

# Merced County Food Bank and Community Partners Launch (PEACH) Program.

MERCED, Calif., July 31, 2016 /PRNewswire/ -- The PEACH (People Eating and Cooking Healthy) Program, is a collaboration between the Merced County Food Bank, Merced County Public Health, Human Services Agency, UC Merced Food Panty, Merced College and Mercy Medical Center Merced staff.



The objective of the PEACH Program is to build community capacity to focus on the following unmet health related areas outlined in Mercy Medical Center's Community Health Needs Assessment.

1. Diabetes
2. Heart Disease & Stroke
3. Nutrition, Physical Activity & Weight

Through a community-based approach to nutrition education and healthy food environments, the PEACH program will work to improve food access and teach lifelong nutrition skills in lower income communities and empower SNAP-eligible individuals, families, children and communities to live a healthy life.

The PEACH Program outcomes will include:

- Educating program participants on making healthy food choices
- Provide free fresh nutritious produce, nuts and food
- Introducing participants to a variety of healthy foods
- Showing parents how to buy and prepare healthy, affordable foods
- Introducing nutritious ingredients through taste tests and cooking demonstrations
- Providing tips on how to stretch a tight food budget
- Teaching nutrition and cooking workshops to adults and families
- Encouraging exercise and healthy decision-making
- Disseminating CalFresh and other information to low income populations which inform them of programs and services that will increase their access to nutritious perishable and non-perishable food throughout Merced County.

Merced County Food Bank's Executive Director Bill Gibbs said "The Peach Program is modeled after a very successful like-named project at The Food Trust – based in Philadelphia. All of the consortium partners have been providing nutrition education and food services through independent projects. Over the last few months, we have been discussing hunger needs in the community and how we can all integrate our resources to help improve the health and well-being of our program participants.

We are all very enthusiastic about the PEACH Program and the positive impact it will have on our community.

This pilot project will start at some of our current food distribution sites and will expand as we gather funds and resources".

## Related Links

<http://www.mmcfb.org>