FOOD IS MEDICINE

You hear this all the time, but did you know eating healthy food can prevent or ease many chronic diseases including obesity, heart disease, high blood pressure, hepatitis, stroke, and type 2 diabetes?

Every day at Food Gatherers, we meet community members struggling to get healthy food on their tables. Many (88%) report purchasing inexpensive, unhealthy food because they cannot afford better options. Others struggle with food insecurity, unaware that there are programs throughout the community to help them access healthy food.

Today, Food Gatherers is joining with local health care providers to help our neighbors struggling with food insecurity access the fresh food they need to support their health. The Health Care and Food Bank Partnership Initiative creates a connection between local health care institutions and Food Gatherers’ network of partner pantries.

When individuals or families visit participating clinics, they fill out a short questionnaire asking about basic needs such as food, housing, and affording medication. The care team at the clinic then connects patients to the appropriate resources. This collaboration between health care providers and Food Gatherers helps patients obtain quality food with dignity and provides the necessary support to maintain good health. Additionally, Food Gatherers is teaching future physicians about the negative impact of food insecurity on health, especially for children.

By working with health care providers, Food Gatherers will be able to reach people who may not be accessing food pantries but still Food is Medicine: You are what you eat! Ellen Rabinowitz, Health Officer, Washtenaw County Health Department says, “When a doctor or a nurse can advise a patient that they are improving their health or their child’s health by getting the food that they need, it destigmatizes food insecurity.

The Initiative is an exciting expansion of the work Food Gatherers has been leading for 30 years. We were early adopters of best practices in hunger relief: creating client choice pantries that showcase produce and protein, connecting clients to SNAP and other federal food programs, and providing innovative food distributions at schools and community clinics. To continue making meaningful changes for low-income individuals, Food Gatherers is committed to engaging community institutions such as schools, colleges, employers, and now, health care providers, to improve access to healthy food, and highlight hunger in our community.

The Health Care and Food Bank Partnership is a multi-year, multi-strategy initiative, with separate components funded in part by Michigan Medicine Community Health Services, the Michigan Health Endowment Fund, and generous community donors.
Advocates- Thank You!

Thank you for your efforts to protect SNAP and increase funding for TEFAP in the bipartisan 2018 Farm Bill. You helped support a strong Farm Bill to ensure that everyone in our community has the food they need to thrive.

Food Gatherers continues to engage in advocacy at all government levels. Do you want to get involved in advocacy?

- Get action alerts to fight hunger by signing up for our advocacy listserv: www.foodgatherers.org/advocate

- Join the Washtenaw Food Policy Council and/or one of the council’s Policy Action Teams.

Harvest Hints

Healthy Snacking: Choose these healthy snacks for a balance of nutrients to feel full and satisfied.

Apple slices + peanut butter  
Baby carrots + hummus  
Multigrain tortilla chips + bean dip  
Whole grain crackers + cheese  
Plain or vanilla yogurt + berries  
Avocado on whole wheat toast  
Plain or vanilla yogurt + granola  
High fiber cereal + ½ cup low fat milk

Guacamole + bell pepper slices  
Canned tuna (or tuna salad) + whole grain crackers  
Oatmeal prepared with low fat milk  
Applesauce + nuts  
Whole grain tortilla + black beans + salsa  
Plain unsalted popcorn + grated parmesan cheese  
Turkey slices + whole grain bagel thin

Introducing New Partner Program Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to orient you to the policies and expectations of membership with Food Gatherers. By becoming a member of our network, you are joining a network of organizations dedicated to ending hunger in America called Feeding America, the nation’s largest domestic hunger-relief organization. Food Gatherers is a member of Feeding America and while we have many of our own requirements for organizations who partner with us, many come from Feeding America.

Food Gatherers operates out of a 28,000 square foot warehouse/distribution center which distributes over 6 million pounds of food a year in Washtenaw County. Through our direct service programs and partners like you, we are able to serve more than 30,000 food insecure individuals right here in our community. Thank you for joining us in this mission!

To continue to serve the residents of Washtenaw County with the highest level of customer service, quality food and excellent programs promoting self-sufficiency, please read through this handbook and have your staff and volunteers do the same.
Understanding the expectations of Food Gatherers will help keep you in good standing within the network.

If you have questions or concerns about any of the policies in this handbook, please feel free to contact us directly. It is our pleasure partnering with you!
**SNAP Benefit Update**

**Attention SNAP Recipients in Michigan**

- March benefits will be issued on March 3, 4 or 5
- April benefits will be issued from April 3-12
- May benefits will be issued as regularly scheduled

DHHS sent out a press release earlier this month regarding March and April SNAP benefits issuance dates. The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) will issue March and April food assistance benefits early to reduce the gap between benefits payments that resulted from the partial federal government shutdown.

MDHHS made changes to the schedule so that families do not have to go more than 45 days without receiving food assistance. The department issued February benefits early beginning on Jan. 17 at the direction of the federal government, which said there were questions about whether the funds would be available to issue in February because of the government shutdown that has since ended. To help you share this information with clients and your communities, the Food Bank Council of Michigan and MDHHS created flyers. Please post and share these flyers with clients in your service area.

Click [HERE](#) for Benefits Update Flyer in ENGLISH

Click [HERE](#) for Benefits Update Flyer in SPANISH

Click [HERE](#) for Benefits Update Flyer in ARABIC

**Food Gatherers Annual Report**

Read about Food Gatherers’ gathering success and our 2018 annual report in the Plenty Winter 2019 newsletter:


**Save the Date!**

**The State of Our Plate**

Wednesday, April 24th from 11:00am-2:00pm
Join us for a luncheon at Washtenaw Community College with policy makers and fellow food advocates. For more information, visit [www.foodgatherers.org/soop](http://www.foodgatherers.org/soop) or contact Helen Starman at helen.starman@foodgatherers.org or 734-761-2796.

**Grillin’ for Food Gatherers**

Sunday, June 9th
Join us for the 30th annual Grillin’ fundraiser! Enjoy a meal hot off the grill, with side dishes, drinks, and desserts from your favorite local restaurants. There will be live music, a silent auction, a raffle, and activities for kids as well. Learn more at [www.foodgatherers.org/grillin](http://www.foodgatherers.org/grillin).
Made with love by the **Community Food Programs Department**

Erin Freeman, Community Food Programs Coordinator, erin@foodgatherers.org

LeRonica Roberts, Community Food Programs Coordinator, leonica@foodgatherers.org

Larry Sanna, Program Evaluator, larry.sana@foodgatherers.org

Shaira Daya, Nutrition Projects Manager, shaira@foodgatherers.org

Amy Diehl, Community Kitchen Staff, amy.diehl@foodgatherers.org

Scott Roubeck, Community Kitchen Manager, scott@foodgatherers.org

Markell Miller, Director of Community Food Programs Department, markell@foodgatherers.org

**CFP Interns**

Journey McAndrews, MSW Intern, journey.mcandrews@foodgatherers.org