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Pallottine Foundation of Huntington awards \$294,416 grant to support new Central Kitchen Food Project

Project Healthy Kids and Mountwest Community and Technical College to partner, provide fresh, nutrient-dense meals to children in local care centers

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – The Pallottine Foundation of Huntington has awarded Project Healthy Kids in Morgantown a \$294,416 Core Priorities Initiative grant to expand its Central Kitchen Food Project to Huntington. The new project will provide nutritious, from-scratch meals to childcare centers in Cabell and surrounding counties to promote healthy dietary patterns and support the physical and cognitive development of the children they serve.

“The pilot Central Kitchen Food Project in Morgantown has already demonstrated remarkable success,” said Janell Ray, CEO of the Pallottine Foundation of Huntington. “We believe the expansion project in Huntington has great potential to significantly impact food insecurity and nutrition by supporting the capacity of childcare centers to serve high-quality meals that meet children’s health needs.”

Through a partnership with Mountwest Community and Technical College (MCTC), the Project Healthy Kids team, along with culinary and dietetics staff and students, will use the Center for Culinary Arts commercial kitchen located at 1648 8th Ave. to prepare meals that appeal to children and incorporate whole foods and fresh ingredients. Childcare centers will contract with Project Healthy Kids for the daily delivery of these meals, which are designed to exceed nutritional guidelines provided by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Child and Adult Care Food Program and are priced at or below average reimbursement rates.

“We are thrilled to be launching our second Central Kitchen Food Project out of the Mountwest Kitchen in Huntington,” said Mary Hastings, Project Director with Project Healthy Kids. “We believe that fueling the future starts with feeding our youngest children nutritious, locally sourced foods. We are grateful for this partnership with the Pallottine Foundation of Huntington, Mountwest Community and Technical College, Healthy Kids Inc., local childcare centers, local farmers, and the many other partners that are making this possible.”

The project is expected to kick off in January 2024. During the first three months, Project Healthy Kids will hire a local kitchen team and a food operations specialist to focus on menu implementation, documentation, and partner communication. The organization will also solidify contracts with childcare centers and secure partnerships with local food producers. By the end of the first year, the project team’s goal is to prepare and deliver 500 meals each day to local childcare centers.

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Project Healthy Kids is the nonprofit partner to Healthy Kids Inc., a social enterprise focused on food and technology innovation to advance the organizations' shared mission of ensuring that every West Virginian has access to high-quality nutrition.

The Central Kitchen Food Project is supported by additional funding from Healthy Kids Inc., MCTC, the Benedum Foundation, the American Heart Association, and the Appalachian Regional Commission.

For more information about the Central Kitchen Food Project, contact Mary Hastings, project director, at 304-376-9117 or mary@projecthealthykids.org.

About the Pallottine Foundation of Huntington

The Pallottine Foundation of Huntington was established with proceeds from the sale of St. Mary's Medical Center, and continues the legacy established by the Pallottine Missionary Sisters of caring for the spiritual, emotional and physical health of those in the region. The Foundation focuses its efforts on four core areas: food insecurity, mental and behavioral health, substance use disorder, and tobacco cessation. It also supports capacity building and health and wellness. Its service area includes Boone, Cabell, Mason, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, Mingo, western Putnam and Wayne counties in West Virginia; Gallia, Lawrence and Scioto counties in Ohio; and Boyd, Carter, Floyd, Greenup, Johnson, Lawrence, Martin and Pike counties in Kentucky.

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