



SPEAKER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

HUNGER:

At any given time, nearly 1 in 7 of our neighbors in Allegheny County are facing chronic hunger and food insecurity. These low-income families, seniors, and people with disabilities don't know whether they'll be able to afford their next meal. Aside from the immeasurable moral costs of hunger in human suffering and indignity, hunger takes a quantifiable toll on public health, education outcomes, and our economy — totalling around \$3.25 billion/year in Pennsylvania.

ADDRESSING HUNGER AT ITS ROOT:

Just Harvest is a nonprofit organization that reduces hunger by lifting up those in need. We get at the root causes of food insecurity by leveraging public policies and programs to reduce poverty and improve food access.

We have served Allegheny County for 30 years. In that time we have helped tens of thousands of low-income households keep food on the table by boosting their access to tens of millions of dollars in nutrition assistance, tax credits, and other government benefits for which they're eligible.

We are also a long-time leader of efforts to make the public's response to hunger – through government policy and civic discourse – more sensible and compassionate.

OUR STRATEGY

Just Harvest takes a four-pronged approach to hunger:

Individual Empowerment: One-on-one engagement with low-income people to help them access the public programs that provide assistance for basic needs

Community Development: Public and private partnerships to boost fresh food access in under-served neighborhoods

Government Relations: Grassroots and professional advocacy for fair taxes, budgets, and public policies that strengthen basic living standards, enhance child nutrition, and improve supports for working families

Public Education: Poverty simulations and informational outreach to explain the systemic causes of hunger

For more information:

Kristie Weiland Stagno,
Tax Campaign Coordinator
Just Harvest

16 Terminal Way, Pittsburgh, PA 15219

412-431-8960 x 113

KristieW@justharvest.org

Upcoming Speaker Meeting:

February 21, 2019 – 10:00 – 11:00 am

Speakers: Kristie Weiland Stagno, Tax Campaign Coordinator - Just Harvest

Topic: Just Harvest Programs

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AIU 3 Blind and Visually Impaired Support Program and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Support Program

The AIU3 Blind and Visually Impaired Support Program (BVISP) and Deaf/Hard of Hearing Support Program work with students in special education who have visual impairments and/or hearing loss.

Our staff provide services in school districts and charter schools in Allegheny County and AIU run schools such as Sunrise. Our Teachers, Educational Audiologists, Orientation and Mobility Instructors and Interpreters work with students to develop skills in the areas impacted by visual impairments and hearing loss such as self-advocacy, social skills, academic skills, language development and literacy skills.

Student goals focus on such needs as Braille, sign language, spoken language, use of accessible technology and orientation and mobility – all in an effort to promote self-determination and independence.

We also host social events for our students and their families throughout the year such as our family day at the Pittsburgh Zoo, Carnival Night at the AIU, and movie night. If you suspect your child has a hearing or vision loss, talk with your pediatrician and follow up with your classroom teacher or school nurse.

Sunrise School will work with your child's district to make a referral if needed. Questions can be directed to Jeanine Esch, Program Director at Jeanine.esch@aiu3.net

Social Security Benefits Increase in 2019

Matt Baily, MA, Trust Administrator II, ACHIEVA Family

The Social Security Administration announced a 2.8% benefit increase for retired and disabled recipients beginning in January, 2019 – the largest COLA increase in 7 years. This increase is to reflect and offset the higher costs-of-living encountered by Social Security recipients. For those receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI), this will increase their monthly payment amount to \$771.00 (if awarded the total amount).

Here are some recent updates from the Social Security Administration regarding Social Security benefits:

- Nearly nine out of ten individuals age 65 or older receive Social Security benefits.
- Social Security benefits represent about 33% of the income for the elderly.
- Considering this demographic, 48% of married couples and 69% of unmarried individuals receive 50% or more of their income from Social Security
- Considering this demographic, 21% of married couples and about 44% of unmarried individuals rely on Social Security for 90% or more of their income.

Social Security benefits are a vital support for older adults, but the system is experiencing significant stress. In 1940, the life expectancy of the average 65-year-old was 14 years. Today it is over 20. If this trend continues, statistics show that by 2035 the number of Americans age 65 and older will reach 79 million- a significant increase from the current 40 million.

For more information on the COLA adjustments please visit <https://www.ssa.gov/cola/>

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Local Resources for Families

Free Informative Event:

State Representative Dan Miller's 6th Annual Disability & Mental Health Summit, to be held in Pittsburgh, March 13 through 15. Learn more about the daily keynote speakers, 30 breakout sessions and 120 resource fair exhibitors and register at www.disabilitysummit.com <<http://www.disabilitysummit.com>>

ACHIEVA's FREE Education Series

Successful Models of Employment for Peoples with Disabilities

Friday, February 8, 2019

9:30 - 11:30 AM

Speakers: Joyce Bender, President and CEO, Bender Consulting Services

Bill Frase, CESP, Assistant Director Employment Supports, ACHIEVA

Financial Considerations for Future Planning

Friday, March 8, 2019

9:30 - 11:30 AM

Speaker: Helen L. Sims CFP, CRPC, Vice President Wealth Management Advisor, The Duckworth Haggerty Group/ Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner & Smith Inc.

How to Save for the Future with Special Needs Trusts and ABLÉ Accounts

Friday, April 8, 2019

9:30 - 11:30 AM

Speaker: Jacquelyn Connell, Esq., ACHIEVA Family Trust Staff Attorney

All programs are held at:

ACHIEVA, 711 Bingham Street, Pittsburgh 15203

Parking is free and accessible, light breakfast will be served.

Children's Museum of Pittsburgh

Sensory Friendly Afternoon

February 12, 2019, 1:00—5:00 PM

Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorders and Sensory Sensitivities can enjoy a fun, friendly experience in a comfortable and accepting environment. Announcement and exhibit sound volume will be reduced, and sound reducing headphones will be available.

Other dates available. For more information:

<https://pittsburghkids.org/events/4507>

Miracle League Baseball

Spring sign ups going on now.

For more information:

Patty Hicks

4530 William Penn Hwy #198
Murrysville, PA 15668

mlwpa.org

mlac.wpa@gmail.com

<http://www.themiracleleague.net/>

Jewish Family & Children's Services of Pittsburgh

5743 Bartlett Street
Pittsburgh, PA 15217
(412) 422-7200

www.jfscspgh.org

The Jewish Family & Children's Services of Pittsburgh's Special Needs Service includes access to advocates who can help work through the legal, medical and educational systems. It assists families to ensure that children, teens and adults with special needs receive access to all benefits, services and programs to which they are entitled. Its services include information and referral services, counseling and support groups, advocacy, community outreach programming and more.

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Upcoming Speaker Events:

February 21, 2019 – 10:00 – 11:00 am

Speakers: Kristie Weiland Stagno, Tax Campaign Coordinator - Just Harvest

Topic: Just Harvest Programs

March 21, 2019 – 10:00 – 11:00 am

Speakers: Harold Hicks

Topic: Miracle League of Western PA

April 11, 2019 – 10:00 – 11:00 am

Speakers: Marie Mambuca - Family Supports, Autism Connection of Pennsylvania

Topic: Services and programs available to families.

Sunrise School Parent Group meeting to follow directly afterwards.

As always if you interested in submitting an article, joining the Sunrise School Parent Group, or just receiving the newsletter please contact Lori Say. lori.saywhat@gmail.com Please note you do not have to attend meetings to be a part of our group, participation by email is welcomed.



Mark Albright, who is a Sunrise parent and parent group volunteer, has offered his notary services to the families of Sunrise School, **free of charge.**

This will help parents get their necessary clearances notarized in order to volunteer at the school. For more information please email

Mark Albright at gskb6057@gmail.com.

Sunrise School Events:

January 29th:

Winter Olympics Day (sponsored by the Wellness Committee and Student Activities Committee)

Students will put their skills to the test through a series of winter themed activities and games.

February 11th:

Basketball Game at Sunrise School at 10am

All adult visitors to the building require PA Driver's license or PA identification to be checked in with our raptor system.

February 15th:

Friendship Dance at Sunrise School
Students/Staff Only

Sunrise School

Address: 550 Aura Drive, Monroeville, PA 15146

Phone: 724-325-1132 **Fax:** 724-327-9179



Parent Group Chairs:

Lori Say, Parent

Maria Korn, Sunrise Social Worker