

THE WAR ON THE POOR

Once there was a War on Poverty, now there seems to be a War on the Poor.

Despite the great need in our community, safety-net programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) are constantly at risk for cuts.

Leaders in Congress argue that the richest country on the planet can afford tax cuts to corporations but must tighten its belt by cutting programs that help vulnerable citizens.

We are currently working to protect SNAP by organizing our members to urge their

legislators in the House and Senate to actively oppose any Farm Bill that includes cuts to SNAP. We held a SNAP challenge with staff at the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette to raise awareness about these looming cuts.



**people in Allegheny County
have trouble putting food on
their table**

"General Assistance is preventing a great number of people from being homeless, and once this program is eliminated, they *will* become homeless."

Rochelle Jackson, *Public Policy Advocate*
Pittsburgh City Paper

In 2012, Governor Corbett and the State Legislature slashed human services, re-imposed the Asset Test for Food Stamp eligibility and eliminated General Assistance. GA was a vital lifeline and a last resort for the most vulnerable and indigent people in Pennsylvania.

Just Harvest joined a coalition of over 100 organizations to speak out against these cuts and inform the governor and public of their disastrous impact.



Over 15 years since so-called "Welfare Reform", Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) has become less effective both in assisting working families affected by economic downturns and helping very low-income families in crisis. Oftentimes, built-in barriers in state TANF programs interfere with the program's ability to promote job readiness.

Just Harvest worked with state welfare department officials and CLIP (Coalition for Low-Income Pennsylvanians) to craft a waiver for Pennsylvania to count participation in a GED program toward the work requirement for TANF. This provides participants who currently do not have a GED a path to future employment and self-sufficiency.

Just Harvest fights hunger by focusing on its root causes: Among them, government policies that allow poverty to exist in a nation of plenty.



Not only has the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) been facing problems of low-participation rates and retention, but it is also threatened by federal sequestration cuts, which are likely to result in some reduced office hours at WIC satellite offices, further decreasing enrollment.

Our work has focused on speaking out to protect WIC from cuts and organizing to simplify the application and recertification processes to promote enrollment.

Requiring fewer visits to the WIC office makes continued program participation less burdensome on working parents, so we worked to push recertification from six months to one year.

The Allegheny County Health Department is moving forward towards implementing our policy proposal to equip WIC offices to routinely conduct the required health screenings themselves, instead of requiring applicants to obtain these in separate visits to their health care providers.

UNCOVERING BARRIERS TO BENEFITS

The Department of Public Welfare (DPW) is chronically understaffed, leading to endemic customer service problems throughout Allegheny County. Unmanageably high case loads per caseworker create barriers for clients to communicating simple messages which can be crucial in obtaining and maintaining vital benefits.

Client experiences and issues constantly inform our discussions with policymakers, especially with respect to chronic customer service problems at DPW.

We surveyed over 160 SNAP clients and made over 200 test calls to the published local DPW numbers. Our results confirmed what we have been hearing from many of our clients: *Reaching a human being if you have a question is nearly impossible.*



1 in 3 applications are denied because of communication problems

48%

of clients

surveyed never received a return call from their caseworker

1/5

clients

surveyed provided documents, only later to be told that DPW did not have them on file

63%

of clients

surveyed did not receive a call back within 3 days as required when given a ticket by the state-wide customer service center

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

There's been a shift in public opinion against poor people over the past few years. Media attacks denounce food stamp and welfare clients as "lazy" and "undeserving" amid anecdotal allegations of rampant "waste, fraud and abuse" in government programs. The Just Harvest Education Fund's major challenge is to debunk these myths and stereotypes and deepen understanding about hunger and poverty.

This year, we reached out: through 59 media appearances, social media and blogging, poverty simulations at local high schools and universities, and speaking engagements.



TAKING THE FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE

For the 1.8 million Pennsylvanians on food stamps, an average meal budget of about \$4/day is the hard reality. Low-income households learn how difficult it is to avoid hunger, afford nutritious foods, and stay healthy without adequate resources.

Staff from Just Harvest and the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* participated in a Food Stamp Challenge, living on a standard weekly food stamp budget for the

work week. Their findings appeared on the front page of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and its blog "Pittsburgh, 5 Days, 6 Dollars" and through Just Harvest's website, blog, and social media, where there were high levels of engagement. Because Just Harvest staff took the challenge from within the confines of a food desert, this also raised awareness of geographic issues of food access and our work in that area.

STRENGTHENING SUMMER FOOD

In cooperation with the Southwestern PA Food Security Partnership, we have been working to expand the summer food program and promote participation.

The Allegheny County Dept. of Human Services has cut back on staffing for low-participation sites. We recruited interns and volunteers to fill in the staffing gap at six of those sites, so that the host organizations will still be able to provide food to kids in their communities.

Low participation is a problem across the program, partly because many sites struggle to provide additional activities for the kids to enjoy while they are there for meals. Brandie Waxler, an intern from CCAC's Dietetic program, spent her spring semester at Just Harvest developing a packet of activities to help sites create a livelier atmosphere for their kids. Activities range from board games that teach about nutrition, matching foods with the body parts they help develop, to coloring activities, to active play.



Changing the politics of hunger requires changing the way each of us thinks about hunger, poverty, and the responsibilities of government.



Just VOTE

In 2012, PA enacted a Voter ID law that required all voters to present a valid photo identification at the polls, starting at the November 2012 general election. Rather than its stated purpose of preventing virtually non-existent "voter fraud," the law disenfranchised seniors, low-income people, and other demographic groups that do not have ready access to the required forms of identification.

Until a court order blocked enforcement of the laws so far, we helped our low-income clients understand the law, making calls throughout the summer to inform them about the law's requirements and to encourage them to pledge to vote in the fall.

While most of our clients had an acceptable form of ID, we provided 253 people with information about how to obtain a free ID for voting purposes.

Volunteers called over 3,000 clients and filled out over 550 pledge to vote cards!

Low-income women tend to have a lower turnout at the polls, so we worked to encourage them to increase their political power through our get out the vote efforts.



As part of a coalition with the Women and Girl's Foundation, National Council of Jewish Women, Chatham University's PA Center for Women and Politics, PA State Voices, the Women's Law Project and Planned Parenthood of Western PA, we collected over 300 Pledge to Vote cards from low-income women.

Through our 5 volunteer phone banks to remind low-income women to get out and vote, we reached 1,569 voters in the weeks before the elections.

**JOIN
OUR ONLINE
NETWORK**

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You Tube

www.youtube.com/justharvestpgh

SERVING

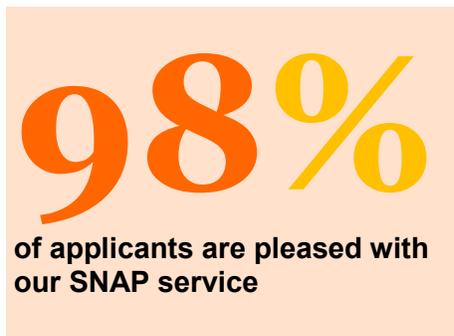


MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Shrinking Department of Public Welfare (DPW) budgets, reduced staffing at County Assistance Offices and increased need have created barriers to participation in SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) for many eligible households.

Since 2007, Just Harvest has provided application assistance and targeted outreach for the program. In addition to promoting it, and processing online applications for clients, we help applicants to overcome common barriers in the application process with dignity and compassion.

As part of our fight against hunger and poverty, Just Harvest helps low-income people access the benefits that they deserve.



Over **30 Volunteers** logged over **350 hours** with our Food Stamp application assistance project!

Our clients received an estimated

\$5.6 million

in Food Stamp benefits from 2007-2012, which generated

\$4.4 million

in additional economic activity



“Before I began volunteering at Just Harvest, I had no real understanding of the plight of those living below the poverty line. What I have seen through my experience at Just Harvest is that the Department of Public Welfare can only handle so much and is practically at the breaking point. With insufficient funding and the outlook of even less in the future, Food Stamps and other welfare programs are becoming far less attainable even to those individuals and families that are barely surviving from one day to the next.

By having an advocacy group such as Just Harvest between the public and the DPW governmental body, more individuals in true need of food stamps can properly acquire these benefits without getting lost or mistreated in the process.”

Cassandra Ann Malinak, *Just Harvest volunteer and recent graduate B.S. in Clinical Dietetics and Nutrition*



AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Just Harvest Education Fund is a proud partner agency of the United Way. The United Way Family enables Just Harvest to expand and strengthen our efforts to help

MONEY IN YOUR POCKET TAX CAMPAIGN



ght against hunger
Harvest helps low-
cess the government
are entitled to.

Many low-income people are eligible for tax refunds or credits and lose much of their refunds to commercial tax preparers in preparation fees and advance refund loans.

As the lead partner in the *United Way of Allegheny County's Money in Your Pocket Coalition*, **Just Harvest** provides free tax preparation assistance for low-income people at four Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Sites in Allegheny County, helping people to collect their refunds and credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit, (EITC) the nation's largest anti-poverty program.

EITC IN 2013

53%

of Just Harvest tax clients received the EITC

331 households'

EITC boosted their annual income by at least

25%

Since 2003, we've served totaling

17,704 households \$31 million

in refunds

OUR COMMUNITY TAX SITES

Our Southside Office
8th largest VITA site in PA

HACP Bedford Hope Center
Grew by **147%** this year

CCAC Boyce Campus
Doubled # of EITC returns in 4 years

Prospect Park Family Center
82% of clients speak English as a second language

86 Volunteers
dedicated over
4,000 hours
this tax season!

M* is a single adult living in the eastern suburbs and working part-time while going to school and earning less than \$6,000 for the year. She writes:

“ I am very glad I decided to take advantage of the free tax program provided by Just Harvest this year. This is the first time I decided to use this program and it really made a difference! I heard about this program through my school and expected perhaps a hassle, but I was wrong. The service was convenient, efficient, and professional and my tax preparer was very helpful, polite and courteous. I will definitely recommend this service to my friends and family and am appreciative for all they have done! Thank you Just Harvest!”

M. received state and federal refunds totaling \$1,700 – which is over a fourth of her annual income!

Way of Allegheny County. Major support from the United Way's Impact Fund on Financially Struggling Adults on help low-income people access the public safety net benefits they need.

FRESH ACCESS

“Access to affordable healthy food should be more than just a privilege for some; it should be a right for all.”

Zachary Murray,
Emerson Hunger Fellow

160,000 residents of Allegheny County on SNAP have been unable to use their Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card at farmers markets because vendors accept cash only.

Since Food Stamp benefits were converted from paper coupons to debit-style EBT cards in 2006, technological barriers have prevented nearly all farmers markets from accepting them. Our Fresh Access project enables Food Stamp shoppers—for the first time in years—to have equal access to the fresh, healthful produce sold there.

In May 2013, Just Harvest launched our new project at two Pittsburgh Citiparks Farmers Markets - in East Liberty and the North Side. It is a coordinated effort with the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council, the City of Pittsburgh, USDA and the PA Dept. of Agriculture, local farmers, and many other partners.

This summer, we are working to expand Fresh Access to other Citiparks markets. Just Harvest will also continue to promote improved access to farmers markets as a key to solving the food desert problem in this region.



1 in 7

people are on SNAP in Allegheny County and have not had access to the fresh, local foods available at farmers markets

A MENU FOR FOOD JUSTICE: IMPROVING FOOD DESERTS

Only **3** of the **21**
communities assessed have a grocery store

For thousands of our neighbors living in low-income communities, getting nutritious, affordable food at a store is a huge difficulty. In many of these communities known as “food deserts,” residents often travel well over a mile to access healthy foods most commonly available at grocery stores and supermarkets.

Just Harvest hosted Zachary Murray as the Bill Emerson National Hunger Fellow of the Congressional Hunger Center to conduct research on food deserts in Pittsburgh and Allegheny County’s most vulnerable communities. This project depended on a community effort that involved many grassroots partners and allies, including the Pittsburgh Food Policy Council and the Pittsburgh Jewish Social Justice Roundtable. We are using this assessment to lay the groundwork for policy

recommendations and a plan of action for improving food resources in communities most at risk for food insecurity.

In June 2013, Just Harvest hosted a community forum to release Zachary’s report, *A Menu for Food Justice: Strategies for Improving Access to Healthy Foods in Allegheny County*. The community forum convened community stakeholders—including faith-based organizations, local government, academia, labor, finance, and philanthropy—in a discussion of community solutions to the food desert problem in our area.



Only **13** of the **75**
stores assessed in food deserts offer a limited selection of fresh produce

STRATEGIC PLAN SHAPES OUR FUTURE

On July 10, 2012, Just Harvest's Board of Directors adopted our first strategic plan in the organization's history, thanks to support from the United Way of Allegheny County.

The plan strengthens our grassroots approach and reaffirms our commitment over the past 25 years to defending those in our community affected by hunger and poverty through advocacy, community education, and high-quality service.

The planning process included an internal reorganization. During 2012, Ken Regal was named Executive Director, and Rochelle Jackson, our Public Policy Advocate. And in 2013, we welcomed two new staff members, Grassroots Organizer Maria Muzzie and Communica-

tions Coordinator Emily Cleath.

With our new team, we're working to create and engage a core grassroots community of Just Harvest supporters, where the dividing lines among members, clients, activists, low-income people, allies, and volunteers are erased, and where we all join together with a collective voice to win real change on hunger and poverty.

This year, we launched a Pledge 25 Campaign, for you, our supporters, to reaffirm your commitment to Just Harvest and to join us in celebrating 25 years of the Harvest Celebration Dinner. For more information on Pledging 25 Seeds of Justice, visit us at www.justharvest.org.

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OUR MISSION

Just Harvest educates, empowers and mobilizes people to eliminate hunger, poverty, and economic injustice in our communities by influencing public policy, engaging in advocacy, and connecting people to public benefits.

PLEDGE 25 SEEDS for a Just Harvest

Thank you to Linda Dickerson and staff at

501(c)(3)²

for facilitating the development of our plan!

Join Just Harvest in celebrating our 25th Anniversary Dinner by Pledging 25 Seeds of Justice

25 MONTHS OF 25 QUARTERS

Support Just Harvest for the next two years with a monthly gift of \$6.25.

25 PEOPLE

Pledge to tell 25 people about Just Harvest. You can do this by:
Inviting a speaker to talk to your co-workers, congregation, or social club.
Hosting a house party.
Inviting 25 people to the 25th Annual Harvest Celebration Dinner.

25 VOLUNTEER HOURS

Pledge to volunteer 25 hours with Just Harvest. Assist with community outreach, office work, making phone calls, or any of our other volunteer opportunities.

25 ACTIONS AGAINST HUNGER

Sign petitions, make phone calls, attend rallies, and use social media to stand up in the fight against hunger.

25 DOLLARS

Join Just Harvest and celebrate with us as a member.



A copy of the official registration and financial information may be obtained from the Pa. Department of State by calling toll-free, within PA 1-800-732-099.

Registration does not imply endorsement.

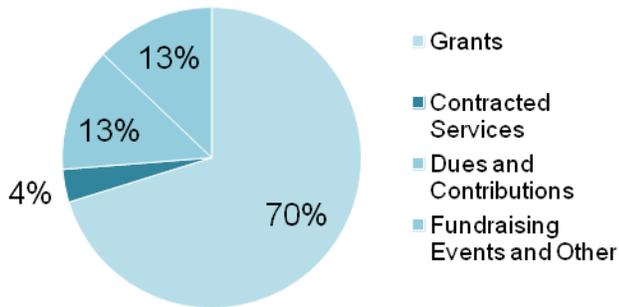
FINANCIALS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

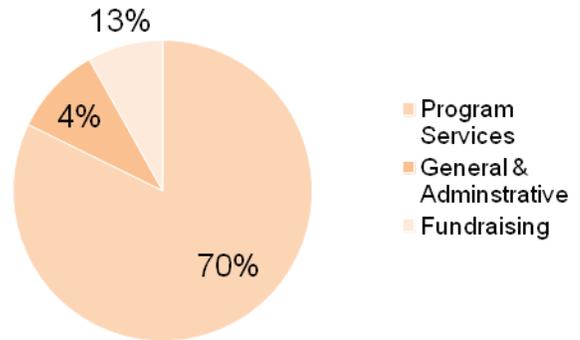
from 2011 Audited Financial Statements
for the year ended December 31, 2011

	A CENTER FOR ACTION AGAINST HUNGER	EDUCATION FUND
REVENUE AND SUPPORT		
Grants	\$ -	\$296,366
Contracted Services	\$ -	\$15,000
Dues and contributions	\$29,017	\$27,304
Fundraising Events and Other	\$48,632	\$5,813
Total	\$77,649	\$344,483
EXPENSES		
Program Services	\$42,843	\$305,786
Administrative and General	\$17,337	\$23,341
Fundraising	\$14,132	\$20,336
Total	\$74,312	\$349,463

REVENUE



EXPENSES



To obtain a copy of the complete audited financial statements of Just Harvest: A Center for Action Against Hunger or Just Harvest Education Fund, please call us at 412-431-8960.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2012-2013

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2012-2013

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Food Stamp Specialist

Emily Cleath
Communications Coordinator

Rochelle Jackson
Public Policy Advocate

Eugenia Mosby
Food Stamp Specialist

Ken Munz
Operations Coordinator

Maria Muzzie
Grassroots Organizer

Ken Regal
Executive Director

Ann Sanders
Volunteer Coordinator

Emily Schmidlapp
EBT @ Farmers Markets Coordinator

Heather Seiders
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Kristie Weiland Stagno
Tax Campaign Organizer

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Andrew Frizzell
Samantha Litvak
Sirisha Kandukuri
Dylan Molloy
Brandie Waxler
Junyun Zhu

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2013

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Ginnie Farnsworth
Nikki Griffin
Ed Heath
Barbara Jakab
Marrissa Johnson
Kellie Kasbee
Ke Li
Sue Polanowski
Emily Schmidlapp
Cassandra Seawood
Kathleen Sheehan
Richard Surdyk
Kay Tanney
Janet Willoughby

TAX INTERNS

2013

Linghao Cui
Steven Danielson
Xin Li Guo
Liam Hennessy
Ruben Jones
Eric Nine
Joseph Peorio
Leah Sibbio
Michael Spagnolo
Weijing Zhong

GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISERS

Nick Brango
Chicks-in-the-Hood
Hambone's
Just Harvest's Holiday Shopping Night
Penn Brewery
Greg Sinclair

THANK YOU!

MEMBERS

To more than **650 individuals and organizational donors** supported us with membership dues and contributions from **\$5.00 to \$5,000**

CAMPAIGN DONORS

To our United Way Contributor Choice and Three Rivers Combined Federal Campaign supporters

PITTSBURGH GIVES

DAY OF GIVING SUPPORTERS

To the **49 donors** whose **\$4,765** in donations were partially matched by the Pittsburgh Foundation

EVENTS

To our supporters, organizers, underwriters, sponsors, advertisers and guests at Empty Bowls, Harvest Celebration Dinner and all of our grassroots fundraising efforts

PHONERAISER

To our supporters who donated a total of **\$1250** towards a new phone system for our office

FUNDERS

ALCOA
Allegheny County Bar Foundation,
Attorneys Against Hunger Campaign
Allegheny County Community
Development
Department of Public Welfare
Food, Research and Action Center,
FRAC
MAZON: A Jewish Response To
Hunger
Motorola Mobility Foundation
Pathways PA
State Voices
The Heinz Endowments
The Pittsburgh Foundation
Share Our Strength
United Way of Allegheny County
Women and Girls Foundation