

Beyond Pantry Walls: Extending our Reach with Online Ordering

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- ❖ Manna, with other MAHN pantries—including Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities (PCRC) and The Open Link (TOL)—visited Mitzvah Food Program Northeast in Fall 2015 to view SmartChoice online ordering and inventory management software in action.
 - ❖ All three pantries ultimately chose SmartChoice after looking at several other inventory and online ordering programs.
 - ❖ Together they shared information, bar codes and helpful tips during planning and implementation.
 - ❖ PCRC launched online shopping in November 2016, Manna in June 2017, and TOL in July 2018 .



Why Online Ordering?

Answer from Dierdre Mulligan of Mitzvah Food Program, one of the original implementers of SmartChoice:

“While the Jewish Federation has provided a wide range of services that include emergency food for vulnerable populations, it recognized that the food pantry system could serve more clients, provide more nutritious food, and empower clients with greater choice in selecting food by investing in a digital ordering system. The digital ordering system, called SmartChoice, was implemented at the Mitzvah Food Program, which is a network of five food pantries in the greater Philadelphia area.”

Deirdre Mulligan dmulligan@jewishphilly.org



HealthSpark Innovation Lab Grant: Extending the Food Security Safety Net

With this grant, MAHN seeks to answer the following questions:

1. Can an online food ordering and delivery service developed in collaboration with new and existing partnerships and infrastructure be leveraged to eliminate barriers to accessing emergency food?
2. What access to emergency food and basic food prep equipment/supplies are needed by people transitioning out of homelessness and incarceration?
3. How does the effectiveness of online ordering and delivery compare with other approaches to serving these vulnerable under served populations?



Pantries in the MAHN Network Using SmartChoice

- ❖ Mitzvah Food Program Mainline (Bala Cynwyd)
- ❖ Pottstown Cluster of Religious Communities
- ❖ The Open Link
- ❖ Manna on Main Street



Upcoming Projects

- ❖ The Open Link is working with local elementary schools in Upper Meriomen School District to connect identified families in need with the pantry through online ordering. Pilot will begin with 5 families and then expanded to include more families and additional schools.
- ❖ Post-Secondary Food Insecurity—A collaborative project to pilot a response to the food insecurity experienced by a significant percentage of college students. Funded by the VNA of Greater North Penn and HealthSpark, it involves MC3, Gwynedd Mercy University, Manna on Main Street, MAHN and Your Way Home. Contact Kristyn DiDominick Kristyn@mannaonmain.org for more information.



Other Options

- ❖ Jenkintown United Methodist Church Food Cupboard is developing the use of an alternative inventory management and online system, Food Bank Manager. This system is currently used by the Bucks County Opportunity Council (BCOC) pantries. Contact Mindy Bartscherer mbartscherer@yahoo.com for more information.
- ❖ The Rachel Way – Gluten and Dairy Free Virtual Food Pantry serves families with gluten and dairy free medically documented needs by providing grocery store gift cards and, sometimes, direct ordering from grocery stores/Amazon from a list that families provide. Families call or send emails with food needs. They are moving from handling or stocking food to a completely virtual pantry.
<http://www.therachelway.org/>



Nuts and Bolts

- ❖ Brooke Harvey's (The Open Link) informational and advice sheet will be sent out with this presentation
- ❖ MAHN Online Working Group—contact them through MAHN Administrator Paula Schafer at pschafer@montcoantihunger.org
- ❖ SmartChoice <https://www.smartchoicepantry.com/>
- ❖ Analytic Solutions, creator of SmartChoice <http://www.analyticsolutions.com/>
- ❖ Food Bank Manager <http://www.foodbankmanager.com/>

