A Path Forward: Innovations at the Intersection of Hunger & Health
WhyHunger’s Nourish Network for the Right to Food is working with emergency food providers, community health organizations and other grassroots and national allies to transform the charitable response to hunger in the U.S. into a more equitable and inclusive social justice movement that recognizes nutritious food as a human right. To learn more visit whyhunger.org

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For decades, our nation’s emergency food providers have worked tirelessly to provide food to those in need, yet we are still in a hunger crisis. One in six Americans is food insecure—uncertain where their next meal will come from. And hunger still kills. In the U.S. in 2015, it is less often as a result of chronic food deprivation; instead hunger’s victims suffer from heart disease or diabetes or myriad other symptoms of poor health and malnutrition. With limited capacity, food pantries and soup kitchens are often forced to provide unhealthy, processed food to their clients—food that may fill a person up but is linked to serious diet-related illnesses and long-term health consequences.

When we talk about success in addressing U.S. food insecurity, we generally use metrics that tout pounds of food distributed, with the implication that the more pounds of food we can distribute, the closer we are to ending hunger. This narrow lens hides the malnutrition that is strongly correlated with disease and morbidity. For most Americans, malnutrition is a symptom not of insufficient food but of insufficient healthy food and balanced nutrition: malnutrition is lack of nourishment.

The same segment of the population that suffers most from food insecurity and poverty is most at risk of malnutrition and diet-related disease. Food insecurity has been widely linked to frequent illness, fatigue and depression. People who are hungry are nearly three times more likely to be in poor health and are more likely to suffer from chronic conditions such as hepatitis, heart disease, high cholesterol and a host of auto-immune diseases.
In fact, poverty is now the number one determinant of poor health in this country. And the long U.S. history of racial and gender oppression that persists today in structural inequities such as unequal access to education, housing and health care puts women and people of color at disproportionate risk of poverty. An enduring legacy of discrimination, then, also puts these groups at higher risk of obesity and other diet-related diseases.

Indeed, an article in the *Journal of Hunger and Environmental Nutrition* cites strong evidence from across the public health literature linking racial/ethnic and socioeconomic disparities to food quality and to obesity and other diet-related disease. Nationally, African Americans are significantly more likely than white Americans to die of stroke (146 percent greater risk), heart disease (131 percent) and diabetes (208 percent). The study concludes that in the United States, food insecurity is highly correlated with obesity. In a study in the *Journal of Nutrition* based on a national sample of more than 4,500 women, researchers concluded that women who were food insecure were more likely to be overweight than those who did not worry about where their next meal would come from.

Hunger, then, is a matter of health and of justice. Nutrition must be foremost in any viable anti-hunger solution. With diet-related costs making up 70 percent of total U.S. health care costs, as a 2011 *American Diabetes Association* study concluded, “the link between obesity, inactivity and poverty may be too costly to ignore.” The study continued, “halting U.S. diabesity epidemic and curtailing its health cost may necessitate addressing poverty.” There are strong social determinants of health that implicate race and gender. A truly pro-health approach to ending hunger must address race and gender inequities as root causes of poverty.

The good news is that people across the country are forging a new way—away from cheap processed food and expensive illnesses and toward healthier people and stronger communities. WhyHunger works with partners who inspire, educate and grow this movement to address the root causes of hunger and poor health and to support innovative solutions. Our *Nourish Network for the Right to Food* is partnering with emergency food providers, community health organizations and other grassroots and national allies to transform the charitable response to hunger in the U.S. into a more equitable and inclusive social justice movement that recognizes nutritious food as a human right.
Elijah’s Promise: Chef Brianna Lopez of the Better World Cafe (l) with Baking and Pastry Manager Chef Chrissy Banks.
In these pages, you will find stories of three organizations that address hunger, poverty and illness through nutrition, equity, dignity and personal empowerment.

God’s Love We Deliver in New York City works squarely at the intersection of hunger and health, delivering 1.4 million nutritious meals annually to people living with HIV/AIDS, cancer, diabetes and other life-altering illnesses. The meals, recommended by a doctor and prescribed by a registered dietitian nutritionist, are literal medicine for many clients, as well-nourished people have less frequent and shorter hospital stays and better overall health than malnourished people. The organization leads the national Food Is Medicine Coalition advocating for food and nutrition to be included in health care policy.

Capital Roots, in Troy, New York, also prescribes healthy food through its Veggie Rx program. Doctors at the local health care center provide weekly coupons for free produce to patients at high risk of diabetes and hypertension; coupons are redeemed at the Capital Roots Veggie Mobile, which brings fresh food into neighborhoods that need it most. The program further links diet and medical care by providing incentives for patients to keep their regular physician visits.

Elijah’s Promise in New Brunswick, New Jersey, believes food changes lives, especially those lives most affected by poverty. The organization provides nutritious, sustainably-sourced food to people in need through a community soup kitchen and offers education and job opportunities to soup kitchen clients, ex-offenders, downsized Fortune 500 employees and many others through the Promise Culinary School. For Elijah’s Promise, the right food can do much more than feed—it can keep people healthy, provide them with a career and literally change their lives.
These three organizations and many more around the country are demonstrating that fresh, healthy, nourishing food has a profound effect on the health of low-income people suffering from acute and chronic illnesses—and from poverty itself. When we understand hunger as an entrenched social problem connected to chronic diet-related disease and perpetuated by social inequities, we get closer to the root of the problem—and can develop a more nuanced and successful path towards ending it.
God’s Love We Deliver began in 1985, when one woman delivered a home-cooked meal to a man dying of AIDS, after realizing he was too sick to prepare food from the bag of groceries she had brought him. As she began bringing meals to more people in the neighborhood suffering with HIV/AIDS, a minister stopped her one day to ask what she was doing. When she told him, the story goes, he said, “you’re not delivering food, you’re delivering God’s love.”

In thirty years, God’s Love has grown from one woman on a bicycle into a nationally-recognized organization providing 1.4 million meals every year—at no cost—to people across the New York metropolitan area who are unable to shop or cook due to life-altering illnesses, including HIV/AIDS, cancer, Alzheimer’s and many others. Meals are also delivered to the children and senior caregivers of clients, because, says Director of Policy and Planning Alissa Wassung, “We have a real interest in supporting the whole constellation that surrounds a client.” God’s Love has no income requirements, but 90 percent...
Nutrition is a low-cost, high-impact health intervention: A patient can be fed well for six months for the same cost as one day in a hospital.”
of clients live below the poverty line, and 70 percent live in New York City’s poorest and most underserved communities. With the combined stigmas of illness and poverty, “Most of the people we serve are ‘invisible,’” says Wassung.

God’s Love partners with two hundred community-based organizations, Medicaid plans and others to “reach the hardest to reach.” The concept that something as basic as bringing a nutritious meal can provide dignity to a person who is suffering still drives the organization’s work, just as it did thirty years ago.

In the early days, the focus of God’s Love was on addressing the severe weight loss caused by HIV/AIDS, so meals were rich, cream- and butter-based and high in calories. With the advent of antiretroviral drugs in the early 1990s, HIV/AIDS suddenly was no longer the immediate death sentence it had been; patients began to live much longer and their nutritional needs changed. God’s Love opened a nutrition department to provide medically tailored meals to support each person’s specific needs. They now have seven registered dietitian nutritionists on staff.

“...A nutritious meal can provide dignity to a person who is suffering.”
Nutrition is what God’s Love calls their “signature difference.” Developed by the dietitians in consultation with clients’ doctors, the meals become an integral part of clients’ medical care. Receiving regular, medically appropriate, delicious meals has a dramatic impact on clients’ health outcomes—and their lives. Queens resident Geraldine, a 38-year-old mother of five, is no longer able to cook due to nerve damage as a result of diabetes. Before connecting with God’s Love, on the frequent days when she was in too much pain to cook, the family’s diet largely consisted of unhealthy takeout. Geraldine and her children have been receiving meals for five years; she says the whole family has lost weight, her cholesterol is down and the meals keep her from overeating. Regular nutritional consultations and the God’s Love support system give her peace of mind. “If you have a question, you can always call,” she says. “There’s always somebody there.” The meals have lifted financial stress as well. “Not only did it help healthwise, it helped with budgeting,” she says. “We get a certain amount of money and we have to buy groceries and pay bills and now I don’t have to worry, ‘oh my goodness, I don’t feel well today, I can’t cook, what am I going to eat, what am I going to do…’ The meals are always here.”

Healthy, nutritious food as a critical element of medical care is an important consideration for anyone who is seriously ill, but for many God’s Love clients, getting basic nutrition may have been an insurmountable obstacle before coming to the organization. Often homebound and living on extremely low incomes, clients may have simply had no access to nutritious food, no matter how important they knew it was for their health. But the societal and health care costs to that lack of access are high.

According to research collected by God’s Love, chronically ill people who are well-nourished, as Geraldine is now, have significantly fewer and shorter hospitalizations, and while 72 percent of malnourished patients are discharged to a nursing home or another facility, 93 percent of well-nourished patients are discharged to their homes. Nutrition is a low-cost, high-impact health intervention: A patient can be fed well for six months for the same cost as one day in a hospital. Based on years of seeing evidence of this difference in their patients as well as in emerging research, the concept “Food Is Medicine” has become a key tenet of God’s Love’s work.

God’s Love leads the national Food Is Medicine Coalition, a cohort of similar organizations who educate and advocate for food and nutrition services to be recognized as a key medical service. In the 1990 Ryan White Comprehensive AIDS Resources Emergency (CARE) Act, passed to improve availability of care for low-income people with HIV/AIDS and their families, food and nutrition services were included from the beginning.
The Ryan White CARE Act, is remarkable, says Alissa Wassung, “Because it’s one of the only health care funding streams that thinks about the individual holistically.” The legislation provides funding for essential support services—those elements of an ill person’s life such as housing, transportation, legal services, food and nutrition that often determine whether they are able to effectively continue treatment and maintain their health. Even more remarkable, as of the 2009 re-authorization of the Ryan White CARE Act, food itself is included not only as a support service, but, when recommended by a physician and prescribed by a registered dietitian nutritionist, as a core medical service like doctor visits, tests and prescription drugs.

Meanwhile, despite evidence showing the efficacy of this approach, the more recent Affordable Care Act (ACA) does not include food as medicine. The Food Is Medicine Coalition educates and advocates at the federal and state level for this important inclusion. The “Triple Aim” of the ACA is improved health outcomes, lower costs and increased patient satisfaction. In discussing the importance of advocacy for an organization like God’s Love, Wassung says, “While it’s intuitive that adding food for someone who’s sick would accomplish [the Triple Aim], in this environment, it’s really necessary to make that explicit.”

While work remains to be done at the federal level, New York State has incorporated food and nutrition services into the state Medicaid long-term care benefits package, and God’s Love partners with Medicaid and several health plans to deliver meals to their most vulnerable members.
At the God’s Love newly remodeled SoHo home, the commitment to both health and community emanates from every gleaming surface. The organization moved back into the building in July 2015 after a $36 million capital campaign and a nearly two-year expansion, which doubled the facility in order to support future growth. The all-important kitchen, which prepares 5,500 meals daily, is now a centerpiece, lined with windows and outfitted with state-of-the-art equipment. Herbs used in some meals come from a rooftop garden, and GrowNYC, New York’s farmers’ markets program, offers a weekly vegetable bag pick-up on site for staff and volunteers. Over 8,000 volunteers annually are essential to the organization’s work, preparing and packaging meals and assisting with deliveries; they provide the equivalent of $2 million in service.

From clients to volunteers to government officials, Wassung reflects, “Every single person—in this chain that we’ve created that is God’s Love—matters. Without one of them, it’s not going to work. And frankly, that includes policy makers.” With further action from the Washington, D.C.-based link in the chain, more seriously ill people will be able to get the nutrition they need to live healthier lives.

“I don’t have to worry, ‘oh my goodness, I don’t feel well today, I can’t cook, what am I going to eat, what am I going to do…’ The meals are always here.”
A line forms shortly before noon every Wednesday at Thurlow Terrace subsidized apartment complex near the State Capitol building in Albany, New York. The source of the anticipation pulls up promptly at noon: a colorful refrigerated truck, which quickly opens to reveal a fully-stocked produce market, shelves lined with everything from apples and blueberries to yams and zucchini. Thurlow Terrace residents climb into the market’s narrow aisle and leave with bags full of inexpensive fresh produce. This is the Capital Roots Veggie Mobile—the words proudly emblazoned across the sides of the truck—and with this stop and dozens of others around the region every week, local nonprofit Capital Roots is working to bring healthy food to people who need it most right where they live.

Capital Roots, based in Troy, New York, has been working at the intersection of hunger and health since long before anyone was talking about “food access.” Begun in 1975 by Garden Way, a local garden equipment manufacturer, the organization built community gardens in low-income neighborhoods. ▶️▶️▶️
Albany resident Indira Hogan shopping on the Veggie Mobile.

The Veggie Mobiles stop in more than 30 locations every week, making 90 varieties of fruits and vegetables available to 55,000 residents.”
around the region, on the idea that an easy way to get better food in areas that needed it was to grow it. By the time current Executive Director Amy Klein arrived two decades later, Capital Roots, then still called Capital District Community Gardens, was building gardens as fast as they could, but, Klein says, “No matter how many gardens we built, it wasn’t going to solve the problem of food access.” Klein and her staff began looking at how to connect disparate parts of the food system and how to move healthy food to where it was most needed on a larger scale. As Capital Roots celebrates its fortieth year and a new name, the community garden program is still going strong—boasting more than a 1,000 garden plots at over 50 sites serving 4,000 neighborhood residents—and has become part of a suite of half a dozen other creative initiatives seeking to improve access to healthy food for low-income residents across the region.

Squash Hunger, a food donation initiative begun in 2004, collects more than 30 tons of produce annually though donations, gleaning and relationships with 75 local farmers in 11 surrounding counties, as well as through regular wholesale distributors. (In addition to local food that supports regional farmers, “Everyone should have access to a banana,” Klein says.) The produce is repackaged and distributed to local food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other feeding organizations, which would otherwise have a hard time finding or affording fresh food. More than a decade after it began in a cramped office space, Squash Hunger now operates out of a 3,500-square-foot food hub in Capital Roots’ newly rehabbed and environmentally efficient home, the Urban Grow Center. Alongside the expanded distribution center, future plans for the building include...
At each quarterly doctor’s visit, Veggie Rx patients receive a prescription coupon booklet containing:

- 13 coupons, each for one week’s worth of produce
- A schedule of the Veggie Mobile’s more than 30 weekly stops

Each coupon is valued at $7. With the low prices on the Veggie Mobile, patients can get a large bag of produce for this amount. Veggie Mobile staff helps Veggie Rx patients to get the best value for their coupon.

Each coupon is dated, to encourage regular use of one per week.

When all 13 coupons have been used, the patient must return to the physician for their next quarterly visit.
much lower no-show rate at their appointments than other clinic patients, according to Whitney Young CEO David Shippee.

The Veggie Mobile, where Veggie Rx patients fill their prescriptions by redeeming the coupons, is perhaps the most visible centerpiece of Capital Roots’ programming. Launched in 2007, the mobile market is housed in a box truck and brings produce into neighborhoods like Thurlow Terrace that have limited access to fresh food. Designed to have a low environmental impact, the truck runs on biodiesel and powers its refrigerators with solar panels. The Veggie Mobile and its smaller cargo van companion, the Veggie Mobile Sprout, stop in more than 30 locations every week, making 90 varieties of fruits and vegetable available to 55,000 residents who would otherwise have to travel many miles, navigate shopping bags on public transportation or simply go without fresh produce.

At every stop, the Veggie Mobile offers “Taste and Take”: customers are invited to taste a sample of a vegetable-based recipe, then given the recipe and a free bag of the produce used in the dish. Truck staff and volunteers provide nutrition education through these and other samples, informational material and conversations, and they help customers get the best value for their produce dollar.

Besides Veggie Rx coupons, the trucks accept cash, electronic food stamps (EBT) and Farmers’ Market Nutrition Program coupons. Thurlow Terrace resident Indira Hogan shops at the Veggie Mobile every Wednesday at noon. She gets the “Taste” every week, “and when I can afford it, I shop on the truck.” Hogan is on a fixed Social Security income and likes the convenience of the Veggie Mobile parked so near her home. “I eat mainly vegetables,” she says, “so it can get heavy [taking groceries home] on the bus. The free ‘Taste’ bag is just great; it helps a lot of people out—me included.”

At the Whitney Young Health Center, where the medical side of Veggie Rx is based, staff regularly shops at the Veggie Mobile on its weekly Tuesday morning stop. Much of the staff lives in the same neighborhood as the clinic and its patients; some staff members also garden in Capital Roots community gardens. These connections mean that staff at all levels at the Health Center—not only the doctors and nutritionists, but lab techs, dental hygienists and receptionists—encourage Veggie Rx patients to redeem their coupons at the Veggie Mobile, helping to normalize the admittedly unusual new habit of shopping for vegetables on a truck.

Some Veggie Rx patients are recent immigrants, primarily from the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Used to a vegetable-based diet but living in the U.S. in low-income neighborhoods where
fresh food is hard to find, these patients were early adopters. Popularity is not an issue for Veggie Rx, however: after an initial slow start, it has taken off in surrounding communities and there are now more requests to participate than the program has funding for.

200 people have participated in Veggie Rx since its launch in late 2011, with an average of about 50 participants at any one time. Early studies have found a significant drop in body mass index (BMI) among Veggie Rx patients as compared to a control group. The program is funded through a grant from the New York State Department of Health Hunger Prevention and Nutrition Assistance Program; as the positive results keep growing, Klein and David Shippee of Whitney Young see much broader potential, such as health insurance plans offering a similar program as an incentive in the way some plans reimburse gym memberships.

For people who live in an area with poor access to fresh food, Klein says, a doctor’s recommendation to eat better can come across not just as empty words, but “as words of complete frustration.” Because, she points out, “you can’t necessarily eat better: you can’t afford it, you can’t get it, so even if you want to, it is a struggle.” Through Veggie Rx and all of its other programming, Capital Roots works to change the environment and give people the tools to “help them do what they naturally want to do”: to live healthier lives.

“Customers are invited to taste a sample of a vegetable-based recipe, then given the recipe and a free bag of the produce used in the dish.”
The sense of respect and camaraderie in Chef Pearl Thompson’s culinary school kitchen at Elijah’s Promise in New Brunswick, New Jersey, is as palpable as the smell of baking bread. Chefs come and go, pushing carts of dough and cakes, picking up threads of old conversations and good-natured teasing, talking logistics for today’s meals. Most of them work for Elijah’s Promise, cooking and baking the many meals the organization serves and sells—and nearly all of them are former students of Chef Pearl’s. They come from dramatically different backgrounds: one chef had a successful but unhappy career as a phlebotomist; one spent time in jail; one used to be homeless and a drug user; one was downsized from a major food distributor. Now they work side by side making food for others, just as Chef Pearl intended when she began the school. “What we try to do is break down barriers, [so that] people who would normally not interact are able to sit across the table from each other,” she says. “That has been the most remarkable part of this school.”
We completely changed the food in the soup kitchen—we got rid of all processed food, we started buying whole foods... We changed everything.”
Elijah’s Promise was started by three New Brunswick churches as a community soup kitchen in 1989. More than 25 years later, the soup kitchen serves 300 meals daily, but has become just one component of a diverse community built on the idea expressed in the motto of Elijah’s Promise: “Food changes lives.”

Today, each of the organization’s programs weave together food, health and empowerment. The Shiloh Community Garden, built in 2010 through a collaboration among the city, New Brunswick United Methodist Church and Elijah’s Promise, has 40 raised garden beds used by neighborhood residents to grow nutritious food. The Better World Cafe, open daily in a nearby church community room, offers healthy, mostly locally-sourced lunch choices to the neighborhood, with flexible payment options including a daily complimentary dish and the opportunity to volunteer an hour of time in exchange for a meal. The Better World Market sells locally-made goods and produce in a cafe environment, with all proceeds benefiting the soup kitchen. The community soup kitchen itself, in addition to serving meals, hosts a regular health clinic and homeless outreach services.

But despite some familiar programs, Elijah’s Promise is not your average anti-hunger charity; what makes it unique is a deep commitment to health, sustainability and dignity running through everything it does.

At the heart of the Elijah’s Promise community, connecting the other programs and truly changing people’s lives through food, is Chef Pearl’s kitchen: Promise Culinary School. Chef Pearl’s family background is culturally diverse and she grew up with a mix of culinary traditions, but it was an early job as a bus driver, eating new foods along the road, that piqued her curiosity about what food could be. Having already gotten a degree in education, she decided to further study food in culinary school. She graduated at the beginning of the AIDS crisis and ran the kitchen for Hyacinth AIDS Foundation, providing restaurant-quality meals for people who were homeless with AIDS—at a time when the stigma and fear around the
disease was at its height. Her background providing nourishing food for people in crisis was a solid foundation for what she has built at Elijah’s Promise.

The school began in 1997 as a training program in the soup kitchen to teach basic skills to clients and anyone else who wanted to learn. Early on, Chef Pearl spent several months with Chef Ann Cooper, who went on to overhaul school food in Berkeley and Denver, but was then transforming the school lunch program at the Ross School in East Hampton, New Y ork. Freshness, whole foods and sustainability were key elements of Chef Ann’s work, and, Chef Pearl says now, “She blew me away.”

While East Hampton is one of the more affluent towns in New York State and the Ross School has vast resources, Chef Ann was clear that the changes she was making were not exclusive. “‘Look at the core of what we’re doing and take the pieces you can back to your institution,’” Chef Pearl recalls her saying. When Chef Pearl returned to Elijah’s Promise, she says, “I was just on fire.” With the support of the Elijah’s Promise director, they began a farm to table partnership with local farmers and began recycling and composting. And, she says, “We completely changed the food in the soup kitchen—we got rid of all processed food, we started buying whole foods... We changed everything.”

Sustainability and health are now a way of life not only for the Culinary School, but for all of Elijah’s Promise. Little to nothing is thrown away: leftover prepared food is given away and kitchen waste is composted. Food is sourced from local farmers when possible and is always fresh. “We scour the planet to find great stuff [for our clients],” says Chef Pearl.
She shakes her head in disgust thinking of the processed food too often handed out at soup kitchens and food pantries. “This whole concept of ‘charity’ has to stop. … I don’t want scraps. If I can’t give you good food, then there’s no point in doing it at all.” At the soup kitchen and the Better World Cafe, not only is the food—prepared by culinary school graduates—fresh, colorful and wholesome, meals are served on ceramic plates, with metal, not plastic, utensils and there are fresh flowers on the tables.

Culinary School students learn how to chop and season and sauté as they would at any of the prestigious culinary academies where Chef Pearl trained. Unlike in more traditional programs, students also learn about the food and agriculture system and the ways it subtly shapes their lives. Chef Chrissy Banks, the Baking and Pastry Manager, takes students on tours of supermarkets, co-ops and bodegas, teaching them to look at prices and read labels. They examine how prices and quality vary according to the race and class of a neighborhood, the importance of supporting local farms and businesses, and why ingredients like corn syrup and shortenings are found in processed foods but not in the school kitchen. “These aren’t real foods, as far as I’m concerned,” says Chef Chrissy. Students watch films about the food system and discuss how politics, economics, race and class influence the food on their plates. The diversity of the student body makes for rich discussions, Chef Pearl says. The school has a large immigrant population, and after watching some films, “Students will say, ‘ah, I remember this happening, and that’s why I’m here… because our country was depressed because of people usurping our resources.’” From a learning perspective, she says, “It’s just a wonderful dynamic.”

These lessons reverberate beyond the students in the classroom; culinary students with children talk about the changes they’ve made to their families’ diets since being in the program, building healthy habits that will last their kids a lifetime. Geoffrey Simon, a single father of two and, since his graduation from the culinary program, a chef for the Better World Market, reads labels and has changed how he feeds his children—who also both help out in the kitchen. “I’m very conscious of what we’re eating and how we eat it,” he says. “It’s changed our lives dramatically.”

Some 800 students have come through the doors of the Promise Culinary School since it began. “They come from everywhere,” says Chef Pearl. Students’ diverse backgrounds include those who are recently downsized from a major corporation, those who are homeless, who are in a second career after retirement, who are blind, severely learning disabled or following a lifelong dream of cooking. With commitments to inexpensive tuition and individualized
student attention, Chef Pearl says, “We invite everyone to the table.”

Former students talk about the investment they felt staff put into their success, both in school and in helping with job placement. Some students don’t go far from “home” after graduation: Nearly all cooking positions at Elijah’s Promise, including the soup kitchen, catering company and the Better World Market and Café food and pastry production, are headed up by graduates.

As a whole, graduates have a 90 percent job placement rate, in jobs ranging from high-end restaurants to running their own catering companies to cooking for the local school district, and at least two former students have appeared on national cooking shows.

For Chef Pearl, the work of Elijah’s Promise has the potential to be nothing short of transformational, improving the lives and health of everyone who walks through its doors—and it is also very simple. “We all go back to food. It’s the one thing everybody has to do. Everybody’s got to eat. And it’s the place where the work gets done,” she says. As the kitchen is the heart of the home, “We try to be the heart of this community. And we use food to make that work happen and change those lives.”
Hunger and Health Resource List

Organizations
- God’s Love We Deliver and Food Is Medicine Coalition
- Capital Roots
- Elijah’s Promise
- Convergence Partnership
- Health Care without Harm
- PolicyLink Center for Health Equity and Place
- Promedica: Come to the Table Summits
- Right to Food and Nutrition Watch

Publications and Webinars
- Alliance to End Hunger: Hunger is a Health Issue
- American Public Health Association: Food Justice, Obesity and the Social Determinants of Health
- Food Research and Action Center: Hunger, Obesity and Health publications
- From Hunger to Health
- NYU School of Law International Human Rights Clinic: Nourishing Change: Fulfilling the Right to Food in the United States

Studies
“This whole concept of ‘charity’ has to stop. ...I don’t want scraps. If I can’t give you good food, then there’s no point in doing it at all.”

Chef Pearl Thompson
Elijah’s Promise, New Brunswick, NJ