

# Helping Families Caught in the “Food Gap” Get Access to Healthy Food

*Healthy Options helps struggling families access fresh, nourishing food.*



Imagine if you were...

- **Struggling to pay your family’s bills for the month.**
- **Cutting your food budget to make ends meet.**
- **Shopping for food and instead of buying fresh fruits and vegetables you needed to buy canned food because it costs a little less.**

This scenario is reality for 26% of families in Adams County\*.

Experts call it the food gap. It affects families who earn too much for food stamps, but too little to shop nutritiously.



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## ***Just one of the many stories about how Healthy Options helps neighbors in need.***



Sharon Johnson is grateful for the vouchers she received to purchase fresh food items.

Sharon Johnson came to Adams county 50 years ago as a migrant worker. Working on farms, she came to love fresh fruits and vegetables. However, found herself eating less and less of them due to financial challenges. But that all changed in 2016 when she was referred to the Healthy Options Program.

“Healthy Options has changed my life. My diet has improved. I am able to make good choices, so I eat better now,” explains Sharon. “I couldn’t afford to buy fresh, good food and my health was suffering. It’s been wonderful. I love this program!”

Sharon is so thankful for the program that she now volunteers as a group leader to help other program participants get the healthy food they need.

“Today, there are so many people struggling to make ends meet. I like volunteering for Healthy Options because they helped me, and I know there are a lot of members of our community who could benefit from it,” says Sharon.

\*Adams County Food Policy Council

## It's a difficult situation for families to face.

Not having the funds to purchase fresh, nutritious food, many families end up eating a diet of highly processed, unhealthy food. This can lead to health issues like obesity, diabetes and malnutrition. Healthy Options, managed by Healthy Adams County, is funded by donor dollars raised through the Gettysburg Hospital Foundation to help individuals and families gain access to nutritious food.

Through **Healthy Options**, participants receive vouchers for fresh fruits, vegetables, breads and meats at Adams County Farmers Market and Kennie's Market. The program targets families who do not qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), more commonly known as food stamps. They receive \$45 in vouchers each month to use at the markets. Healthy Options also educates, participants learn to grow and prepare their own food through a series of gardening classes, farm tours and healthy cooking classes.

There are also programs to help families who use SNAP access more fresh food. The **Double Dollars** program doubles SNAP recipients' fresh purchases up to \$25 spent on their Access Card and doubles the Women, Infant, Children and Senior Farmer's Market Nutrition Program vouchers.

The **Fruit and Veggie Bucks** program through Kennie's Market gives SNAP recipients an opportunity to sign up for a 50% discount on the 5 highest-priced fruits and vegetables that they can purchase daily.

**When the program first started in 2011, Healthy Options served 25 families. Since then the program has grown. In 2020, we addressed food insecurity by reaching:**

# 516

individuals through the **Healthy Options** program

# 151

individuals receiving SNAP assistance through the **Fruit and Veggie Bucks** program

# 470

SNAP recipients and their families through the **Double Dollars** program

For a total of

# 1,137

served in Adams County

## Here's How Your Gift Makes an Impact

Healthy Options provides fresh fruits and veggies on the dinner table and inspires participants to eat healthy, stay active and connect with peers and support services in Adams County. When you give to the Gettysburg Hospital Foundation, you fund programs like Healthy Options that provide:



Healthy and nutritious foods to individuals and families that fall in the food gap.



Education for participants on gardening and creating sustainable food sources, including local farm tours.



Cooking classes so families and participants know how to use the produce they get at the market and learn how to preserve the food beyond the growing season.



Physical fitness activities for participants to stay healthy and exercise.



Mentorship and fellowship opportunities for participants to learn from one another and get connected to a community devoted to staying healthy.

Healthy Options fulfills WellSpan Health's vision of inspiring health for patients and communities on their journey of life.

**Your gift is contributing to a healthier community!**

## For more information about other vital community programs in Adams county:

Contact Kristin Vought at (717) 337-4154 or [kvought@wellspan.org](mailto:kvought@wellspan.org).

