



NEWS RELEASE

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UNITED FOOD BANK IS FUNDED BY MOSAIC AND PATTERSON COMPANIES TO STRENGTHEN OUTCOMES FOR THE ELDERLY EXPERIENCING HUNGER IN RURAL EAST HILLSBOROUGH

Plant City, Florida (April 29, 2022): The Mosaic Company, along with Patterson Companies, have funded the United Food Bank, beginning June 15, 2022, for its *Feeding Our Legacy* pilot program on behalf of food-insecure seniors who reside primarily in rural, East Hillsborough or one of the following nine communities served by this nonprofit food bank: Plant City, Seffner, Thonotosassa, Dover, Valrico, Brandon, Bealsville, Lithia, and parts of Riverview.

During the pandemic, the United Food Bank began delivering emergency food supplies to a targeted number of low-income multi-family residential communities. It became apparent that a specific program addressing senior food insecurity was needed; hence the *Feeding Our Legacy* program was created.

United Food Bank's Executive Director Mary Heysek reports, "1 in 4 seniors struggle with hunger and access to nutritious food. Many are struggling with decisions between paying for medication, household expenses, and buying food. Our pilot program is designed to work one-on-one with each participant to get them the needed help, whether food, medical care, housing, or other services.

Mosaic agreed to fund the staff needed to strengthen the intake process for seniors. Staffing for this program will be culturally informed and attuned to health-related matters so they may adequately assess needs for well-being. Approximately 150 seniors will participate in the program which includes an extended intake process with follow-up and tracking of expressed needs and ability. Identifying senior needs with bilingual and culturally diverse intake staff is the first step toward establishing a plan of referrals or onsite services to help meet the demand.

The Patterson Companies have agreed to provide the goods and supplies needed to operate the program which includes a vast array of products.

Addressing hunger is one of three core areas for Mosaic community investment. The United Food Bank, Mosaic and Patterson have teamed up, as they have on other projects, to address issues that may be leaving rural seniors in Hillsborough County to face hunger and, all too often, facing this health risk alone.

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The United Food Bank has been operating since 1991 with a mission *to assist those in need, moving them from a state of hunger and impoverishment to self-sufficiency, empowerment, and self-reliance*. The agency meets 144,068 individual requests for services per year (2021), up from serving 110,000 individual requests for emergency food and other services in 2020. United Food Bank relies on community support, now more than ever, with needs soaring, to maintain its \$5.8 million annual budget, including \$4.8 million in food supplies, with a Four-Star Rating from Charity Navigator, exceeding industry standards of charities with its cause.

Any follow-up questions from the press, please call Mary Heysek, Executive Director, at 813-764-0625 X-5 or 813-763-4660 (cell) or e-mail Ms. Heysek at mheysek@ufbpc.org.

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