



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## ***JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT RONALD J. DANIELS TO VISIT FRANCISCAN CENTER FOOD DISTRIBUTION EVENT***

**President Daniels joins student volunteers in distributing food to our neighbors in need.**

Baltimore, Maryland—October 15, 2013

Johns Hopkins University President Ronald J. Daniels will join 20 Johns Hopkins University students on Saturday, Oct. 19, 2013 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Franciscan Center to participate in the Center's second Mobile Pantry Food Distribution Event.

As part of the University's *President's Day of Service*, students will work with Franciscan Center staff and volunteers to provide free fresh produce and other food to economically disadvantaged families and individuals in the neighboring community.

The Franciscan Center is partnering with the Maryland Food Bank to host this event, which will be held in the Center's parking lot on Maryland Avenue, around the corner from the building's front entrance at 101 W 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in Baltimore.

"We were thrilled with the results of our first food distribution event," said Franciscan Center Executive Director Christian Metzger, "The line stretched around the block when we opened, and continued steadily throughout the day." He added, "We're looking forward to serving even more of our neighbors in need on Oct. 19.

At its first food pickup on Aug. 10, the Franciscan Center distributed more than 15,000 pounds of fresh produce to 463 area families, reaching more than 800 men, women and children in our community. The Oct. 19 event will be the second in a series of food drops to be held every other month at the Center.

Though Maryland is the richest state in the nation, hunger still exists in here, according to the States Census Bureau. The Baltimore City Food Policy Task Force reports that 1 in 5 people in Baltimore live in areas of the

City designated as “food deserts.” Neighborhoods designated as “food deserts” are more than a quarter mile from a supermarket and have a median household income at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. More than 40 percent of households in these areas have no vehicle available, and the average Healthy Food Availability Index score for supermarkets, convenience and corner stores is low based on the *Nutrition Environment Measures Survey (NEMS)*.

Non-profit organization Feeding America’s *Map the Meal Gap Technical Brief* identifies individuals who do not qualify for federal assistance programs but still don’t earn enough to have sufficient and consistent access to food. A United States Department of Agriculture report entitled: *Household Food Security in the United States in 2011* states that, “National data reveals that 59 percent of those struggling with hunger have incomes above the federal poverty level.” As a result, those who live in food insecure areas often purchase low nutrient dense foods from fast food store restaurants because of the lack of full service supermarkets offering fresh food within their neighborhoods.

According to the Maryland Food Bank, 38 percent or 174,024 people living in Maryland “solely rely on the Maryland Food Bank and its partner network for food.” The Maryland Food Bank’s goals for the Mobile Pantry Produce drops includes:

- Providing overburdened Maryland Food Bank Network Partners with more food for their clients without straining their operations;
- Supplementing food given to clients between their normal pantry visits; and
- Distributing fresh produce and healthy food options to people in need.

“Food drops are planned to be client-choice (meaning that the recipient gets to choose which items to take home.) This increases the likelihood that clients will eat the food, because they are able to choose what they like. The Maryland Food Bank pointed out that this system gives clients a sense of dignity, and is also very efficient. “Clients will walk down the ‘grocery aisle,’ where volunteers have lined up all the food in stations by type of food,” the Food Bank said.

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