that affects families, schools, workplaces and entire communities.

And the worst part is that the disease, disability and death caused by foodborne illness is unnecessary and, to a large degree, preventable. No one should die from *E. coli* found in the hamburgers they eat. No one should get sickened from *Salmonella* in their peanut butter. And no one should suffer from *Listeria* lurking in their lettuce.

Kidney failure, liver damage, paralysis, heart attacks, arthritis, brain and spinal cord infections, diabetes, cognitive and visual disabilities—illnesses that forever change someone's life, their ability to function normally and perform daily tasks are far too high a price to pay for doing what every human being must do: eat.

The stories of Alex, Lauren, Rylee, Diana, Anna and Dana that we've highlighted in this report give you a glimpse of the devastating, real-life impact of foodborne illness. Their stories—and those of thousands of others we've heard about and helped—are stark reminders of the broken food safety system in our nation.

But, together, *we can* and *we will* lessen the impact of foodborne illness.

Through advocacy, awareness and action, we'll continue working with government, industry, consumers and all of our partners in food safety to prevent the woefully unnecessary, tragic deaths and sicknesses that befall people who eat contaminated food.

One life at a time, we'll help make sure that more people are protected from deadly pathogens making their way into the food we sit down to eat every day.

# what we do to **MAKE FOOD SAFER**

At STOP, we provide many high-impact programs and services that help us **ADVOCATE, BUILD AWARENESS** and **OFFER ASSISTANCE** to people affected.

## WE ADVOCATE

**Ongoing Dialogue with USDA, FDA and CDC:** A cornerstone to STOP's progress in helping to create a safer food supply has been our continuous working relationships with the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). We regularly weigh in and attend public meetings on policy issues, submit public comments for the record and attend monthly meetings with both USDA and FDA along with our Safe Food Coalition and Make Our Food Safe Coalition partners.

**Service on National Advisory Committees:** STOP is recognized by government agencies as a leading authority on food safety issues and for bringing a unique voice to policy discussions. STOP advocates have served on the National Advisory Committee on Meat and Poultry Inspection (NACMPI), the National Advisory Committee for the Microbiological Criteria for Food (NACMCF), the Joint Institute for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (JIFSAN) as well as other ad hoc committees.

**Connecting Advocates to the Issues:** Through our website, e-Alerts, eNews, Facebook and Twitter, we ask our readers to take action with their elected officials on key issues such as the need to declare additional pathogens as adulterants in food, the necessity for implementing the Food Safety & Modernization Act, requiring labeling of beef that has been mechanically tenderized and the increasing dangers of the sub-therapeutic use of antibiotics in food animals.

**Partnering with Coalitions:** STOP works closely with the Safe Food Coalition, Make Our Food Safe Coalition, Keep Antibiotics Working Coalition, Coalition for Sensible Safeguards and others to leverage our collective efforts for greater impact.

**Capitol Hill Visits:** We know that the best way to help legislators understand the devastating impact of foodborne illness is to hear from the victims themselves. To that end, STOP facilitates visits for those impacted by foodborne illness to meet with their elected officials in Washington, DC to share their personal stories and highlight the need for strong food safety leadership by members of Congress.



## WE BUILD AWARENESS

**Public Media:** Because STOP puts the personal perspective on the toll of foodborne illness and is widely regarded as an authority on food safety, we're regularly approached by members of national and local media, in electronic and print, for our perspective on food safety issues and advice for consumers on ways to minimize risk from contaminated food.

**E-Alerts and eNews:** We deliver timely messages to thousands of readers with information about food recalls and foodborne illness outbreaks through our e-Alerts. In addition, we publish a monthly eNews where we share news and stories about topical food safety issues, how people have been personally impacted, STOP events, how to get your voice heard and more.

**Website and Social Media:** STOP has an extensive library of fact sheets, brochures, DVDs and other resources available on our website. We also display a strong social media presence to reach the increasing number of people who use Facebook and Twitter as their primary communication tools. If you haven't already, join us online! Friend us and follow us at @STOPfoodillness.

**Webinars:** We host educational, interactive webinars on food safety and legislative topics that help people learn about preventing foodborne illness, regulations affecting food handling/preparation and getting active with advocacy. These webinars are available at [www.STOPFood-borneIllness.org](http://www.STOPFood-borneIllness.org).

**Exhibits and Presentations:** STOP regularly exhibits and speaks at food safety and other events including the International Food Safety Conference, the Food Safety Summit and AARP's annual conference. We also present to high-risk groups for children and the elderly, peer organizations, environmental health agencies and others.



## WE OFFER ASSISTANCE

**Helping People Affected:** Food poisoning can be a very traumatic experience, both for the individual and their loved ones, and many turn to STOP for help during or after the immediate emergency.

We help provide information and tips about how to best navigate the public health and medical system. We pair people together with similar experiences for mutual support. STOP gives foodborne illness-impacted people an opportunity to share their story and become advocates to promote a safer food supply.



**STOP Foodborne Illness HISTORY**

20 years as your voice for safe food



# MAJOR MILESTONES

During the past 20 years, STOP Foodborne Illness has been instrumental in advocating for and bringing about important, groundbreaking changes in food safety policy. We've also reached and helped countless people through our communications, education, advocacy and awareness efforts.

All of this has culminated in STOP being recognized as a leader in consumer advocacy by government officials, industry leaders, academia, public health organizations, members of Congress and the media.

We invite you to take a walk through STOP's remarkable history with the highlights that follow. You'll get a glimpse of how we began and how far we've come. As you'll see, the major milestones and many accomplishments are indeed impressive. Enjoy your stroll down STOP's memory lane!

## 1993: Safe Tables Our Priority is Launched

Back in 1992, most of us had no idea what *E. coli* was. But, in 1993, we would learn all too well. In what would become known as the West Coast *E. coli* Outbreak, over 600 people fell ill and four children died in a multi-state outbreak from eating *E. coli* O157:H7-contaminated hamburgers. With media attention across the world, *E. coli* became a household word and the issue of the safety of the food supply became visible on the public's radar screen.



In California, the origin of the outbreak, a group of grieving people gathered together to try to understand how an event of this proportion could happen. A course of action was decided—to identify and get corrected the problems and gaps within the regulatory, public health and industry sectors—and S.T.O.P. – Safe Tables Our Priority was born. Its mission then, as it remains today is simple: To prevent illness and death from foodborne pathogens.

## 1994: *E. coli* O157:H7 Declared an Adulterant in Ground Beef

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Acting Undersecretary for Food Safety, Michael Taylor, declared *E. coli* O157:H7 an adulterant in ground beef at an American Meat Institute conference in San Francisco. This very bold move was one STOP fully supported and one that would change the dynamics of the meat industry. As an adulterant, ground beef found to be contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7 would—for the first time ever—be subject to recall.

# toward safer food

## 1996: STOP is a Major Influence in Sweeping Meat and Poultry Inspection Reform

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is responsible for inspecting most meat, poultry and processed egg products for safety, wholesomeness and labeling. Federal inspectors or their state counterparts are present in all slaughter plants and in establishments that further process meat and poultry.

But the inspection system, first designed in the early 1900s, wasn't keeping pace with changes in the food production and marketing industries. The inspection process until then was organoleptic, also known as "poke and sniff," and was totally incompetent in detecting microbial contamination.

On July 6, 1996, STOP co-founder Roni Rudolph Austin and then-President Nancy Donley joined President Clinton at the signing of the National Meat and Poultry Act requiring sweeping reforms and calling for rules to curtail microbiological contamination of meat and poultry products.



On July 25, 1996, after more than two years of numerous and intense public meetings with FSIS, industry and consumer organizations, the Pathogen Reduction/Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (PR/HACCP) rule was finalized. STOP was a very active participant during the entire process and brought the human face to the discussion.

The PR/HACCP rule set in place performance standards and required that companies identify "hazards reasonably likely to occur," identify the points where contamination could occur and then develop prevention strategies and systems.

## 1997: The Lauren Beth Rudolph Food Safety Act is Passed

On December 28, 1992 Lauren Beth Rudolph died an untimely and painful death at the tender age of just six. As we share in Lauren's story on page 8, she lost her young life after eating three bites of an undercooked hamburger at a fast food restaurant near her home in San Diego, CA. The deadly hamburger was contaminated with *E. coli* O157:H7.



Lauren was one of the four children who died in the West Coast *E. coli* Outbreak that galvanized STOP's founding.

With her grieving mother, Roni Rudolph Austin, leading the charge as a staunch STOP co-founder and advocate, the Lauren Beth Rudolph Food Safety Act of 1997 was passed. This legislation sets minimum mandatory cooking temperatures for different types of meat and eggs and makes it illegal for Californians to be served undercooked food of animal origin in retail food facilities.

## 1997: PR/HACCP is Enacted for Meat and Poultry

The West Coast *E. coli* Outbreak was the catalyst behind the PR/HACCP regulation, which was finalized in 1996. HACCP is a prevention-based food safety system in which a production process is examined step-by-step to identify points where risk to food safety is likely. Preventive actions are then taken to reduce or eliminate potential hazards. STOP played a very active role in the development of the final rule.

Mandatory HACCP regulations began for seafood in 1996 and were phased in for meat and poultry producers in 1998.

Implementation of HACCP regulations reflected a fundamental shift in how the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety & Inspection Service regulates the meat and poultry industries to ensure the safety of the products they produce. It established science-based, preventive measures to improve food safety and clarify responsibilities of processors under the inspection laws. It was an important shift from FSIS's traditional reliance on "command-and-control" regulations to greater use of performance standards, giving companies an incentive to improve processes.

## 2000: Zero Tolerance Policy Instituted for *Salmonella* in the National School Lunch Program's Ground Beef Purchases

STOP has always been concerned with the quality and safety of the meat purchased by the government to be used in the National School Lunch Program.

We were successful in convincing the USDA Secretary Daniel Glickman that the food purchased through the program should have the highest standards for one of the most vulnerable populations for foodborne illness: children.

The *Salmonella* zero tolerance policy for ground beef bought through this program is even stricter than what is required for retail ground beef. STOP successfully thwarted what was once a culture by some members of the ground beef industry of "if retailers won't buy my ground beef I can always sell it to the National School Lunch Program." Now, suppliers must perform to the highest of standards to qualify to sell ground beef to the program.



## 2003: First-Ever Congressional Food Safety Caucus Formed

A big win for STOP after years of advocacy efforts, 21 members of the U.S. House of Representatives formed the first-ever, bipartisan Food Safety Caucus. Although not active now, the aims of the caucus included educating the public and Congress on current and emerging food safety issues, examining the ability of the food safety system to ensure safe food, coordinating communication between stakeholders and policy-makers, and enhancing legislative efforts toward improving the safety of the food supply.

Many legislators who formed the caucus were introduced to concerns about foodborne illness by STOP members. Therefore, this important milestone is credited to all STOP members who took time to talk with their legislators about why foodborne illness needs to be a priority—something we encourage all of our supporters to do every chance they can.

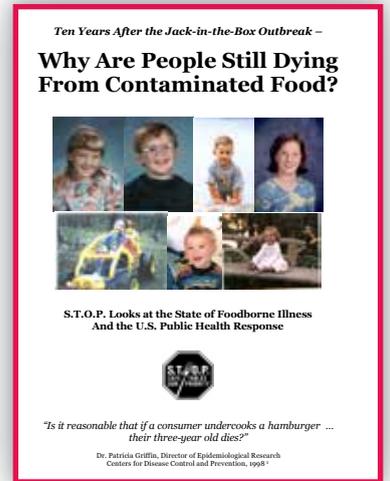
## 2003: STOP Publishes "Why Are People Still Dying From Contaminated Food?"

Ten years after the West Coast *E. coli* Outbreak, STOP published an intensive, in-depth report detailing progresses, problems and gaps. The report examines the entire food safety continuum from farm to fork, the retail sector and the public health system's response.

While key strides had certainly been made, in many cases health risks outstripped progress and the disaster of preventable foodborne disease in the U.S. had continued to attract far too little attention and meaningful action.

STOP's goal for "Why Are People Still Dying From Contaminated Food" was to provide a singularly compelling and comprehensive view of the system policy gaps that had been allowing foodborne disease to continue to kill and harm millions of American families every year. One United States congressional staffer called the report "The most clear overview I've seen on the topic and what I will refer others to."

You can download the report at [www.STOPFoodborneIllness.org](http://www.STOPFoodborneIllness.org).



## 2004: Families & Patients Forum on Foodborne Disease Held

STOP made food safety history in September 2004 when the U.S. House of Representatives' Food Safety Caucus sponsored the first-ever "Families and Patients Forum on Foodborne Disease." Many STOP leaders attended the historic event in Washington, DC, which included speeches and presentations by STOP members.

This forum provided an opportunity for government representatives to interact with victims and families who've been devastated and debilitated by foodborne disease. And it provided STOP many opportunities to build relationships, bolster awareness, share stories, advocate for change and connect with friends.



## 2005: Safe Food Act Introduced

Food safety efforts and responsibilities have been—and continue to be—spread among 12 different agencies, all with different and some with conflicting missions. For example, the U.S. Department of Agriculture is responsible for both inspection and marketing of meat and poultry—clearly conflicting interests that may contribute to an unsafe food supply.

On April 6, 2005, the Safe Food Act was introduced. STOP worked closely with both congressional offices in crafting this legislation, which has the goal of establishing a single independent food safety agency. This agency would reduce overlaps and fill gaps existing in the currently fragmented system and eliminate conflicts of interest.



# PREVENTING

## foodborne illness



Preventing the pain, suffering and death from foodborne illness is a tough challenge to tackle.

From farm to fork, many people and processes are involved. Contamination and cross-contamination can occur at every point in the food chain—from harvest or slaughter to processing, storage, distribution, retailing and serving. Prevention is a complex issue.

But, at STOP, this is at the heart of our mission.

We know that the responsibility for making sure our food is safe is a shared one. Government, industry and consumers all play an important role. Below are the highlights of how you can help minimize the risks that might be lurking in food at home.

## What You Can Do To Minimize the Risk of a Foodborne Illness

### Keep It Clean

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water before handling food and often during food preparation.
- Wash and sanitize all surfaces and equipment used for food preparation.
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly, especially if eaten raw.
- Don't wash raw meat or poultry prior to cooking. If it happens to be contaminated, the risk of spreading pathogens around the kitchen and cross-contaminating other food items and food preparation surfaces is greatly heightened in the washing process.

### Cook Thoroughly

- Cook food thoroughly, especially meat, poultry, eggs and seafood.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure food is cooked to safe temperatures.
- Follow closely the cooking instructions on packaged microwaveable foods.
- Reheat cooked food thoroughly.

### Separate ... Don't Cross-Contaminate

- Separate raw meat, poultry and seafood from other foods.
- Use separate equipment and utensils such as knives and cutting boards for raw meat and poultry in order not to cross-contaminate other food items.
- Store food in containers to avoid contact between raw and prepared foods.

### Chill Food to Safe Temperatures

- Don't leave cooked food at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Promptly refrigerate all cooked and perishable food.
- Keep cooked food piping hot prior to serving.
- Don't store food too long, even in the refrigerator.
- Check and adhere to expiration dates.
- Don't thaw frozen food at room temperature.
- Keep your refrigerator temperature at 40°F or below and your freezer at 0°F or below.

### Despite My Best Efforts, I Got Sick

- See your doctor promptly if symptoms continue and seek medical attention immediately if you're experiencing blood in your stool.
- Report your illness to your county or city health department. Reporting illnesses helps officials identify and communicate about potential outbreaks.
- With more information about foodborne illness, researchers can increase understanding about sources, trends, health outcomes and preventive strategies.
- Practice strict sanitary practices to prevent cross-contamination of your illness to another person. Wash hands thoroughly after using the bathroom.

**Visit [www.STOPFoodbornellness.org](http://www.STOPFoodbornellness.org) to learn more and keep updated on how you can help prevent foodborne illness.**

# WE NEED YOU:

## how you can help

You and all of the people who've come together over the past 20 years have made all of our life-saving work possible. Thank you for being a special part of STOP Foodborne Illness.

To keep important progress moving forward each day, we need your continued involvement and support. And there's a lot you can do! Whether you're interested in advocacy, looking for leadership opportunities or want to help with fundraising, join us. Together, we'll work to create a future with even more progress on food safety efforts to help save more lives and prevent foodborne illness.

So, take a few minutes today to review the many ways listed below that you can help STOP achieve our important goals.

### ADVOCATE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Advocacy is truly the lifeblood of our work. Becoming an advocate that we can call upon for help with advocacy activities—like speaking on Capitol Hill, writing in to your legislators or commenting in online forums—is a vital way to make your voice heard and make a difference.

### ASSIST OTHERS AFFECTED BY FOODBORNE ILLNESS

People suffering from a foodborne illness need support. If you'd like to be someone we can connect with victims and loved ones who want to talk to someone who understands, please let us know.

### GIVE ANNUAL DONATIONS

Generous gifts received each year from individuals, corporations and foundations give STOP the fuel we need to fund our life-saving mission. By making STOP a philanthropic priority with a donation each year, you'll play a critical role in ensuring that our programs continue and grow.

### HOLD A FUNDRAISER TO BENEFIT STOP

Organizing a fundraiser—such as a walk, dinner party or golf event—or perhaps giving to STOP in lieu of gifts for seasonal or birthday celebrations is another fantastic way to support us and build awareness too.

### SHARE YOUR STORY

We're always looking for people who are willing to share their story. People connect best with stories, so we feature these as often as possible in our communications. If we can help educate and inspire others with your story, please let us know.

### JOIN OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board service is an especially rewarding way for you to lend your expertise and support to our work. We're in a major phase of growth, so we're interested in hearing from people who want to explore taking on a strong leadership role as a board member. Use the email below to let us know if you're interested in learning more or if you'd like to nominate someone for consideration.

### MAKE A PLANNED GIFT

Your planned gift to STOP can be a very meaningful way for you to positively impact the people affected by foodborne illness now and for years to come. And the tax advantages are attractive. Leaving a life-changing legacy with your planned gift—through a bequest or many other options—is a wonderful way to give.

### VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

From time to time, we need volunteers for various projects, events and initiatives. If you'd like to be added to our volunteer call list, please be in touch and let us know about your special skills and talents.

## Contact STOP Today!

Are you interested in helping STOP realize its vision of a safe food supply for all? Are you ready to join with us in some of the activities we've listed above? We hope you are and would love to hear from you.

And, as always, if you've been affected by a foodborne illness and would like our assistance, please let us know. We're here to help!

We look forward to staying in touch and hearing from you soon.

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