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United Way of the Midlands Awards \$15,000 to No More Empty Pots
Grant to Fund the Community Harvest Program

(Omaha, Ne.) No More Empty Pots is pleased to announce it was recently awarded a \$15,000 grant from United Way of the Midlands. Thanks to the generosity of United Way donors, No More Empty Pots Community Harvest Program improves self-sufficiency by providing healthy prepared meals, local produce through Community Supported Agriculture (CSA's), and food related health information and activities. Community Harvest is an interactive program that includes nutrition education and healthy meal preparation for food insecure households, especially with children under 18 years old. Residents expressed a desire to eat healthier foods and be more active but some residents find it difficult to use healthy foods that they have access to because of unfamiliarity and lack of education in preparing some produce. The program expands markets for local producers by purchasing local produce from farmers and reduces food waste by transforming gleaned and rescued food.

Community health data for metro Omaha shows that residents have greater access to fresh fruits and vegetables but are not consuming them. Employment and poverty data from the American Community Survey in 2017 shows lower unemployment but higher poverty in our community. With more residents working more but still not able to make ends meet, the data suggests that our neighbors have less time to spend on healthier habits and not enough resources to support healthier habits.

NMEP has leveraged the Community Harvest Program to extend further into the community where individuals and families have lost employment and income as well as have less access to healthy nutritious meals. Through the Feeding Our Neighbors activity of Community Harvest, individuals and families needing emergency food assistance are able to request prepared meals and pantry box deliveries to their home at no cost to them.

With this award from United Way of the Midlands, No More Empty Pots provides budget-friendly nutrition-centered cooking demonstrations for intergenerational participants, from youth to adults seniors. The programs feature a flexible payment plan to encourage participants to purchase more fresh local produce and stretch their food dollars. In addition, plans include pay-what-you-can, pay-as-you-go and with SNAP, there is a 50% match to help cover the costs of the produce and meals.

Through pre and post surveying of the last round of Community Harvest participants, respondents reported a 13% increase in food security following their participation. Participants also reported a 7% increase in confidence with trying new foods and cooking from unprocessed ingredients.

“Trying to cover housing, utilities, medicine and food with the uncertainty of stable income and the threat of the current pandemic is burdensome for many in our community, especially households with youth and seniors. This funding from United Way of the Midlands supports our ability to continue to serve our neighbors wholesome healthy food with dignity and respect. We are grateful to each donor to United Way of the Midlands' campaign that makes healthy food accessible for thousands in our community,” said Nancy Williams, President/CEO of No More Empty Pots.

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About United Way of the Midlands:

United Way of the Midlands (UWM) has served the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro for more than 95 years. Guided by best practices and community input, it approaches poverty in a specific way – a “united” way. With the support of volunteers, community partners and donors, UWM invests donor dollars efficiently and effectively in our local community. These dollars fund basic needs, education and financial stability programs at local nonprofits, creating a circle of support for people in need. Please visit unitedwaymidlands.org for more information.

About No More Empty Pots

No More Empty Pots (NMEP) is a 501c3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect individuals and groups to improve self-sufficiency, regional food security and economic resilience of urban and rural communities through advocacy and action. NMEP's vision is to support communities in becoming self-sufficient, and food secure through collaboration and adherence to our core values of education, stewardship, and sustainability. Our biggest project is the Collaborative Community Centered Food Hub where we provide jobs and training operating a shared use commercial kitchen and culinary workforce training program. NMEP serves youth to seniors in educational, hands-on experiential learning. Cups Café is a neighborhood café committed to helping the community become self-sufficient and economically resilient. It is a social enterprise program area, where we engage community and support

emerging small-scale food entrepreneurs. To learn more about No More Empty Pots, visit www.nmepomaha.org, email info@nmepomaha.org or call 402.502.1642

