

CAROUSEL

COMMUNITY

LBUSD

Help Me Help You launches new food pantry program to fight childhood hunger in Long Beach



BY SIGNAL TRIBUNE · MARCH 15, 2021 · 2 SHARES · 3 MINUTE READ



Logo courtesy of Help Me Help You

The community based non-profit organization Help Me Help You (HMHY) has initiated the new Nutrition Knights program to provide and encourage access to free, nutritious groceries at LBUSD schools in order to combat the food insecurity that has been increasingly faced by children and families during the coronavirus pandemic.

Before the pandemic arrived in the United States, one in seven children were living in a household that was experiencing food insecurity, but that rate has now grown to one in four children, according to an HMHY press release.

Children from low-income families who were receiving free school meals through the State Food Program also had the process complicated during the stay at home orders when schools were ordered to close. Although meals were still distributed at “Grab-and-Go” sites, there are only a limited number of sites in the Long Beach Unified School District.

According to the Food Research & Action Center (FRAC), food insecurity has been tied to poor health, developmental risks, mental health issues and substandard educational outcomes.

Families may not even be aware they are suffering from food insecurity, and it can manifest in subtle ways such as food anxiety, diet monotony, decreased nutrition and inadequate food intake.

Many individuals who have recently become unemployed are unaware of, or hesitate to access food pantries that could assist their families.

To encourage families to use school food pantries, and to make pantries easier to navigate, HMHY launched the Nutrition Knights program. The program has a knight in shining armor as its mascot who encourages healthy eating and uses the slogan, “Groceries to Save The Day.”

HMHY Nutrition Knights school food pantries will be open twice a month at Cesar Chavez, Stevenson, and Oropeza Elementary schools, located in the first and second council districts.

The pantry schedules for the three schools will be as follows:

Where: **Cesar Chavez Elementary School, 730 W. 3rd Street, Long Beach, CA 90802.**

When: 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month

From: 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Where: **Stevenson Elementary School, 515 Lime Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90802.** |

When: Every 1st and 3rd Friday of the month

From: 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

Where: **Oropeza Elementary School, 700 Locust Avenue, Long Beach, CA 90813**

When: Every 2nd & 4th Friday of each month

From: 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM

The pantries will be open to any residents of Long Beach. The free groceries available will include meats, proteins, milks, cereals, breads, fresh fruits, vegetables, canned goods

and more. All three locations are accessible through walk-up, Chavez and Oropeza will also be accessible through drive-thru.

“By creating the Nutrition Knights School Food Pantry program, it is our goal to encourage more families to access healthy foods and ensure no-one in Long Beach suffers from food insecurity. We also aim to expand our services with more Long Beach school food pantry locations as there is definitely a community need for it”, Zina Washington, HMHY Executive Director, said.

For more information on the Nutrition Knights school food pantries, or to see if there is a Help Me Help You food pantry in your area, visit [their official website here](#).

HMHY also offers a food delivery program for seniors over the age of 60 or high-risk seniors over the age of 50 with underlying health conditions. To check eligibility, click [here](#).

Online donations can be made through their website here.

Schools and parents interested in starting a food pantry can contact 562-612-5001.

Supporting the Signal Tribune

Like other small businesses around the city, the Signal Tribune has faced hardship during the pandemic. We cannot rely on advertising alone to keep our paper afloat. Consider donating to ensure that we can continue providing you news from Signal Hill, Long Beach and beyond.



Click here to make a donation.

2

Shares



Share 2



Tweet



Author