



Healthy Acadia

Building vibrant communities in Hancock and Washington counties

For Immediate Release

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Healthy Acadia's Gleaning Initiative Receives \$25,000 Grant from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation

Healthy Acadia has been awarded a \$25,000 grant from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation to enhance volunteer support for its gleaning program, the Downeast Gleaning Initiative, which aims to increase food security for residents of Washington and Hancock counties. Healthy Acadia, a community health organization serving Hancock and Washington counties, is one of 25 not-for-profit community initiatives receiving a grant through the Foundation's 2019 Healthy Food Fund, which will award nearly \$625,000 this year to support initiatives that grow, glean, or distribute fresh produce to increase access to healthy foods for low-income families and older adults in Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. The grant awards are renewable for two additional years.

The Downeast Gleaning Initiative was launched in Hancock County in 2013 by Healthy Acadia, in partnership with University of Maine Cooperative Extension, and was expanded in fall 2014 to include Washington County. The program plays a unique role in supporting the local farm economy and improving access to healthy food for low-income residents; bringing together farmers, food security organizations, and volunteers to prevent food waste and redirect surplus food to those in need. The program also supports community gardens, which help to empower residents to connect with and grow their own food, and provide additional fresh food for pantry sites. The Initiative has proven to be a powerful catalyst for fulfilling one of Healthy Acadia's overarching goals – increasing food security and nutrition for low-income households – to date, harvesting over 224,000 pounds of food that would have otherwise gone to waste and distributing it to more than 30 food security programs and organizations across both counties.

“We believe that all people deserve access to healthy food, regardless of income,” said Healthy Acadia Food Programs Director, Katie Freedman. “We are thrilled to receive this grant award from Harvard Pilgrim Foundation to support this volunteer-driven community initiative.” Healthy Acadia's gleaning team is gearing up for the 2019 gardening season, and is actively seeking community volunteers to assist with harvesting and distribution, as well as farmers and local food producers interested in donating their surplus produce. Learn more at www.healthyacadia.org.

The Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Foundation supports Harvard Pilgrim's mission to improve the quality and value of health care for the people and communities they serve by providing the tools, training and leadership to help build healthy communities throughout Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, and New Hampshire. Since its inception in 1980, the Foundation has awarded \$150 million in funds and resources throughout the four states. For more information, please visit www.harvardpilgrim.org/foundation.

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