

Healthy Children and Families Meal Delivery Pilot

DELIVERING MEALS TO LOW-INCOME FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN CAN SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE FOOD INSECURITY AND INCREASE HEALTHFUL EATING

The COVID-19 pandemic caused an economic crisis as well as a health one for millions of families. Parents were faced with job loss, reduced access to housing, financial strain and hunger. These struggles were particularly acute for families with young children.

Nutrition during early childhood is critical for healthy development. Without consistent, reliable access to healthy food, young children can face long-term, serious consequences on brain development, coordination, cognitive abilities, and health problems that can follow them into adulthood.

No Kid Hungry works to connect children with the nutrition they need. At the start of the pandemic, they reached out to the team of the Division of Community Pediatrics (DCP) at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital and Chef Erik Bruner-Yang's Power of 10 Initiative (P10) to develop the "Healthy Children and Families program" to test innovative ways of connecting young children with the food they need for good health during this time of crisis.



WITH THE MEAL DELIVERY PILOT,
FOOD INSECURITY DECREASED
FROM **75%** TO **21%**
AMONG FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN.

They teamed up to deliver healthy, heat-and-serve meals, groceries and nutrition education materials directly to families throughout the week.

The results were striking. Among families in the study, food insecurity decreased from 75% to 21%, while three out of four families ate more fruits and vegetables. The pilot program also had both high retention rates and high satisfaction amongst participants.

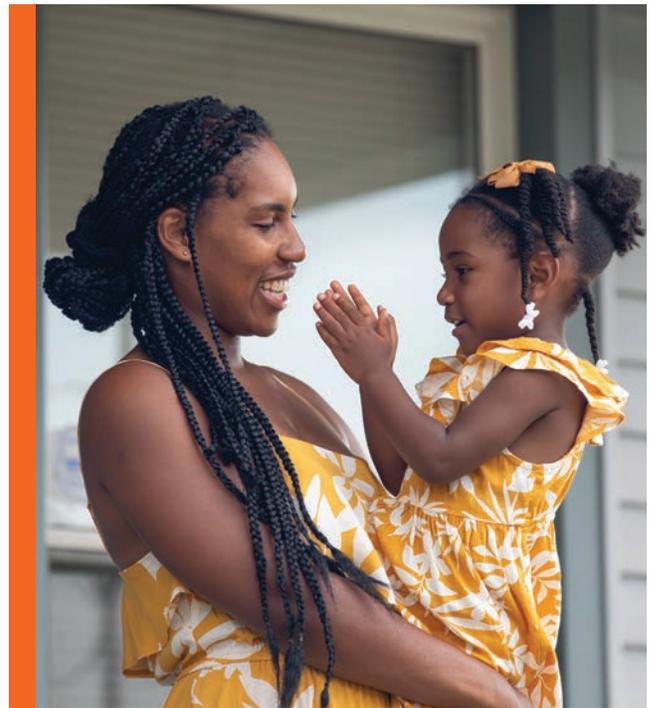
"IT HELPED NOT HAVING TO GO GROCERY SHOPPING AND SPEND MORE MONEY ON FOOD SO WE COULD HAVE MONEY FOR OTHER NECESSITIES."

Pilot Participant

THE FAMILIES

The pilot program was designed to support the most vulnerable families with at least one child age 0-5 years old in Washington, D.C., making sure that young patients and their families had access to regular, reliable meals that support good health during this crisis.

- Forty-six families enrolled in the meal program and received at least one food delivery, which included multiple meals, in ten weeks.
- These families represented 229 individuals and 161 children.
- At the beginning of the pilot, 75% of these families reported at least one member missing a meal in the last week because there was not enough food at the start of the program.
- And 74% of families worried their food would run out at the start of the program.



THE PILOT

The project was designed by No Kid Hungry and the MedStar Georgetown's Division of Community Pediatrics leadership team, who together facilitated the program vision, implementation and evaluation. First, the medical team identified and enrolled patient families struggling with food insecurity.

Next, healthy, ready to heat and serve meals were prepared and packaged by restaurant staff overseen by Chef Erik Bruner-Yang and his Power of 10-affiliated restaurants. These meals and grocery bags were delivered directly to families throughout a week along with nutrition education materials. Families were also contacted twice a week by family navigators who facilitated operations and provided hands-on support.



OVER THE COURSE OF THE PROGRAM,
THERE WERE 755 TOTAL DELIVERIES OF

14,191 MEALS.



ALONG WITH **862** CALLS AND TEXTS
FROM FAMILY NAVIGATORS.

A SECONDARY PRIORITY OF THE PILOT WAS TO HELP SUPPORT LOCAL FOOD INDUSTRY JOBS THAT WERE SEVERELY THREATENED BY THE CLOSURES OF THE PANDEMIC. IT WORKED. THE PROGRAM HAD ADDITIONAL SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC IMPACT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC BY SUSTAINING MULTIPLE JOBS IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY OVER THE TEN WEEK PERIOD AND GAINING ATTENTION FOR POWER OF 10 TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL PHILANTHROPIC FUNDING BEYOND THE TEN-WEEK PROJECT PERIOD.

THE FINDINGS

Thirty-one families completed the post-program survey and were included in the analysis. Among these families:

- Food insecurity decreased from 75% to 21%.
- Ninety percent of caregivers reported that this program decreased their worries related to food.
- And 77% percent reported their families ate more fruits and vegetables during this program.
- Only 1 family (3%) reported having missed a meal in the past week.

A focus group of these families showed common themes when it comes to providing food:

- Food cost is primary consideration for how they purchase food.
- Storage space and finances affect frequency of grocery store shopping.
- They usually travel to multiple stores to find least expensive items.
- They value nutrition in order to improve health but difficult to afford and prepare.
- And cooking can be challenging with small children.



BOTTOM LINE

This multi-sector partnership successfully responded to the food insecurity crisis exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic with a novel wrap around meal-delivery program supporting children and their families served by the Division of Community Pediatrics. Food insecurity was significantly mitigated, and families reported increased fruits and vegetables consumed. The pilot program had high retention rates and high satisfaction amongst participants.

UP NEXT

This program will extend for another year and will test, more closely, how healthy food access and education can improve health outcomes for young children who are living with obesity, asthma, allergies or developmental and behavioral outcomes and their parents.



No child should go hungry in America. But in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, 1 in 4 kids could face hunger this year. No Kid Hungry is working to end childhood hunger by helping launch and improve programs that give all kids the healthy food they need to thrive. This is a problem we know how to solve. No Kid Hungry is a campaign of Share Our Strength, an organization committed to ending hunger and poverty.



MedStar Georgetown University Hospital is a not-for-profit, acute-care teaching and research hospital licensed for 609 beds located in Northwest Washington, D.C. Founded in the Jesuit principle of cura personalis, caring for the whole person, MedStar Georgetown is committed to offering a variety of innovative diagnostic and treatment options within a trusting and compassionate environment. MedStar Georgetown's centers of excellence include neurosciences, transplant, cancer and gastroenterology. Along with Magnet® nurses, internationally recognized physicians, advanced research and cutting-edge technologies, MedStar Georgetown's healthcare professionals have a reputation for medical excellence and leadership.

The Power of 10 is a restaurant industry non-profit initiative whose mission is to aid independent restaurants across America by re-employing staff, sustaining business operations, and providing food to community members who need it the most. By raising \$10,000 per week in donations, The Power of 10 can re-employ 10 full-time restaurant workers and provide 1,000 free meals. For those looking to donate or get involved in The Power of 10, please visit www.powerof10initiative.com.

WITH SUPPORT FROM:

No Kid Hungry Leading Partner:
Citi

No Kid Hungry Innovation and Early Childhood Sponsor:
Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation

METHODOLOGY AND CONTACT:

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Leadership from all three organizations worked quickly to develop and stand up the operations of the project. Key areas included meal content and packaging, delivery operations, communications, rapid-cycle response, nutrition education and evaluation.

The Division of Community Pediatrics (DCP) at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital developed information technology systems to allow for: HIPAA compliant enrollment and evaluation, documentation and tracking of touch-points, operations management including bidirectional communication with P10.

Eighty-six percent of families (n=37) completed the program (at least 5 weeks). Of those, 31 families completed the post-program survey and were included in the paired analysis.