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United Way of  
Allegheny County

**United Way of Allegheny County's Summer Healthy  
Meals Food Delivery Program Expands**

*Pilot program expands to Hazelwood, feeding more children*

Pittsburgh, Pa. (July 27, 2015) – fitUnited, an initiative of United Way of Allegheny County, now part of United Way of Southwestern PA, recently launched the second year of its Summer Healthy Meals Food Delivery Pilot Program. In partnership with the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, the program provides weekly deliveries of fresh, healthy food to nearly 100 children who attend home-based childcare centers in Hazelwood and Homewood.

In response to a five-year study commissioned by RAND Corporation in 2011, “PHRESH: Pittsburgh Hill/Homewood Research on Eating, Shopping and Health,” which identified Homewood as a food desert due to the absence of a neighborhood grocery store, United Way launched the Summer Healthy Meals Food Delivery Phase I Pilot Program in 2014. United Way staff delivers five days’ worth of healthy meals and snacks to home-based child care providers every Thursday. Over the course of the summer, with support from United Way staff, community and partners, 10,000 healthy meals and 5,000 healthy snacks will be delivered.

“Both Homewood and Hazelwood are classified as food deserts, with little access to supermarkets to buy fresh, healthy food,” said Christine Grady, United Way’s fitUnited program director. “Providing nutritious meals for kids is extremely difficult for many small and home-based child care providers due to accessibility and cost.”

United Way convened multiple local partners to address these challenges. Program development partners include Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank, Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC), and Eat’n Park Hospitality Group. The program is being funded equally by Eat’n Park Hospitality Group, Heinz Endowments and The Grable Foundation.

“This is an innovative collaboration of non-profit organizations, agency partners and private sector businesses. We are proud to be part of the solution to a significant challenge facing those who care for the children of our community,” said Brooks Broadhurst, SVP of Food and Beverage, Eat’n Park Hospitality Group, Inc. “By combining

our collective resources, we're working with others in the county to instill healthy habits and positive change."

The Summer Healthy Meals Food Delivery program is also working to impact USDA policy to improve the structure of feeding children in childcare settings. Currently, child care providers receive food reimbursements from the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) and are responsible for completing complex paperwork, in addition to shopping for and preparing the food themselves.

The new program would ease the administrative and logistical burden placed on providers while leveraging greater food purchasing power through partner organizations. As a result, providers would receive more fresh, healthy food delivered right to their door in lieu of CACFP dollars.

The program is running so efficiently, that it can begin providing a surplus of food for children to take home on the weekends.

"Food insecurity is a significant issue in these communities, namely in the summer," said Grady. "Our goal is to send each child home with a backpack of healthy food to eat over the weekend."

Thus far, the Summer Healthy Meals Food Delivery Program is producing enough savings to provide each child with additional food to when they are not in care.

The program runs through August.

**About United Way of Allegheny County** – United Way of Allegheny County, now a part of United Way of Southwestern Pennsylvania serving Allegheny, Westmoreland, Fayette & Southern Armstrong Counties, brings people together to tackle our community's most challenging issues, because no one person or organization can do it alone. United Way leads and mobilizes the caring power of individuals and organizations to help people in need measurably improve their lives. United Way creates long-lasting change and helps children and youth succeed, strengthens and supports families by promoting financial stability, ensures the safety and well-being of vulnerable seniors and people with disabilities, and provides county-wide access to information and referral sources meeting basic needs.

**About fitUnited Pittsburgh** - fitUnited Pittsburgh is an initiative of United Way of Allegheny County that works to improve the children's health by mobilizing and motivating the community to provide caring adults with knowledge and tools to support healthy kids; encouraging healthy eating at youth-serving organizations; increasing awareness of how to choose and access healthy foods; and increasing physical activity. Serving as a convener of people, programs and research, the foundation for fitUnited is evidence-based research and best practices in health, nutrition and fitness. We draw on

both proven and promising programs at a national and regional level, and share these with the community through a series of special events and our website, [www.uwacfitunited.org](http://www.uwacfitunited.org)

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