



# Manna Works

**Uplifting News About A Caring Community**

Spring/Summer 2019

Dear Friends of Manna,

Recently, a chance conversation about Manna with a long time Lansdale resident surprised me. He knew about Manna on Main Street and knew our location in North Penn Commons, but he did not know what we did beyond helping people. He listened with interest as I described how annually we serve 40,000 warm meals in Manna's Kitchen, distribute 500,000 pounds of nutritious food in Manna's Market, and provide \$100,000 in financial aid to struggling households unable to afford medicine or a critical bill. I also told him of the dozens of individuals living in poverty who receive training in Manna's Common Grounds Food Service Training to Employment Program and assistance finding sustainable employment.

While impressed with all that Manna does, what most surprised him was that there was such need in our region to make Manna necessary. He had not seen or heard of anyone living in poverty in our community. I explained that this is the nature of suburban poverty; it exists—mostly hidden—throughout the North Penn region. Those in need worship with us, their children play on school sports teams, they serve behind retail counters, and they may be the elderly couple living on our street. As chance conversations go, we each needed to be on our way, but I hoped that our short time together had helped him understand the need that thousands of our neighbors face daily.

At Manna, we are grateful for all of you who do know the need and feel called to help. Without the 3,300 volunteers, meals would not be served or food distributed; without food donations from individuals, organizations and grocery stores, there would be no food to serve or distribute; and without financial donations, there would be no staff to run the programs, no welcoming table to sit at, and no comfortable lobby to wait in for services.

With our gratitude comes a deep sense of responsibility to use all that is provided to serve our neighbors in need more deeply and effectively. In this newsletter, you will read of the transformative, innovative programs that Manna operates.

It is because of your support that Manna continues to broaden the scope of its mission of ending hunger in the North Penn region. We ask you once again to give generously so, together, we can serve and grow to meet the need.

With thanks,

Suzan Neiger Gould  
Executive Director

Manna on Main Street is committed to ending hunger in the North Penn region by providing food, fulfilling social service and education needs, and conducting community outreach. Through a food pantry and soup kitchen, emergency financial aid, counseling and referrals, and education opportunities, we serve those in need with the hope "that everyone might be fed."

## Business Champion Spotlight



Headquartered in Greeley, Colorado, JBS® USA—previously known locally as MOPAC in Souderton—processes, prepares, packages and delivers fresh, further-processed and value-added beef, pork, and poultry products for sale to customers in more than 105 countries on six continents. JBS is a leading American processor of beef and pork and a leading processor of beef in Canada, and they employ more than 100,000 individuals in over 100 worldwide facilities.

Manna on Main Street is pleased to welcome JBS as a Trailblazer Business Champion in 2019. As a partner at this level, JBS is a committed financial supporter, and has also begun donating more than 2,000 lbs. of beef each month, which Manna picks up from their Telford location in a refrigerated van.



Thank you, JBS, for partnering with us in our mission to eliminate hunger and food insecurity in the North Penn region and all of Montgomery County! 🏰

# Food Insecurity Doesn't Take A Vacation...

Our Spring Appeal begins with the mailing of this newsletter and ends on July 30th. Food insecurity doesn't take a vacation; please don't let your generosity take a vacation, either! Consider donating online or using the enclosed envelope to support our vital work in the community.

2019 Fiscal Year  
Budgeted Revenue  
**\$1,488,820**

2019 Fiscal Year  
Revenue-to-Date (Oct-April)  
**\$913,652**

2019 Fiscal Year  
Spring Appeal Goal  
**\$150,000**

Many thanks to our entire community for your commitment to ending hunger in the North Penn region!

## Degrees of Hunger

When you reflect on college, what are the images that first come to mind? Are you picturing listening to a lecture or cheering at the big game? Or are you back in the dining room loading up your tray with as much food as your arms can carry?

Many of us have these college impressions and memories, but may be unaware of the realities that some postsecondary students experience today...

- Replace that student focusing on a classroom lecture with an empty chair. She can't afford to get to class because she's out of gas money;
- Replace the big game with a work and school schedule that barely leaves time for sleep;
- Replace the student loading up his dining room tray because he can't afford campus food and is skipping meals to save money.

The Hope Center for College, Community, and Justice at Temple University conducts the nation's largest annual assessment of basic needs security among college students (#RealCollegeSurvey). In fall 2018, 123 two- and four-year institutions participated, yielding these troubling findings:

Nearly 86,000 students participated.  
The results indicate:

- 45% of respondents were food insecure in the prior 30 days
- 56% of respondents were housing insecure in the previous year
- 17% of respondents were homeless in the previous year

Locally, Manna is partnering with Gwynedd Mercy University and Montgomery County Community College to assess student food security through a 2018-2019 research grant generously provided by the VNA Foundation of Greater North Penn.

Manna's Program Director met with more than 50 students through six focus groups to learn about their college experiences. Many of these student voices echo national findings and reveal the hardship, resilience and deep need of students in our own backyard.



*"I work full time. I just came from work, and I'll be going back to work; there are days that I can't stop. I travel an hour and need that money for gas. So, there it is, there are days that I just go hungry."*

During summer and fall 2019, Manna, Gwynedd Mercy University, and Montgomery County Community College will be reviewing national and campus-specific survey findings, focus group discussions, and key stakeholder interviews to determine local need and a possible pilot project. We are grateful to our partner institutions for identifying this need and committing to improved student food security and well-being in our community. 

## “...this program is the cornerstone of my life and recovery today.”

As part of the program at An Evening of Gratitude on May 14, we asked one of our current Common Grounds Trainees, Carlise Jeter, to share about his life and his experience at Manna.

“**G**ood evening. My name is Carlise Jeter. I grew up in North Carolina and lived there for 14 years until I moved to Pennsylvania with my family; I grew up in a single-parent home.

I came to realize that life is a journey, and my journey began with me making bad choices. I didn't at the time truly understand that all choices have consequences, and as a result my life became unmanageable and dark. I couldn't seem to find purpose and meaning. At this time, I at the age of 15 began experimenting with drugs and alcohol. By the age of 18, I was incarcerated. By the time I was 20, I was in and out of incarceration numerous times.



While moving in this vicious cycle, I realized that something had to change. I heard it said that, “it is easier for us to change our perception of reality than to change reality itself”. So I started by changing my reality one day at a time—setting goals, facing adversity, getting the tools to overcome the choices I had made.



Therefore, all my journey brought me to Manna on Main Street where today I am learning to face challenges with not only dignity and respect, but to see them as opportunity for growth, problem solving, and most importantly a work ethic which, in demanding the best of us, is providing all the tools needed for success. I can honestly say that this program is the cornerstone of my life and recovery today. Without it, facing a world which demands the most of those whom succeed, I would be lost...stuck in a life built on poor choices. Today, with Manna, I choose to live a life I can be proud of. This program is in part the key to me achieving my dreams, and allowing me a second chance. Learning these and other values are such important tools and Manna has opened so many doors. I have specific goals of employment opportunities through Manna. Also, with their continued support, I hope to attend the upcoming semester of Community College. The program is more than just cooking. It affords those who would not ordinarily have the opportunity to advance within society as a whole, and the chance of a career path in the food industry which is competitive and fast paced.

I someday hope of using food with all that I learned from Manna to do for others which Manna is doing for me.

I would also like to take this time to thank everyone who supports Manna. First, the volunteers who so selflessly sacrifice their time and resources for me and all the participants. I would also like to thank the staff for imparting their skills and talents to us, and for also demanding the best of us...pushing us to excel in all that we do. Finally, I would like to thank the donors for their generosity because without it, these doors of advancement would be closed, preventing potential participants from reaching their goals.

It is a pleasure to meet and talk to all of you. Thank you for your time. ”

# Volunteer Spotlight

Jill Davies started volunteering at Manna in December 2018. We are excited to highlight her experiences:



## What made you pick Manna as a place to volunteer?

I support Manna's mission that no one in our community should go hungry. We have raised our family in the North Penn region, and it's important to me that the people of our community [get the] food needed to live a healthy life. This is a vital basic need that no one should go without.

## Where have you volunteered while at Manna and which was your favorite?

I have volunteered in the Market, in food preparation, and with serving meals and have enjoyed them all. I like serving the most because I get to interact with the people who benefit from the services that Manna provides.

## What is one thing you would tell others about volunteering at Manna?

That it is a wonderful feeling to help improve the lives of people in your community.

## Grab & Go 2019

For the last five years, from mid-June to mid-August, Manna has partnered with North Penn School District School Nutrition Services to offer the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) in our community.

SFSP, known locally as Grab & Go, is a United States Department of Agriculture initiative to ensure that no child goes hungry during the summer.

## GRAB A LUNCH

JUNE 24 to AUGUST 16



Look for the mobile meal van at these locations this summer, or stop in to North Penn Commons for a healthy lunch or breakfast. All children are welcome!

The Summer Food Service Program, known locally as GRAB A LUNCH, is a United States Department of Agriculture initiative to ensure that all children have access to free, healthy meals year-round. North Penn School District and its affiliates are EEO institutions.

QUESTIONS? Call 215.853.1082 or visit www.rpen.org/summerfeeding.

This program is sponsored by:

<img alt="Logos for Penn State Health St. Luke's and

# A Manna Refresh!

Dale Weber (of Dale Weber Remodeling) has been a volunteer member of Manna's Building Maintenance and Safety Committee for many years. After 2-1/2 years in North Penn Commons, everyone was hoping for a fresh coat of paint to refresh our space for the enjoyment of staff, volunteers, clients and everyone else who visits Manna on Main Street. Dale approached Home Depot's Montgomeryville location with a request for assistance with maintenance projects at Manna.

Home Depot management steered Dale toward their grant program and helped him with the application process. We are thankful for Home Depot's generosity and the award of a \$2,000 gift card grant to be used for maintenance and improvement projects around our North Penn Commons facility.



Manna Refresh Volunteers  
Dale, Collin, Julie, Rose and Tim



Our first big project was painting the dining area and hallways. We were able to use the granted gift card to purchase all paint supplies, and Home Depot also arranged for their employees to volunteer at Manna in order to complete the painting project in one day. Dale has also used the grant award to purchase wall panels to protect hallways from carts and crates and to purchase garden fencing to keep rabbits and other critters out of our community gardens.

The next time you visit Home Depot in Montgomeryville, please thank them for their community engagement and support. We certainly appreciate it! 

## A Snapshot of Common Grounds

Many of the Common Grounds trainees enter our Kitchen with heavy pasts. Some have been homeless or housing insecure; several have attended each day from emergency shelters, rising from cots to take long bus commutes to arrive at Manna by 8:00am. Others have struggled with addiction or mental health challenges that have led to past charges or incarceration, deepening the trauma in their lives. All experience daily economic uncertainty.

With these past and present challenges, our trainees come ready to learn, leaving troubles in their lockers as they put on their chef shirts and aprons to focus on batonnet or julienne knife cuts. Their resiliency, fierce determination and commitment to invest in themselves yields life-changing results. Their ServSafe® certification and new skills open up employment opportunities that could lead to self-sustaining careers. Our graduates have shared that Common Grounds transforms them beyond their culinary knowledge and job placement. This program changes them deeply, igniting confidence and competencies previously thought lost.



Common Grounds Cohorts 11 & 12

At the end of this 14-week program, we ask graduates to complete a self-reflection of their life, work and situational circumstances. This snapshot reveals how impactful Common Grounds enrollment is for our trainees and their households. We are deeply grateful to this community for partnering with Manna in helping individuals learn and hone culinary skills, secure employment and transform their lives. 

LIFE & WORK SKILLS Did Common Grounds (CG) impact your ability to...	Big/Huge Impact
Communicate effectively	87%
Develop intentional listening and speaking	88%
Focus on positives within	87%
Develop a cover letter and resume	93%

LIFE & SITUATIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES Did CG impact another positive outcome in your life, such as...	Big/Huge Impact
Confidence about getting and keeping a job	90%
Interest in pursuing additional education	90%

North Penn Commons  
606 E Main Street, Suite 1001  
Lansdale, PA 19446



## HUNGER DOES NOT TAKE A VACATION



For an up-to-the-minute list of items in need, go to: [mannaonmain.org/give-food/what-is-needed/](http://mannaonmain.org/give-food/what-is-needed/).



Please consider donating low salt/low sugar and whole grain items.



**Manna's Common Grounds Café & Catering**  
social enterprises directly support our culinary training program.



Visit the Café in North Penn Commons Monday–Friday, 8am–1:30pm; Saturday, 9am–1:30pm.

Contact Chef Dan to schedule your next catered event:  
[catering@mannaonmain.org](mailto:catering@mannaonmain.org)



[www.mannaonmain.org/cgtp](http://www.mannaonmain.org/cgtp)

### Common Grounds by the Numbers

Common Grounds by the Numbers	2017	2018
Trainees	23	27
Graduated	65%	70%
Employed Upon Graduation	47%	58%

## You can find Manna at...

First Fridays in Lansdale (6/7, 8/2 & 10/4)—Come see what Lansdale has to offer during Discover Lansdale's First Fridays! You can find us by the Kugel Ball from 6:30-9:30pm.

Villari's Kick-a-thon (6/15)—Villari's Self Defense in Chalfont holds their annual Kick-a-thon every June. Proceeds from the event are donated to Manna.

Lansdale Farmers Market (6/22 & 10/26)—Head over to Penndale Middle School to support Manna through the Buy One, Give One program. All donations go to Manna's Market. Stop by from 9am-1pm.

Night Sky Campout (7/12)—Grab your tent & sleeping bags for a fun family event at Parkside Place! Admission is a canned good for Manna's Market!

Founders Day (8/24)—Lansdale's biggest annual event, hosted by Discover Lansdale, is the perfect way to end the summer. Come to learn about Manna, stay for the fireworks!

