



Mercy Regional  
Medical Center  
Centura Health®



# EMPLOYEE PRODUCE SHARE PROGRAM

## THE PROGRAM

In 2019, Centura Health, Mercy Regional Medical Center, and the Good Food Collective joined forces to create the Roots of Health Employee Produceshare Program. The program connects Mercy hospital associates with weekly Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) shares from local farmers. On top of nourishing our incredible healthcare workers, this unique CSA program does so on a sliding-scale, meaning participants choose how much they can budget for their share, while all participants receive the same value of veggies. Our CSA program helps further our mission to create a strong, resilient food system through addressing many essential components of a healthy food shed- food access, food security, agricultural investment, sustainable land stewardship, and nutrition!

For the program's third year, we collaborated closely between project partners and our farmers to make sure our operations aligned well with our participant preferences and farmers' needs to better reach our goals:

- 1) Promote healthy behaviors and improve health outcomes for Mercy associates**
- 2) Support local agriculture**
- 3) Increase short and long-term food security and awareness of local food assistance among Mercy associates**

## THE IMPACT

- 125 CSA participants
- 3 local farms using sustainable growing methods supported
- ~17,500 pounds of healthy, sustainably grown produce circulated in our local food system
- 203 unclaimed shares re-distributed to 9 food assistance providers across Southern Ute tribe and the La Plata, Montezuma, and Archuleta Counties
- \$52,500 invested in our region's small-scale producers

"I have loved getting to try new veggies- things I never thought I'd try before. Thank you!"  
-2022 participant





"My kids were excited about it and it improved their expectations of what healthy food looks and tastes like"  
 -2022 participant

## 1) PROMOTE HEALTHY BEHAVIORS

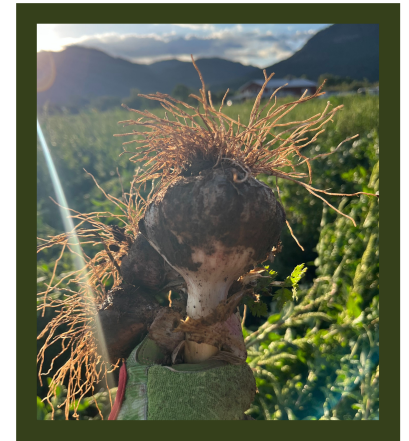
Providing the food is one thing, but addressing the entire picture? That's our speciality. Our targeted outreach plan focuses on providing the tools to successfully facilitate long-term healthy lifestyle changes among participants and their families. We've seen firsthand how this program improves participants and their families' relationships with vegetables, nutrition, and cooking.

Our weekly newsletter communications explore topics like meal prepping, exercise, and mental health-- demonstrating the interconnectedness of the many facets of healthy living. We carefully curate recipe ideas and nutrition information to align with our farmer's weekly share contents to provide as relevant material as possible.



## 2) SUPPORT LOCAL AGRICULTURE

Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) programs are a direct, up-front investment in our local farmers. Consumers share the risks of harvest season with their growers; accepting that some weeks may be more fruitful than others. CSAs are a way to let your local producers know that you believe in their relationship with the land and value the labor they put into getting fresh, beautiful vegetables onto our plates-- which in turn allows farmers to invest in their staff and expand their crops and/or infrastructure.



## 3) INCREASE SHORT AND LONG TERM FOOD SECURITY AND AWARENESS OF LOCAL FOOD ASSISTANCE RESOURCES

Research during the Employee Produceshare's pilot year in 2020 found that 21% of associate participants were experiencing food insecurity, while the rate of food insecurity in the greater Southwest region was 14%. The Employee Produceshare aims to boost short and long-term food security among its participants. Each week we highlight new food assistance resources in our participant newsletters, while also helping build long-term skills and habits through covering topics like buying on a budget, properly storing fruits and vegetables, and label literacy.

On top of benefitting associates our outreach aims to inform patient care. With a better understanding and awareness of the underlying causes of food insecurity and the resources and information available to combat it, associates have the opportunity to provide more holistic care to their patients!

"This program allowed us to have the up front capital to feel confident in investing in employees and business overhead for the months before we had salable product."  
 -Beet Street Farm