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Foodbank.
St. Louis Area Foodbank

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— EST. 1818 —

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Family Dinner Program to Supply Meals to Hundreds of St. Louis Families in Need

Partnership of schools and non-profits established the program in just weeks

St. Louis – Four St. Louis organizations have partnered to help address hunger among families in St. Louis neighborhoods with the highest need during the coronavirus epidemic.

The Family Dinner Program was initiated by St. Louis entrepreneurship incubator **Habitat for Neighborhood Business (HNB)** in conjunction with **Saint Louis University** after learning of the growing stresses on area families, whose financial resources have, in many cases, been impacted by furloughs, layoffs or illness. In response, approximately 200 **Saint Louis Public Schools (SLPS)** families with the most need will receive free nourishing meals through collaboration with the **St. Louis Area Foodbank**. That will be followed by 4-6 weeks of significantly expanded meals through food pantries in North and South St. Louis.

“After we learned about the increasing stress on these families in underserved neighborhoods, the need to act was urgent,” said HNB Board Chairman Douglas Brown. “We decided to act quickly using networking by HNB staff and board members to identify partners and funding.”

The partnerships and program, which will supplement the food support that SLPS has been providing school families through its Emergency Response Fund, was conceived and put into operation in just a few weeks.

“For families experiencing food insecurity and hunger, the stress and worry we are all experiencing right now is multiplied,” said Dr. Kelvin R. Adams, Superintendent of Saint Louis Public Schools. “We are thankful for entities like the St. Louis Area Foodbank and Habitat for Neighborhood Business at Saint Louis University for working to establish a plan to supplement the pandemic meal program in the City of St. Louis. Through their partnership, families in need can pick up good, nutritious dinners at area food pantries and mobile food markets.”

Families most in need, as identified by the SLPS social service staff, will be provided meals for the next 4-6 weeks through 15 food pantries affiliated with the St. Louis Area Foodbank. The cost of the program is being entirely funded by donations and staffed with volunteers.

In addition to providing the meals, the Foodbank will organize **Mobile Markets** at distribution sites located near 10 SLPS schools. At these Mobile Markets, pallets of fresh food will be brought in to provide nutritious fruits, vegetables and meat for area families.

“Knowing that COVID-19 is tough on everyone, the Foodbank is honored and humbled to partner with Saint Louis Public Schools and Habitat for Neighborhood Business at Saint Louis University to keep families healthy and strong by providing nutritious meals during these challenging times,” said St. Louis Area Foodbank President and CEO, Meredith Knopp. “If families need food assistance, we will work to direct them to locations close to their home where they can get the help they need. Together, we’re building stronger communities by empowering people with food and hope.”

Saint Louis University, which is a founding partner of HNB, says the program aligns with the University’s mission of supporting the community and those most in need.

“The virtue or habit of solidarity is central to our way of proceeding as a Catholic and Jesuit university and so this collaborative outreach from HNB, the St Louis Foodbank and St Louis Public Schools expresses most eloquently that mission of Saint Louis University,” said Christopher Collins, S.J., SLU Assistant to the President for Mission and Identity.

Donations committed to date will fund up to 100,000 meals, in part because the Foodbank receives many food products at little to no cost. Even so, this program may need to be extended, depending on when the area economic situation improves. Donations for the Family Dinner Program will be gladly accepted and can be sent to:

Habitat for Neighborhood Business
Family Food Program
3674 Lindell Blvd.
St. Louis, MO 63108

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About Habitat for Neighborhood Business

Habitat for Neighborhood Business partners with Saint Louis University students and volunteer businesspeople to help restore economic vitality to under-served neighborhoods through mentoring, networking and education for existing and aspiring minority entrepreneurs. In addition, HNB collaborates with developers, government and others sharing our interest in strengthening neighborhood commerce.

About Saint Louis University

Founded in 1818, Saint Louis University is one of the nation’s oldest and most prestigious Catholic institutions. Rooted in Jesuit values and its pioneering history as the first university west of the Mississippi River, SLU offers nearly 13,000 students a rigorous, transformative education of the whole person. At the core of the University’s diverse community of scholars is SLU’s service-focused mission, which challenges and prepares students to make the world a better, more just place.

About the St. Louis Area Foodbank

The St. Louis Area Foodbank began its service to the community in 1975. Since that time, the organization has grown to become the bi-state region’s largest nonprofit 501c3 food distribution center dedicated to feeding individuals in need. Through a robust network of community partners and programs throughout 26 counties in Missouri and Illinois, the Foodbank helps provide 37 million meals annually. More than 392,000 people in the bi-state region rely on the Foodbank for assistance each year. For 45 years, the St. Louis Area Foodbank has been there for people dealing with crisis, be it a natural disaster, a global pandemic, or the everyday crisis of hunger. For more information on Foodbank’s COVID-19 relief and response efforts and how people can access resources near them, call (314) 292-6262 or visit <http://STLFoodbank.org/covid19>.

About Saint Louis Public Schools

Saint Louis Public Schools has been preparing students for a bright future since 1838. The District serves approximately 22,000 children in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. With nearly 70 schools and academic programs, including Magnet and Choice schools, SLPS has a school to fit every child’s needs.