Healthy Meals Lead to Happier Lives
Food is something we all need, but we don’t all have. McAuley Ministries offers financial support to our community partners who provide resources for food and aid to our neighbors who are hungry.

Stories of Hope

Project Love Coalition (PLC)

Veterans Peace & Friendship Garden in Hill District
PLC benefited from this project in an awesome way that created more exposure for our brand, mission, and vision. Often times during the past year we were able to meet so many new and awesome people of diverse backgrounds who showed up and gave us their smiles and time to volunteer in a neighborhood environment not in their comfort zone, but afterwards they would let us know how rewarding it felt to be welcomed and able to contribute to giving back in their own way.

Neighborhood Resilience Project
(formerly FOCUS Pittsburgh)
Backpack Meal Program
A mother approached the organization’s staff while they unloaded meal bins at the school. She asked if these meals were the ones provided by FOCUS Pittsburgh. When that information was confirmed, she began to weep and hug the staff. She informed the staff of how much the meals meant to her and her children. She was truly thankful for the meals and all of the work of the organization.

Pittsburgh Mercy

Food Insecurity Initiative
Our care management team has shared numerous instances related to feedback from persons served commenting on how unique it is that we are providing a safe place to discuss food insecurity, a topic that they often struggled with how to approach. It also was frequently noted that we did not just talk about food needs but provided a wide variety of items that serve specific dietary needs and items for those without the ability to cook a traditional meal.

Recently a person served was struggling due to the circumstances of COVID-19 and not working. Due to having underlying conditions, she was also having a hard time grocery shopping. She became very emotional when talking about struggling to put food on the table and never having this challenge before. She spoke about never expecting for a doctor’s office to be able to provide food, and “that it was a saving grace.”

For I was hungry, and you gave me something to eat. (Matthew 25:35)
Food Insecurity

About Food Insecurity in Pennsylvania
Food insecurity means not having access to reliable and nutritious meals. Since hunger and health are deeply connected, the effects of chronic hunger are profound. Those effects include increased risks for chronic diseases, higher chances of hospitalization, poorer overall health, and increased health care costs. Adequate access to healthy meals is also critical to child development and success in education so kids can focus in school and lead healthier, more productive lives.

What Is Food Insecurity?

- Mild Food Insecurity
  - worrying about the ability to obtain food
- Moderate Food Insecurity
  - compromising quality and variety of food
- Severe Food Insecurity
  - reducing quantities, skipping meals
  - experiencing hunger

Causes of Increased Food Insecurity for Individuals
- COVID-19
- Lack of Awareness of Existing Resources
- Difficulty Finding Resource Information
- Existing Benefit Shortcomings
- Job Loss
- Isolation
- Transportation
- Supply Chain Challenges
- Socioeconomic Status

Food Insecurity in Pittsburgh
Food insecurity is a serious issue throughout the U.S. 21% or 1 in 5 Pittsburghers are food insecure. This is higher than both the national average of 12% and the county average of 14%. A household is considered food insecure when members are uncertain of whether or not they have enough food to meet basic needs at some time during the year. According to the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, food insecurity can have serious consequences, including an increased risk of health issues. Food insecurity often times forces these households to choose between paying for food and other expenses such as rent, medicine, and heat.

Food Advocacy
McAuley Ministries granted $50,000 to Just Harvest Education Fund: Health and Wellness/ Food Insecurity to support Advancing Food Security for All Advocacy Initiatives. Just Harvest addresses the root causes of hunger and poverty by connecting people to public benefits, breaking down institutional barriers to these benefits, advocating for a stronger and more compassionate government response to hunger, educating the broader community about hunger and poverty, and improving access to healthy and nutritious food for all.

Food Rescue
Organizations seek to remedy the discrepancy between lack of access to fresh food and food waste by collecting high quality food slated for disposal and redistributing it to people in need and the organizations that serve them.

Sources
https://pittsburghpa.gov/index.html
https://www.pittsburghfoodbank.org/
https://www.agriculture.pa.gov/Food_Security/Pages/About-Food-Insecurity.aspx
Outcomes

FOCUS Pittsburgh (2017) $72,000 & Neighborhood Resilience Project (2019) $72,000

FOCUS Pittsburgh, previously part of FOCUS North America, became independent and renamed Neighborhood Resilience Project in 2019.

Provided six meals each weekend to 300 Hill District children who would otherwise go without eating on the weekends. The children are able to go to school fed and more ready to learn on Monday.

412 Food Rescue (2018) $35,000

Recovered over 2,459,650 pounds of perfectly good food. During this time, volunteers completed nearly 20,000 food rescues to support the 412 Rescue trucks and ensure that this food is reaching people where they are.

Funding from McAuley Ministries helped 412 Food Rescue increase distribution of surplus food donations in the Hill District, Uptown, and portions of Oakland. They partnered with 36 organizations in the area to distribute more than 168,000 pounds of food - equivalent to delivering 140,153 meals.

By redirecting from landfills, 412 Food Rescue has cumulatively mitigated more than 3 Million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions from impacting the environment.

The Jubilee Association (2018) $30,000

Served 11,403 (44/day) low-income families and individuals through their soup kitchen and an average of 157 families made monthly visits to the food pantry.

Pittsburgh Mercy (2019) $22,190

While attending doctor’s appointments at Pittsburgh Mercy, persons served are screened about their connection to food-related resources and are offered food onsite through the Pittsburgh Mercy food pantry. Pittsburgh Mercy linked 400 individuals to food directly, as well as, to SNAP/food stamps benefits, food pantries, budgets, and other food related supplies.

Project Love Coalition (2019) $10,000

The grant brought diverse groups of people together with veterans to contribute to the overall health and wellness of the community. A completed site prepared for garden activities was created at Somers Street and Webster Avenue through the installation of 82 raised garden beds which exceeded the original number of 40 beds planned for the site. Gardening teams will be established in 2020 to plant, care for, and harvest the beds.

Macedonia FACE (2019): $50,000

McAuley Ministries grant supports FACE’s senior program which includes Meals on Wheels.

FACE secured an agreement with the Energy Innovation Center to house the staging area for Home Delivered Meals and now has a program manager and four part-time drivers working to ensure that over 180 seniors enrolled in the program receive hot meal deliveries three times per week and frozen meals twice a week, amounting to over 900 meals each week.

FACE has secured ongoing volunteer support to assist with packing and loading food and has acquired four specialized, temperature-controlled food delivery vehicles that help ensure food safety.
McAuley Ministries responded to COVID-19 emergency needs by helping our community partners who serve vulnerable populations.

**Grants awarded that supported community health:**
- **Pittsburgh Mercy**
  personal protective equipment and supplies for colleagues on the front line
- **Ujamaa Collective**
  production and distribution of cloth masks to residents in the Hill District
- **Neighborhood Allies**
  laptops to help students continue their education through remote learning
- **Hug Me Tight Childlife Centers**
  supplies to comply with guidelines for re-opening the child care center

**Grants awarded to help address food insecurity:**
- **Acculturation for Justice, Access and Peace Outreach (AJAPO)**
- **Catholic Charities, Diocese of Pittsburgh**
- **Hill District Consensus Group**
- **Macedonia Family and Community Enrichment Center (FACE)**
- **Neighborhood Resilience Project**
- **Shepherd’s Heart Fellowship and Veteran’s Home**
- **The Intersection, Inc.**

To date, McAuley Ministries has awarded grants totaling $307,500 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**In response and gratitude for a COVID-19 Emergency Grant:**
“Thank you so much for the incredible witness that the Sisters of Mercy continue to provide. We pray that we are at least in some small way carrying forth the legacy we have inherited from your blessed order. May God bless and keep you all safe and healthy.” — Rev. Paul T. Abernathy, CEO, Neighborhood Resilience Project