

# Teen Advocate Launches Initiative to Expand Allergen-Safe Meals in NY Shelters

*The New York teen advocate is leading food allergy reforms while ensuring shelters provide safe meals for children and families in crisis*

ONEONTA, NY, UNITED STATES, August 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Safe to Eat, a youth-led nonprofit, has launched an initiative to provide allergen-safe meals to families living in domestic violence and homeless shelters. The program, founded by 17-year-old advocate Devin August Sailer, is designed to address the urgent need for food allergy safety in crisis housing across New York State.

He's no stranger to community impact. He partnered with Allergy Advocates of New York to help advance three New York State bills expanding access to lifesaving epinephrine, with three more currently awaiting the governor's signature. Now, he is working with rural shelters to ensure food-allergic families have access to safe meals in times of crisis.

"Families entering shelters often have little notice or preparation time, and children with food allergies face serious risks," said Sailer. "Safe to Eat was created to close this gap and make sure every family has the food security they deserve."

The need is urgent, especially in rural communities. Nearly 15% of rural households are food insecure, and 20% live in food deserts with little or no access to supermarkets. Families in crisis face even greater barriers to finding nutritious, allergen-safe foods.

Food allergy rates are rising nationwide, affecting an estimated one in 13 children. Yet few



Devin August Sailer, 17-year-old founder of Safe to Eat, advocates for food-allergic families in shelters

shelters are equipped to manage these risks. The issue is significant: nearly one-quarter of shelter residents are children, and an estimated 8% of them live with food allergies. Safe to Eat's work ensures shelters can provide meals that protect these children and their families during critical moments of transition.

Safe to Eat has donated hundreds of pounds of food to multiple rural shelters and plans to expand its programs across upstate New York while continuing to push for food safety policy at both state and national levels.

#### About Devin August Sailer

Devin August Sailer is a nationally recognized youth advocate from New York living with 31 food allergies. His personal experience drives his mission to protect food-allergic families in crisis. He also serves on two national boards and is the recipient of the Billy Michael Leadership Award for his leadership and community impact.

#### About Safe to Eat

Safe to Eat is a youth-led nonprofit created to protect food-allergic families in crisis. The organization delivers allergen-safe foods to domestic violence and homeless shelters across eight rural New York counties — an area comparable in size to Jamaica.

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Safe to Eat  
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