Thanksgiving is a traditional American holiday that is celebrated on the fourth Thursday in November. The origin of Thanksgiving is most commonly traced back to harvest feast celebrations at Plimoth Plantation in the early 1600s. Throughout the nation’s history, Thanksgiving has been a day to give thanks and be grateful for the blessings and good fortune of the previous year. Family and food are two very important parts of Thanksgiving day. Traditionally, families will gather on the holiday, share a large meal, and give thanks. Many families will open their homes to those who cannot travel to be with their own families, so Thanksgiving dinner can also include guests. A turkey is the centerpiece of the Thanksgiving meal, and other typical Thanksgiving foods include stuffing, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole, cranberry sauce, corn, fall vegetables and pumpkin pie. Americans eat more on Thanksgiving day than on any other day of the year! Several places in Massachusetts will have special, more traditional, Thanksgiving dinners available, including Oliver Wright Tavern and Bullard Tavern at Old Sturbridge Village and Plimoth Plantation.

Thanksgiving Day and the day after Thanksgiving are both considered national holidays. Several cities have Thanksgiving Day parades on Thursday morning. The Thanksgiving parade that is closest to Worcester is in Plymouth, Massachusetts and takes place on November 21, 2015. After the Thanksgiving feast, many families will spend the rest of the day napping, watching American football games on TV, and eating leftovers from the meal. The day after Thanksgiving, also known as “Black Friday”, is the first day of the Christmas shopping season and is the biggest shopping day of the year. Stores will open either late on Thursday evening or very early on Friday morning, and people will line up to shop Black Friday sales!
Thanksgiving can also be an excellent time to give back. Many families and individuals enjoy volunteering at local soup kitchens or food pantries to provide a meal to the homeless on Thanksgiving Day. Many of these organizations are non-profits that serve the local community or are associated with local churches.

Some local organizations that may be accepting volunteers for Thanksgiving are:

- Catholic Charities on Hammond St, call 508-860-2232 or online
- Rachel’s Table, 633 Salisbury St; call 508-799-7699
- The Mustard Seed, 93 Piedmont St; call 508-754-7098

If you are interested in volunteering, you should contact one of the organizations above or search the list of local food pantries here.

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Happy Thanksgiving!