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DISTRICT, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS TO LAUNCH STUDENT MEALS HOME DELIVERY PILOT PROGRAM

Families can determine eligibility using online tool

PATERSON – Superintendent of Schools Eileen Shafer, Yvonne Zuidema of the United Way of Passaic County today announced their collaborative effort to launch a pilot program to provide home delivery of student meals. Paterson Public Schools families will use an online tool to determine their eligibility for the pilot program. Success of the pilot program will help determine whether the program can be expanded to more district families.

“As long as this pandemic continues, we simply cannot do enough to keep our students food secure,” said Shafer. “This pilot program started with a collaborative vision between the district, the United Way of Passaic County and other partnering organizations to bring student meals to those who could not otherwise get them. This will be a learning experience for all of us. But we hope to apply what we learn through the pilot program to make this service available to all district families who need it. I want to thank Food Services Executive Director David Buchholtz and everyone he is working with to launch this pilot program.”

“We have been working with Paterson Public Schools’ Food Services Department to support meal distribution throughout the pandemic,” said Zuidema. “This latest innovation to increase access to school meals through geo-mapping is the brainchild of our NJ FoodCorps service member Nima Homami. We are so proud of his work and our partnerships with NJ Food Corps and Paterson Public Schools to increase food security in Passaic County.”

Through state emergency COVID-19 funding, the MotivCare (formerly known as LogistiCare) transportation company is able to provide two vehicles to make deliveries on the two days when student meals are distributed, Mondays and Thursdays. Meal deliverers would call or text the households prior to their arrival, giving families advance notice of the meals being delivered.

To be eligible for the delivery service, a family would need to live more than one mile from any distribution site. The Food Services Department, partnering with Food Corps/United Way, has developed an online tool that determines whether they live beyond the one-mile distance. Families who are found to be eligible will immediately be able to register online for the delivery service pilot program. The pilot program will try to accommodate as many eligible families as possible.

Success of the pilot program could lead to additional vehicles being made available and the service being made available to more district families.

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