



Bibb County School District

Department of Communications / Community & School Affairs

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FOOD RESOURCE AND EDUCATION PROGRAM IMPLEMENTED IN FOUR BIBB SCHOOLS

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(MACON, GA) – The Bibb County School District partnered with Helping Hands Ending Hunger Inc., Peyton Anderson Foundation, and Mercer University's School of Business and Athletics Program on Friday, April 21, to announce the successful pilot-year implementation of Helping Hands Ending Hunger in four Bibb County School District schools – Heard Elementary, Ingram-Pye Elementary, Southfield Elementary, and Ballard-Hudson Middle. Helping Hands Ending Hunger is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation established in 2016 with an inspired vision: to alleviate childhood food insecurity, reduce school food waste, encourage better educational outcomes, and shape a healthier world.

"We are thrilled to be provided with this opportunity to bring our programming to Macon schools. Thanks to the generous grant from the Peyton Anderson Foundation, our four pilot schools have fully embraced the opportunity to engage 'kids helping kids,' reducing food waste and addressing food insecurity in their communities. The support from the Bibb County School District has been unparalleled. We look forward to helping encourage optimal educational outcomes for participating students and cultivating healthier habits with sustainable, wide-reaching solutions for the community," said Carla Harward, CEO of Helping Hands Ending Hunger Inc.

Helping Hands Ending Hunger empowers students to rescue uneaten food from school cafeterias and join hands with their communities to alleviate food insecurity, reduce food waste, encourage education equity, and shape a healthier world. When first introduced to the project, the Bibb County School District recognized a great alignment to Leader in Me with its student-led project that teaches students the importance of citizenship.

The implementation of the program in Bibb schools is supported by a grant provided by Peyton Anderson Foundation, which supports local nonprofit organizations through philanthropic funding that improves the quality of life in Central Georgia. Initial funding provided for a refrigerator, freezer, barrel cooler, insulated bags, cart, bin, scale, gloves, fruit wash, and initial food pantry at each school. The necessary training and program implementation also was included in initial funding. Members of Mercer University's School of Business and Athletics Programs have helped promote, collect donations, and volunteer for the program.

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Vision: Each student will demonstrate strength of character and will be college or career ready.

Mission: The Bibb County School District develops a highly trained staff and an engaged community dedicated to educating each student for a 21st century global society.

About Helping Hands Ending Hunger

The program began in a small, rural town in northwest Georgia as the result of Carla Harward's effort to feed two little boys who had come to her daughter Sophie's school on a Monday crying, their bellies hurt, because they hadn't eaten any food over the weekend. Noting all the food waste that occurred in the school's cafeteria during meals, Sophie posed a simple question that became the catalyst of programming: Why can't we take the food that students throw away during breakfast and lunch and give it to that family so those little boys don't go hungry? Turns out, long-enforced policy governing school nutrition programs (applicable nationwide) determined it was better to trash nutritious, edible food than to repurpose it to feed hungry children.

Helping Hands Ending Hunger is a 501c3 nonprofit corporation established in 2016 with an inspired vision: to alleviate childhood food insecurity, reduce school food waste, encourage better educational outcomes, and shape a healthier world. Helping Hands Ending Hunger's innovative, "Kids Helping Kids" program empowers student leaders to repurpose uneaten food from school meals and join hands with their communities to nurture food insecure families. Re-educating that food is medicine, not trash, is a primary focus. As a result of determined efforts measured to change existing policy, Helping Hands Ending Hunger now offers the only program operating in Georgia that has been expressly reviewed and approved by the Department of Public Health and Department of Education/School Nutrition to rescue cold storage food (milk, cheese, yogurt, fruit, etc.) along with dry packaged foods and channel it to children when they need the most, over weekends and school breaks. Providing constant access to nutritious food so that participants can enjoy active healthy lives is the organization's goal. A non-profit operating with strict food safety protocols, Helping Hands Ending Hunger removes the risk of liability for food donations under state and federal law. Moreover, with its unique student-led design, the program, once established in a school, requires minimal coordination from school staff and easily integrates into daily routines.

Further resolved to make significant differences in the quality of life for people living with food insecurity, Helping Hands Ending Hunger employs a "whole family" focus, while encouraging everyone at participating schools to dispel stigma, change school climates, and develop parent/caregiver engagement for best outcomes. Partnerships with established nonprofits working to bridge need gaps for the same population Helping Hands Ending Hunger serves (Good360/Esther International/Regional Food Banks/FoodRescue.net) expand outreach and effectiveness. By incorporating nutrition/healthy living components along with STEAM learning, soft-skill development, CTAE pathways, and other relevant curriculum, Helping Hands Ending Hunger strives to help students achieve their full human potential through education, stability, health, and well-being. Building community partnerships in each district the program operates in creates program sustainability. Now operating in over 110 schools and adding more chapters monthly, Helping Hands Ending Hunger has collected and distributed over 2.25 million pounds of food and put 1.8 million meals on the tables of struggling families. Helping Hands Ending Hunger has been recognized as "one of the most dynamic and committed social organizations in Georgia," from GA Senate Resolution 147 (February 25, 2021).

About the Peyton Anderson Foundation

The Peyton Anderson Foundation serves as a lasting memorial to a man whose goodwill lives on long after his death in 1988. Peyton T. Anderson, Jr., owner in the 1950s and 60s of the Macon Telegraph and the Macon News, was a highly successful businessman, family man, veteran, civic leader, and philanthropist. In his will, Peyton Anderson assigned the bulk of his estate for charitable purposes to benefit his hometown and region of Macon and Central Georgia. He maintained that the people of Macon, Bibb County and Central Georgia had been good to him and he in turn wished to be good to them. For more information about Peyton Anderson's legacy, the Foundation and the grant application process, please visit PeytonAnderson.org.

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