



Together, we feed our community.

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It is our pleasure to express Meeting Essential Needs with Dignity's ("MEND") sincere appreciation for our partnership with RWJBarnabas Health ("RWJBH"). MEND is dedicated to strengthening the health of our community by increasing access to fresh, healthy food across Essex County. Since our founding, we have worked collaboratively with food pantries, community partners, and families experiencing food insecurity to build responsive, community-driven programming.

Support from RWJBH allows our organization to invest directly in community-based initiatives that advance health equity and food security across our shared communities. Our mission aligns deeply with RWJBH's commitment to addressing the social determinants of health and building healthier, more equitable communities.

Through our partnership, RWJBH has enabled MEND to provide bi-monthly home deliveries of fresh, locally grown produce to 200 households across Essex County to families facing mobility challenges, chronic illness, lack of transportation, and financial hardship. Last year, our home delivery program alone provided nearly 5,000 servings of fresh, healthy food to participants. Combined with broader initiatives such as MEND on the Move, Supplemental Support distributions, and Pantry Partnerships, we provided over 151,000 servings countywide. RWJBH's support has been instrumental in allowing us to operate with the consistency that families can count on.

Furthermore, funding from RWJBH has allowed us to respond quickly and strategically when the fall SNAP crisis hit, due to the government shutdown. Funding allowed MEND to step in to support five newly-created, school-based community hubs in Newark, and supply them with weekly deliveries of fresh food and eggs, over a period of six weeks, while families waited for benefits to resume.

Continued partnership is critical. Without renewed support from RWJBH, MEND would be forced to reduce the number of households served, scale back delivery frequency, and potentially limit services for those facing the greatest barriers to food access. Such a change would directly affect hundreds of families who depend on these consistent deliveries for their health and well-being.

We remain deeply grateful for RWJBH's unwavering commitment to building and sustaining healthier communities. Continued investment in these community partnerships ensures that programs like ours can continue reaching vulnerable families across New Jersey.

Please reach out with any questions or concerns.

Regards,
Robin Peacock
Robin L. Peacock