



For Immediate Release

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Bucks County Nonprofits Launch Coordinated HELP Center to Distribute Food and Other Necessities

Fairless Hills, PA – April 21, 2020 – St. Mary Medical Center, Bucks County Opportunity Council, and United Way of Bucks County, with the support of Penn Community Bank, announce the launch of a new 8,000 square foot space for a healthy eating and living partnership named the HELP Center.

The new site, located in Bristol Borough, will provide food and other necessities to residents county-wide. Items will be distributed through food pantries, Fresh Connect free mobile farm markets, and existing distribution points. The site is not open to the public.

"St. Mary brought these organizations together to improve the coordination of hunger relief in Bucks County," said Larry Brilliant, MD, President of St. Mary. "The HELP Center will be a hub for addressing food insecurity in Bucks County, fulfilling the mission to serve our community members most in need." St. Mary will use the center for distributing food resources for their weekend meal program.

Bucks County Opportunity Council, the county's lead food agency, will use the HELP Center as central distribution for dry goods. The COVID-19 outbreak has increased need with hundreds of new families waiting in long lines for food. According to CEO Erin Lukoss, the HELP Center will increase the Opportunity Council's capacity.

"Last year, BCOC coordinated distribution of over 1.9 million pounds of food to over 60 sites. With the new HELP Center, we can increase our food storage volume and get more food onto the tables of families who need it," says Lukoss.

United Way of Bucks County will eventually relocate its existing in-kind goods distribution to the new site. The in-kind gifts program typically provides home goods. While COVID is a concern, the local United Way will focus exclusively on urgently needed items like donated toilet paper, diapers, and cleaning supplies.

"There is an increased and urgent need for the basics," said Marissa Christie, United Way of Bucks County's CEO. "Our new HELP Center means we can get larger donations from corporate partners and get items out to the community faster."

Penn Community Bank is providing financial support to launch the project. "Penn Community Bank is committed to serving as a catalyst for growth. We live out our mission by serving as a trusted and essential partner that meets people where they are – the HELP Center is an extension of that mission," said Jeane M. Vidoni, President and CEO of Penn Community Bank. "Whether it is helping those in need, partnering with front-line organizations



to expand their reach, or leading the community response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our goal is to make an unparalleled contribution to the communities we serve.”

About St. Mary Medical Center: Established in 1973, St. Mary Medical Center is guided by its Catholic-health core values of reverence, stewardship, integrity, justice and commitment to the underserved. Located in Langhorne, Pa., and with 371 licensed beds, St. Mary is a community teaching hospital and offers state-of-the-art technology and highly skilled physicians and clinical professionals to provide advanced care for complex cases. St. Mary offers advanced non-invasive treatments, adult and pediatric emergency services, inpatient medical and rehabilitation facilities, along with supportive health and wellness programs. St. Mary is designated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a Level II Trauma Center. St. Mary has a nationally accredited hip and knee replacement program and has an NAPBC-accredited breast program and Commission on Cancer-accredited cancer center, with services provided in partnership with Penn Medicine. Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic is a Regional Health System that includes Mercy Catholic Medical Center – Mercy Fitzgerald Campus in Darby, Pa.; Mercy Catholic Medical Center – Mercy Philadelphia Campus in West Philadelphia; Nazareth Hospital in Northeast Philadelphia; Saint Francis Healthcare in Wilmington, Del.; St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne, Pa. and home health and LIFE programs. Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic is a member of Trinity Health, one of the largest multi-institutional Catholic health care delivery systems in the nation.

About Bucks County Opportunity Council: BCOC is the lead anti-poverty organization in Bucks County, with a mission to reduce poverty and partner with the community to promote economic self-sufficiency. Since 1965, BCOC has served low income families by helping them to stabilize when in crisis, garner resources to achieve a livable wage, gain additional education and training, and work towards economic self-sufficiency. Last year, they assisted 17,327 people through its five programs: Economic Self-Sufficiency Program, Emergency Services, Food, Weatherization, and Volunteer Income Tax Preparation (VITA). The food program has grown exponentially over the past several years to meet the needs and reduce hunger in our community. This project will only strengthen that program and make a greater impact for families.

About United Way of Bucks County: Since 1952, UW Bucks has been improving lives in Bucks County by uniting donors, advocates, and volunteers around the common good. United Way programs focus on the building blocks for a good life: a quality education, a stable income, and good health. For more information, call 215.949.1660 or visit www.uwbucks.org.

About Penn Community Bank: Penn Community Bank holds more than \$2 billion in assets, employs more than 350 people, and offers banking, lending and investments at 24 bank branches and two administrative centers throughout Bucks and Montgomery counties, Pennsylvania. As an independent, mutual financial institution, Penn Community Bank is not publicly traded and operates with its long-term mission in mind: to help businesses grow and prosper, to provide financial resources to individuals and families throughout their lifetimes, to strengthen the local economy, and to partner with local organizations to act as a catalyst for positive growth in every market it serves.

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