

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEES ON EDUCATION AND HOUSING,
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND THE
HOMELESS

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, March 14, 2016
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION 160077 - Resolution authorizing the joint City Council Committees on Education and Housing, Neighborhood Development and the Homeless to hold public hearings to examine the feasibility of having a pilot program in Philadelphia to feed needy children when schools are closed due to emergencies.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
3 morning. We thank you all for coming.
4 We are now convening and beginning the
5 hearing for the Committee on Education
6 and Housing, Neighborhood Development and
7 the Homeless. This is a very important
8 issue. We're grateful to have this
9 opportunity and, again, we invite all
10 those on our collective committees --
11 Councilman Domb is here and myself -- so
12 that you may be involved in this hearing.

13 We will now ask the Clerk to
14 read the title of the resolution.

15 THE CLERK: Resolution 160077,
16 resolution authorizing the joint City
17 Council Committees on Education and
18 Housing, Neighborhood Development and the
19 Homeless to hold public hearings to
20 examine the feasibility of having a pilot
21 program in Philadelphia to feed needy
22 children when schools are closed due to
23 emergencies.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much.

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2 I will not make an opening
3 statement. There's a lot we want to hear
4 and begin right away. So we are going to
5 thank GIS analyst Greg Kingery and ask
6 him to come before we begin all our other
7 detailed testimony. We want to thank him
8 and ask him to come and talk about our
9 maps and the information we have.

10 And we thank you. See, we make
11 you first. Yes, please join us at the
12 witness table.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 MR. KINGERY: Thank you,
16 Councilwoman, Councilman Domb, Councilman
17 Oh. Again, my name is Greg Kingery, GIS
18 analyst for Philadelphia City Council,
19 Office of the President, Technical
20 Services, and author of the maps you all
21 see before you today. I'm happy to field
22 any questions regarding these products.

23 Working with Paulette Adams in
24 Councilwoman Blackwell's office, we
25 wanted to find a way to convey the

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2 accessibility of select community
3 resources to our City schools in every
4 Council district. There is a lot going
5 on in these maps. Once again, I'm happy
6 to field any questions.

7 The resources we chose included
8 libraries, rec centers, walkable access
9 to healthy food, food pantries, and women
10 and children's shelters and resource
11 centers as well to kind of give us the
12 best picture, the fullest picture of what
13 the proximity is, what's the locational
14 data on all of our City schools in each
15 respective district.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you so much. And this is such important
18 information. In all of our offices we
19 have it for all ten districts, and each
20 office will be able to access this
21 information for any use, and it's really,
22 really wonderful that we have this
23 information and how many ways we can use
24 it.

25 We thank you so much for all

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2 the work you did to put this together for
3 our own city. Thank you again.

4 MR. KINGERY: Thank you,
5 Councilwoman.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you.

8 Panel 1 -- we note that
9 Councilman Oh is here. We thank him very
10 much. Thank you. We'll now ask -- one
11 moment, please.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: The red on
13 the charts -- thanks for this work, by
14 the way. It was very helpful.

15 MR. KINGERY: Happy to help
16 you.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
18 Chairperson Blackwell, for this
19 opportunity.

20 But the red on the charts means
21 it's not walkable, correct?

22 MR. KINGERY: Correct. That's
23 a metric developed by the Health
24 Department and their GIS crew, which we
25 incorporated into this map, and per this

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2 metric, it means that there is no access
3 to healthy food.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And the outer
5 ring from a school was defined as a
6 quarter of a mile, you mentioned to me?

7 MR. KINGERY: That is correct.
8 It's a quarter mile radius.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Quarter mile.
10 And roughly how many blocks might that be
11 to walk?

12 MR. KINGERY: In the densest
13 parts of the City, it may be six blocks.
14 It's generally considered to be a five-
15 to ten-minute walk, to my understanding.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do you think
17 in a 25-inch snowstorm that's feasible?

18 MR. KINGERY: Not necessarily,
19 no.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
21 you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you very much.

24 Any other questions?

25 (No response.)

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you, Mr. Kingery.

4 Panel 1, Karyn Lynch,
5 Philadelphia School District.

6 You know, Ms. Lynch, if you do
7 a good job at a hearing, you always get
8 invited to do another. Thank you.

9 Wayne Grasela, School District,
10 Senior Vice President of Food Services,
11 and Melissa Moore. We thank Melissa
12 Moore especially because she came in this
13 morning from Baltimore to testify,
14 because they have a program going there
15 and she came in to be willing to testify
16 for us. So we are very, very grateful.
17 And it's not that we even offered car
18 fare. She came in on her own to help us
19 with our program, and we're grateful.

20 (Witnesses approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So
23 please identify yourself and begin your
24 testimony. Thank you.

25 MS. LYNCH: Good morning, Madam

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2 Chair. My name is Karyn Lynch. I'm the
3 Chief of Student Support Services with
4 Philadelphia School District, and it's
5 our great pleasure to be here today. I
6 am joined by Wayne Grasela, who leads our
7 Food Service Program, and he has
8 information available about the numbers
9 of meals that we serve each day, the
10 numbers of children breakfast and lunch,
11 and the various programs that we have
12 that are federally funded. I would say
13 99.9 percent federally funded.

14 Philadelphia is a unique
15 jurisdiction in the country because of
16 the numbers of impoverished families that
17 we have. And so we recognize fully that
18 the meals that our children receive,
19 children across the City receive through
20 the breakfast and lunch and afternoon
21 programs, are extremely important, and
22 when schools are closed due to inclement
23 weather, we too are very concerned about
24 how children receive and the meals that
25 they are going to receive. In fact, it's

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2 one of the factors that we heavily take
3 into consideration when we consider
4 whether or not we're going to close
5 schools. Particularly the sequence of
6 days, if it's more than one day, two
7 days, it heavily weighs into our
8 decision-making about closing schools.

9 We're here today to share some
10 of the things that we do with regard to
11 ensuring that children have great meals
12 each day, but also want to share that we
13 have several schools that are engaged in
14 programs and services where they partner
15 with non-profits within the City to make
16 food available or at least pantry food
17 available for students on an ongoing
18 basis, for children on an ongoing basis.

19 One of the programs that I'd
20 really like to highlight in fact is a
21 program that we were involved with in
22 Maryland before coming to Philadelphia.
23 We're not aware that it exists here right
24 now. It was a beneficial program. We
25 called it the -- and I think the

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2 non-profit that organized it called it
3 the Backpack Program, and children would
4 go home on an ongoing basis with
5 backpacks. It allowed families to fill
6 their storage, their stockpile, if you
7 will, their pantries with the staples
8 that are essential - rice, canned foods,
9 beans - so that when inclement weather
10 actually did come, there was food within
11 the household to sustain the families.

12 We have also heard about
13 emergency programs that send food home
14 during emergencies when it's predictable.
15 I think that the Backpack Program is
16 probably a much better opportunity,
17 because children are going home on an
18 ongoing basis.

19 We are also very much
20 interested in knowing where food pantries
21 and sources of food exist all across the
22 City. We have means of communicating
23 with all of our parents and to have more
24 information like that. We can share that
25 information. We can send out robo calls.

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2 We can let families know during inclement
3 weather where food pantries actually
4 exist by sending out robo calls, which
5 are done electronically and don't require
6 staff to come into the buildings during
7 inclement weather or, most importantly,
8 children to travel outside into inclement
9 weather in order to find out where
10 pantries might be available.

11 We have on our web page
12 information about where food supplies are
13 and where pantries are available to have
14 more information of that kind. We can
15 certainly circulate it and make our web
16 page and our information and sharing much
17 more robust.

18 But in closing, I just want to
19 offer the School District's interest in
20 partnering, particularly with
21 non-profits, to find ways to ensure that
22 during inclement weather, children all
23 across the City are able to receive food,
24 food products, and a nourishing meal.

25 Thank you. If there are any

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2 questions regarding the numbers of meals
3 that we provide, the food service, the
4 allocation of dollars that we receive
5 from the federal government, Mr. Grasela
6 is here to answer those questions.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you very much.

9 Questions?

10 Councilman Domb.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: What is the
12 cost of a backpack typically for a
13 student?

14 MS. LYNCH: I don't know
15 exactly what the cost of a backpack would
16 be for the City of Philadelphia. My
17 guess is that there are non-profits that
18 are here today that would have better
19 information about the actual cost of
20 doing that. I know that where we were,
21 foundations helped pay for that cost. It
22 was not a public cost. It was a donation
23 of food, food supply.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So is the
25 idea with the backpack maybe in the first

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2 sign of a snowstorm or December, you send
3 home two days of meals with a student so
4 that they have the food available for the
5 next two or three months in case it
6 happens or do you do it right before the
7 storm?

8 MS. LYNCH: That's certainly
9 one option. The Backpack Program that I
10 am most familiar with, food goes home on
11 an ongoing basis, because the families
12 that we're talking about are not just
13 unable to provide food supply during
14 inclement times. It's usually a shortage
15 of food within their household on an
16 ongoing basis. So to be able to send
17 kids home once a week, once every other
18 week with a supply of food means that
19 they'll have food over the weekend and
20 there'll food within the household. So
21 if you have several siblings going home
22 to the same household, you have a little
23 bit extra within that household. You
24 know, you send home a couple of pounds of
25 rice and some other products.

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2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The
4 Chair notes that Councilwoman Gym is
5 here. We thank her as well.

6 Many years ago, since I've been
7 around here forever, we had hearings when
8 crime kind of spiked and we got
9 possession of a see-through pack,
10 backpack and bookbag, which was a real
11 good idea. We tried to -- we bought
12 some, but obviously we couldn't buy
13 enough. But we did try it as a way to
14 allow only positive things and everything
15 in the bookbag could be seen, but we
16 tried to do that once. There aren't too
17 many things we haven't tried once or
18 twice, but that's a good idea as well.

19 Any questions, any further
20 questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you.

24 Mr. Wayne Grasela.

25 MR. GASELA: Good morning,

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2 Chairwoman Blackwell, Councilman Domb,
3 and members --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
5 can't hear you.

6 MR. GRASELA: -- of the
7 Education and Housing, Neighborhood
8 Development, Homeless Committee. I am
9 Wayne Grasele, Senior Vice President of
10 Food Service with the School District of
11 Philadelphia. I welcome the opportunity
12 to be here this morning to examine the
13 feasibility of having a pilot program in
14 Philadelphia to feed needy children when
15 schools are closed due to emergencies.

16 I have been with the District
17 for over 25 years and have worked in many
18 areas of operation, including facilities
19 and transportation. As the current point
20 person for the District in terms of
21 feeding our students, all breakfast,
22 lunch, and dinner meals are provided
23 without charge to all students regardless
24 of family income. Free breakfast for all
25 students was implemented during the

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2 2011-2012 school year, free lunch for all
3 students implemented during the 2014-15
4 school year. Free dinner meals are
5 provided at select schools in
6 high-poverty neighborhoods.

7 We currently provide annually
8 over 27 million breakfast, lunch, and
9 dinner meals at no charge to 136,000 K-12
10 students in 265 District, charter, and
11 private school locations. We use
12 in-house staff of about 890 employees,
13 which over 99 percent are unionized. We
14 receive no District or City of
15 Philadelphia funding. Instead we operate
16 as an independent enterprise fund, whose
17 only source of revenue is various state
18 and federal student meal reimbursement
19 programs.

20 On a daily basis, we serve
21 89,000 lunches, which is approximately 70
22 percent of our attendance; 54,000
23 breakfasts, which is approximately 42
24 percent of our attendance; and 5,000
25 after-school dinner meals.

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2 So what happens to the food
3 when there is a snow day? Food scheduled
4 for use on any snow day does not go
5 unused, but remains under refrigeration
6 for the following day's use. In the
7 event of multiple snow days at the end of
8 the work week, for example, Thursday and
9 Friday, for example, all food items are
10 evaluated on the following Monday and
11 destroyed as needed to ensure only safe
12 and healthy meals are provided to each
13 student. In general, snow days do not
14 result in any material loss of food and
15 food items, so there are no lost supplies
16 to reallocate.

17 When there is a snow day in the
18 City, our team works with the Streets
19 Department, Transportation Department,
20 and other departments in the City of
21 Philadelphia. We make sure that the
22 streets are clear and safe before
23 students and staff return. If the City
24 closes, we will wait until they have
25 cleared the streets, then start to clear

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2 the sidewalks and pathways to schools.

3 We will not require students to go out

4 until the City has deemed it safe for

5 people to travel and the sidewalks and

6 school grounds have been cleared.

7 Again, thanks for the

8 opportunity to be here and discuss the

9 critical issues that will support our

10 children.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

12 you very much.

13 Are there any questions?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All

16 right. We're going to -- Councilwoman

17 Gym and then we'll go to Melissa Moore.

18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So I'm

20 sorry. Mr. Grasela, thank you very much.

21 Good morning.

22 MR. GRASELA: Good morning.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: A couple of

24 questions. I guess -- and I'm sorry that

25 I wasn't here a little bit earlier, but

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2 can you clarify. So you could deliver
3 these meals to another location? I know
4 you don't want students to come to
5 schools until the streets are cleared and
6 safe, but this food is ready to be used;
7 is that right?

8 MR. GRASELA: The food is ready
9 to be used.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And could be
11 distributed to another location?

12 MR. GRASELA: We -- well, no.
13 The food is used when the children return
14 to school.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: But you
16 would -- so one of the questions is is
17 like if there's an alternative site, how
18 would food get to that site?

19 MS. LYNCH: If during inclement
20 weather -- if the question is how would
21 we get to the site during inclement
22 weather and move the food during
23 inclement weather, that would be a
24 challenge for us, because our workers are
25 not coming in during the inclement

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2 weather. They traditionally don't come
3 in. So moving the food during that
4 circumstance from one location to another
5 is a challenge.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And so one
7 possibility is just that there are
8 central sites that open up like they've
9 done in other cities?

10 MS. LYNCH: Well, I think I
11 shared earlier a great possibility is to
12 ensure that food is going home on an
13 ongoing basis prior to inclement weather
14 or prior to an emergency. So through a
15 program where food is going home to -- a
16 program where food is going home to
17 households on an ongoing basis, there
18 would be -- the thought is that there
19 would be food within the household during
20 an emergency or -- and in these programs,
21 as the question was asked, when you know
22 inclement weather is coming, can you send
23 an extra supply home. That's definitely
24 a possibility.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And then I

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2 guess one of the questions is is that in
3 the last snowstorm, we had a four-day
4 extension. So it was Saturday through
5 Tuesday.

6 MS. LYNCH: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And I think
8 that the question is what happens on
9 Tuesday when the child and the family are
10 now four days out? Is that something
11 that you would plan for as well?

12 MS. LYNCH: Exactly. So if
13 food is going home on an ongoing basis,
14 if there's a non-profit within the City
15 or a series of non-profits within the
16 City that are sending food home on an
17 ongoing basis, then the food would be
18 there in that household for that four-day
19 period. And if we knew that there was
20 inclement weather, an additional supply
21 of food could go home with children. I
22 mean, non-profits can make that happen.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank
24 you.

25 And then, Mr. Grasela, one

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2 other question is, could you talk to me a
3 little bit about the status of, just
4 separately, about the breakfast program
5 and participation in the breakfast
6 program in the last two years.

7 MR. GRASELA: Yeah. Over the
8 last -- well, currently, as I mentioned
9 in my testimony, about 42 percent of the
10 students who are in attendance receive
11 breakfast. We are working diligently
12 with executive leadership of the District
13 to try to improve access to breakfast, to
14 encourage principals to provide breakfast
15 in the classroom. We are working with
16 approximately -- a large percentage of
17 our schools we've identified where
18 participation is struggling and working
19 specifically with the principals to give
20 them any option or provide any support we
21 can to help them to provide access to the
22 students for breakfast.

23 At one time we were probably
24 national best practice when it came to
25 breakfast. We struggled over the last

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2 two years, partly because of principals
3 and staff on site to supervise the
4 children, but we are trying to encourage
5 the principals to open up breakfast in
6 the classroom, and that really will
7 increase access for students.

8 MS. LYNCH: I think something
9 else that has increased access for
10 students also is transitioning our
11 kitchens so that they are -- and maybe
12 you could share some of the numbers where
13 we have increased the food prep on site
14 opportunities in our kitchen and
15 converted them to food preparation
16 locations.

17 MR. GRASELA: Yeah. Part of
18 our multi-year strategic plan is to
19 convert any school that was a
20 pre-packaged satellite type of operation
21 and has the physical characters to become
22 a full-service production type of
23 environment, we've transitioned them to
24 full-service environments. That has
25 greatly increased customer satisfaction.

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2 Our goal is to decrease the footprint of
3 where we have to serve pre-packaged
4 meals.

5 Currently, 60 percent of our
6 students, as of next year, 60 percent of
7 our students will have access to
8 full-service operations.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I think
10 that's actually one of the best aspects
11 that the School District has done in a
12 really great way, and I think that your
13 department and the District should be
14 commended for expanding the access to the
15 full-service cafeterias. But I think my
16 question is a little bit about
17 participation in the breakfast program,
18 and that's seen a significant decline
19 overall, unless you're saying that these
20 are just individual schools that are
21 seeing it.

22 MR. GRASELA: Yeah. As we
23 looked at this, certain schools that had
24 robust programs where the principals were
25 allowing the kids to eat breakfast in the

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2 classroom, for a variety of reasons they
3 decided not to go that direction.

4 Although the students do have access to
5 breakfast, it's not at the same level as
6 it would be if it was breakfast in the
7 classroom. And that's really the best
8 way to increase breakfast participation,
9 through breakfast in the classroom.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And could
11 you share what kind of numbers are we
12 seeing? I mean, 42 percent of students
13 get free breakfast -- or participate in
14 the free breakfast program; is that
15 right?

16 MR. GRASELA: That's right.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So 42
18 percent of eligible students. And
19 breakfast is free across the board?

20 MR. GRASELA: That's correct,
21 and it has been so since 2011.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Right. And
23 one of the things that we're trying to
24 encourage both schools and principals to
25 understand is that a child on a full

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2 stomach having free breakfast available
3 to them, it is kind of troubling that
4 we're only at 42 percent, and one of the
5 things I think you mentioned is the lack
6 of staffing in schools, which we
7 certainly heard from a number of
8 principals concerns about there's nobody
9 to open up the school in the morning
10 except for the principal. It's not
11 feasible for them to both monitor and
12 distribute the breakfast and monitor the
13 classroom and get the school ready. And
14 can you talk a little bit more about the
15 staffing concerns.

16 MR. GRASELA: Well, I really
17 can't -- I mean, certainly Food Services
18 provides -- Operations provides whatever
19 staff we can within our budget in terms
20 of how we staff schools outside of that.

21 I mean, Karyn, you want to take
22 that question?

23 MS. LYNCH: I think the food
24 service staff within buildings
25 traditionally are responsible for

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2 breakfast in the classroom. Breakfast in
3 the classroom becomes a challenge
4 because, I mean, it's served at the place
5 where teachers are attempting to teach.
6 The project and the program, Breakfast in
7 the Classroom, is one where there's an
8 opportunity to increase our participation
9 rates, and that's something that we're
10 working on, as Wayne said right now.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: That's
12 great. I mean, one of the things I just
13 want to emphasize, that it's our
14 understanding that in 2013 or '14 that it
15 looked like we had almost 70 percent
16 participation in the breakfast program.

17 MR. GRASELA: Yeah, 70 percent
18 of -- well, it wasn't 70 percent of --
19 no. It was 50 percent of the --

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Breakfast
21 and lunch?

22 MR. GRASELA: Well, the
23 national target is 70 percent of the
24 children who eat lunch. So for every
25 hundred students who eat lunch, ideally

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2 70 percent would participate in the
3 breakfast program. In 2013-14, we hit
4 that target, yes, and we were considered
5 national best practice.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So in
7 2013-14 we had about 70 percent of
8 eligible students participate in the free
9 breakfast program; we currently have 42
10 percent?

11 MR. GRASELA: No. Everyone's
12 eligible to participate, but 70 percent
13 of the --

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Lunch
15 participants.

16 MR. GRASELA: Yes, were
17 participating, yes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: But right
19 now this 42 percent is based on total or
20 lunch?

21 MR. GRASELA: Attendance.
22 Total.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So total.
24 And then in terms of participation, would
25 you say that the 70 percent is

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2 significantly different from the 42
3 percent?

4 MR. GRASELA: Well, the goal
5 actually, if you look at it as a
6 percentage of attendance, 50 percent of
7 attendance would be approximately 70
8 percent of lunch.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. So I
10 think one of the things -- and, Madam
11 Chair, I just wanted to just clarify a
12 little bit, that the free breakfast
13 program is a wonderful program that was
14 established by the federal government,
15 supported strongly by Senator Casey when
16 we were almost going to lose the program
17 a couple of years ago, and it actually
18 brings in funding for the School District
19 because it's fully reimbursed by the
20 federal government. And our hope is that
21 we can see those numbers ratchet up, and
22 if it's related to staffing, that this is
23 a very serious concern for all of us,
24 that this is a major priority that we get
25 our children fed, that they are

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2 participating and healthy when the school
3 day starts. It's free and available to
4 them, and we don't want staffing problems
5 to be the barrier to getting a child to
6 start a school day on a full meal and
7 with a healthy frame of mind and also to
8 feel really supported in school. And to
9 the extent that our offices can be
10 supporters with the School District on
11 the Breakfast in the Classroom program,
12 we would be wholly engaged and my office
13 in particular would be wholly engaged
14 with that. So thank you.

15 MS. LYNCH: Thank you.

16 MR. GRASELA: Thank you very
17 much. There are many studies that
18 indicate that children who eat breakfast
19 are more equipped to learn, less
20 disruptive, healthier, et cetera. So we
21 are very supportive and we appreciate any
22 support we can get from Council on that.
23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And one
25 quick clarifying question. What staff

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2 would be needed to be able to open up
3 breakfast in the classroom or to have a
4 breakfast program in schools? What staff
5 is it that we're needing to have?

6 MR. GRASELA: Ideally, it's
7 been -- most of our success with
8 Breakfast in the Classroom, we prepare
9 the meals, we package them, and then the
10 students actually help out with the
11 delivery to the classroom and the
12 teachers monitor it for us in the
13 classroom level. So basically the
14 students come down to the cafeteria area.
15 They take -- or a noontime aide will take
16 it up to the classroom. The teacher will
17 serve it, check off the students, and
18 that's how we claim for reimbursement.

19 Pennsylvania Department of
20 Education has allowed breakfast in the
21 classroom to become part of the
22 instructional day. So it's not like
23 we're taking from the instructional. So
24 we are fully supportive, and we are doing
25 everything we can. We will do breakfast

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2 in the classrooms, in the cafeterias, in
3 the hallways, courtyards, grab and go.

4 Whatever a principal will allow us to do,
5 that's what we'll do to provide access
6 for the students. And we've been

7 successful in quite a few schools. So

8 one of the things that we're doing right

9 now is, we're identifying where we are

10 successful and sharing those experiences

11 with the principals who may be a little

12 resistant or reluctant to do so. We're

13 starting to make some headway. We're

14 seeing growth, not the numbers. Part of

15 our strategic plan is to grow that 10 to

16 15 percent a year over the next three

17 years, but I think we're going to do

18 better than that.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And what
20 kind of staff would it take to have a
21 breakfast program in the schools separate
22 from the Breakfast in the Classroom
23 program? What staff are we missing that
24 we would need to take a look at?

25 MR. GRASELA: Noontime aides

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2 probably would be helpful, because

3 they're the ones that are monitoring the

4 students as they mill around the schools.

5 We'll provide whatever staff we can

6 within our budget. I mean, we have a

7 limited budget, as I mentioned in our

8 testimony. We are an enterprise fund.

9 We receive no funding from the City or

10 the School District. So we rely strictly

11 on state and federal reimbursements,

12 which have to cover all our overheads,

13 utilities, et cetera, et cetera.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank
15 you very much.

16 MR. GRASELA: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you.

19 Councilman Domb.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I just want
21 to wrap up what I think I'm hearing, but
22 basically we're here today to discuss how
23 to feed needy children when the schools
24 are closed due to emergencies. That's
25 the resolution. And what I'm hearing is

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2 that the easiest way probably is making
3 sure the food is in the home through the
4 Backpack Program versus any other method.
5 That's what I've gleaned from this
6 conversation. Is that accurate?

7 MR. GRASELA: Yes.

8 MS. LYNCH: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you very much.

12 And now, again, we thank
13 Melissa Moore, Family League of
14 Baltimore, Program Director, for coming
15 this morning to grace us with information
16 on her experience on running such a
17 program in Baltimore. Thank you very
18 much.

19 MS. MOORE: Thank you very much
20 for having me.

21 Can you hear me okay?

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

23 MS. MOORE: Okay. In Baltimore
24 city, a third of our residents are living
25 in poverty, and one in four of our

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2 children lives in a food desert. Our
3 maps look a lot like the maps that you
4 have up here in Philadelphia, although
5 you have a lot more people in your city
6 than we do in ours.

7 I commend the work of the
8 school system. I think they're doing an
9 amazing job with all of the meals that
10 they're serving.

11 Eighty-five thousand of our
12 students, every single one of them, is
13 eligible for the free and reduced meal
14 program, breakfast and lunch, and we
15 serve over 60,000 of those children every
16 day.

17 When schools are closed due to
18 an emergency, there isn't -- there wasn't
19 a magical way for those children to get
20 these meals that they needed every day
21 and there wasn't an established backpack
22 program or emergency meal plan by the
23 City of Baltimore. Luckily, right before
24 this last storm, Storm Jonas, where we
25 were shut down for all five days, an

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2 entire week of school, which if you count
3 the weekends, that would be nine days.
4 So technically nine days that children
5 didn't have potentially access to the
6 meal that they would have gotten in
7 schools. And so prior to that, Baltimore
8 City had convened an emergency work group
9 where over 20 city agencies and
10 non-profits were brought together by the
11 Mayor's Office Department of Planning,
12 and we were able to have two meetings
13 before the storm happened. And so we had
14 a lot of systems in place on how we were
15 going to serve the most vulnerable
16 populations in our city, including the
17 elderly, homeless, and children.

18 The Family League is focused on
19 children. We run a Child Adult Care Food
20 Program, which is the after-school meals
21 program. We serve over 10,000 kids a day
22 in that program. We also participate in
23 the Summer Food Service Program. And so
24 that's why we were called to the table,
25 as well as the food banks and some other

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2 non-profits.

3 So with all of these people at
4 the table, we were able to develop a
5 tiered system of serving at our
6 recreation centers and some schools. And
7 it wasn't finalized, but it was trial by
8 fire in the storm, and we were able to
9 have someone in the Mayor's Office of
10 Emergency Management. They have a room
11 where they have people that are there 24
12 hours a day, including the Department of
13 Transportation, Recreation and Parks,
14 Baltimore City Police, and a number of
15 other agencies. And so we had someone
16 from our emergency food work group that
17 was stationed in that room and was able
18 to facilitate conversations between the
19 organizations that were implementing the
20 food programs.

21 We had our Recreation and Parks
22 step up in a really, really big way to be
23 able to serve the meals. They opened up
24 their recreation centers to serve meals.
25 We were able to get them there between

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2 12:00 and 2:00, and the centers

3 themselves were open from 12:00 to 6:00.

4 So they were able to not only be open to

5 offer meals, but they were also open to

6 provide that recreation and that healthy

7 play that the children weren't getting

8 while they were in schools.

9 We were able to get reimbursed

10 for these meals through the Child and

11 Adult Care Food Program. Much like the

12 breakfast and lunch program, it is a

13 reimbursable federal meal program, and

14 when schools are closed, you can operate

15 that program at any time of day. So

16 during the school year, we could only

17 serve after school is closed, around 2:30

18 or 3:10, depending on which school it is,

19 but when there is a spring break or a

20 Christmas break or President's Day or

21 something like that, we implement the

22 CACFP program in centers that will open

23 during those days for children. And so

24 we thought it best to open those centers

25 during the storm, and the recreation

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2 centers were the first on the list
3 because they were city employees and so
4 they were able to be made as, I believe,
5 essential staff.

6 So we were able to serve meals
7 at recreation centers, but then we had
8 some schools that wanted to get involved
9 too. One of our schools in South
10 Baltimore looks a lot like the 2nd School
11 District map over here, and it is very,
12 very red. There is no grocery stores in
13 that area, and when school was closed for
14 five days, there isn't an easy way for
15 children or parents to get to a grocery
16 store to get food. And so a school
17 actually called us. One of the community
18 schools in Baltimore City gave us a call,
19 and the principal was willing to open up
20 her doors. And while she couldn't serve
21 food from her kitchens because of some
22 staffing issues and things like that, we
23 were able to have our vendors drop off
24 food at her school and it was served from
25 there. We had three schools that decided

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2 to do that. The schools were getting
3 hundreds of meals every day to hand out
4 to the children, which was a really,
5 really great partnership.

6 We did operate the
7 reimbursement through the Child and Adult
8 Care Food Program, but in the event of an
9 emergency like a snowstorm, you can open
10 up your Summer Food Program sites.

11 Baltimore City has 565 Summer Food
12 Program sites. A lot of them are
13 schools, a lot of them are churches, a
14 lot of them are recreation centers, but
15 that is something that the USDA has told
16 us and given us guidance that it can be
17 done. They put out a waiver and some
18 material on that, which I'm happy to
19 send.

20 I think that there is a lot of
21 layers to this and it took a lot of
22 people around the table to figure out how
23 to do what we did during the storm, and
24 it was a lot of dedication of the
25 recreation center staff, of the school

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2 staff, and of our non-profit who -- when
3 there's a snow day, a lot of people think
4 of, you know, let's hang out and watch TV
5 and go sledding and have hot chocolate,
6 but in areas such as this where we are in
7 food deserts and when there is such high
8 food insecurity, we think of how are
9 children going to get the meals that they
10 need and the services that they usually
11 get at school. So we were really happy
12 that we were able to provide what we did.

13 We have gone back and done some
14 reflection, and the emergency action plan
15 is being finalized. We've met a few
16 times since then.

17 One of the things that we did
18 decide to do from some things we learned
19 during the storm was to have a few days
20 of non-perishable meals on site at the
21 recreation centers so that they can --
22 they are reimbursable through the Child
23 and Adult Care Food Program if they meet
24 certain program requirements. And so
25 during those two days -- let's say we

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2 send two days of food -- then they could
3 use that food if the roads were so, so
4 bad that we couldn't get to them, or if
5 they wanted to use all of the food in one
6 day because they had so many people come,
7 we could probably get, depending on what
8 tier they are and the clearing schedule
9 from the Department of Transportation, we
10 could probably get food to them on that
11 second day so they could receive a fuller
12 boxed meal or a hot meal.

13 And the other thing was the
14 pre-stocking food from the food pantries
15 before the storm and then restocking
16 after. Obviously with Storm Jonas we had
17 a lot of notice. I, for one, didn't
18 really think it was going to be as bad as
19 it was, just because it's hard to trust
20 the weather people, but it did. It hit
21 us, and it hit us really hard. And when
22 we have that kind of foresight, we can
23 pre-stock the food pantries. We can have
24 the ones that we know are community based
25 really be open during that time when they

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2 can get staff there, and then we can
3 restock them afterwards. And so while we
4 can't do any deliveries during the storm,
5 we can prepare before and then restock
6 afterwards.

7 Thank you very much.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
9 you so much. And you admitted that when
10 you were -- you really needed it, even
11 your transportation system then would,
12 for these special circumstances, would
13 bring their people in. All very
14 important.

15 Questions from members of the
16 Committee?

17 (No response.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It's
19 very important, because you do it and you
20 use your summer sites as an example of
21 places that they can go. That's very
22 good too, from churches to schools to rec
23 centers. Very, very, very important.

24 Do we have any questions for
25 Ms. Moore? She came from Baltimore to

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2 give us her information.

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I see
5 you, Stephanie Marsh.

6 All right. Well, let me thank
7 you. If you all think of something,
8 we'll ask her while she's here and before
9 she goes back. But thank you very, very
10 much --

11 MS. MOORE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: -- for
13 helping us with this successful program.
14 Thank you.

15 Sue Slawson, Parks and
16 Recreation; Elizabeth Hersh, our new head
17 of OSH, Office of Supportive Housing, our
18 Director; Ms. Reardon, Free Library,
19 President and Director; Mike Carroll,
20 Streets Department, Deputy Commissioner.

21 (Witnesses approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you all very, very much. We appreciate
25 your coming. Thank you. Please identify

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2 yourself and begin your testimony, any
3 order.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SLAWSON:

5 Good morning, Madam Chairwoman Blackwell,
6 Councilman Domb, and members of the
7 Committees of Education and Housing,
8 Neighborhood Development and the
9 Homeless. My name is Susan Slawson. I
10 am First Deputy Commissioner for
11 Recreation and Programs. On behalf of
12 Parks and Recreation, Commissioner
13 Kathryn Ott-Lovell, I'm here to testify
14 about the feasibility of providing meals
15 to children during a weather emergency.
16 Thank you for this opportunity to present
17 our findings.

18 The Parks and Recreation
19 Department provides meals to youth 18
20 years and younger on a year-round basis.
21 During the Summer Food Program, an
22 extension of the school lunch program,
23 over 800 citywide sites receive meals,
24 serving over 32,000 youth per day.
25 During the school year, over 100 sites

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2 receive meals, serving 4,000 youth per
3 day. In Fiscal Year 2015, nearly three
4 million meals were served to Philadelphia
5 youth through Parks and
6 Recreation-sponsored sites.

7 Parks and Recreation staff are
8 committed and take serious the goal of
9 providing healthy meals to children of
10 Philadelphia. However, there are some
11 logistical and operational challenges we
12 would need to address regarding providing
13 meals during weather emergencies.

14 One, currently over 100 sites
15 provide meals daily. Meals are not
16 prepared on site. They are delivered via
17 the contracted vendor. As a matter of
18 policy, when schools are closed, the
19 after-school program and the meal program
20 do not operate. If a weather emergency
21 is issued, it is usually followed by a
22 statement encouraging the public to stay
23 off the roads, which would limit
24 Department staff and the vendor from
25 getting to facilities to distribute

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2 meals. Meals are delivered the same day
3 they are served, so bad weather would
4 have a direct impact on food delivery.
5 At least two staff would be needed to
6 distribute meals as well as staff to
7 clear the walkways of snow. Since
8 recreation center staff typically work
9 afternoon and evenings during the school
10 year, having them come in to serve
11 breakfast and lunch would require a
12 schedule change or additional compensated
13 hours, which would affect our budget.
14 Sites request a certain number of meals
15 to distribute per day. Any increase in
16 that number requires a 72-hour turnaround
17 time. Refrigerated storage for
18 additional meals could also be a
19 challenge, as would be distributing any
20 extra meals if the snow never arrives but
21 the extra meals do. Extra meals received
22 but not served are not reimbursed by the
23 state Department of Education, which
24 would require the Department to cover
25 costs.

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2 Parks and Recreation is
3 continually looking for ways to improve
4 the food program. Philadelphia as a
5 whole provides 50 percent of all the
6 meals served in the state, and Parks and
7 Recreation is the largest provider. We'd
8 be happy to continue having this
9 discussion about this important aspect of
10 meeting the needs of Philadelphia's
11 children.

12 I can actually remember myself
13 as a child benefiting from these free
14 lunches being out in the summer on play
15 streets. So we are very concerned, and
16 we are aware of how important it is that
17 we support somehow if this is something
18 that's possible. We just need to figure
19 out how to work through some of the
20 logistical and operational challenges
21 that we have.

22 I also have with me today Terry
23 Kerwawich, who has run the food program
24 for eight years, and she's here to assist
25 in answering any questions that you may

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2 have.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you.

5 Do we have any questions?

6 Councilwoman Gym.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Hi, Ms.
8 Slawson. Good morning. So I understand
9 like kind of the logistical complications
10 and certainly commend the Parks and Rec
11 Department. I mean, obviously you're a
12 free feeding site during the after-school
13 and summer programs, and we're fully
14 aware of it. So it's just trying to
15 think through this emergency support
16 area. And I don't think that we would
17 expect all the sites to open, but it
18 would be more like what we saw in some
19 other cities, which was could there be
20 some centralized types of locations and
21 do you feel that the logistics of this
22 issue are too much to overcome to make it
23 happen?

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SLAWSON:

25 No. I think one of the things that I

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2 mentioned is that those were things that
3 we would just have to work through and
4 figure out, you know, our budget, what
5 particular sites we're talking about
6 actually opening, how many sites we're
7 talking about opening, how many staff
8 members. We'd have to figure out with
9 the state, because the requirement, the
10 three-day requirement, is not something
11 that we've put in place. We have -- with
12 the vendor we need three days to notify
13 them. If an inspector comes on site and
14 we have additional meals -- an inspector
15 would be someone from the state. If they
16 came on site and we have those meals
17 there, we're not compensated for those
18 meals that are there.

19 So there are just logistics
20 that we have to work out if this is
21 something that we can figure out and move
22 forward with; that's all. We think that
23 it's -- I think it's a great idea. It's
24 just a matter how do we make it happen,
25 how is our budget going to be affected,

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2 how will we get staff in to our
3 facilities if there's a snow emergency,
4 because our staff is used not only for,
5 you know, programming, they're also used
6 to clean the snow from outside of our
7 facilities as well. So those are just
8 things that we need to discuss and figure
9 out how we can get through it.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how many
11 vendors does Parks and Rec use for its
12 feeding programs?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SLAWSON:
14 There's one person that has the entire
15 contract.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Is it
17 Marimont?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SLAWSON:
19 It's Marimont, that's right.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So it
21 feels -- and Marimont also services the
22 School District of Philadelphia as well.
23 So at least in this way we have sort of a
24 streamlined vendor that we can open up
25 conversations with. Marimont, I believe,

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2 has a fairly good delivery system as
3 well, and if there were additional
4 things.

5 Can you just tell me a little
6 bit more about the 72-hour turnaround
7 time and who mandates that.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER SLAWSON:
9 I'm going to ask, yes, Terry Kerwawich,
10 who oversees the program, to come and
11 answer that question for you, if that's
12 okay.

13 MS. KERWAWICH: Good morning.
14 The 72 --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
16 Introduce yourself for the record again.

17 MS. KERWAWICH: Sorry. Terry
18 Kerwawich.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Spell
20 your last name.

21 MS. KERWAWICH:
22 K-E-R-W-A-W-I-C-H.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you.

25 MS. KERWAWICH: So because the

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2 meals are pre-made and delivered to us
3 pre-packaged, any increases that we make
4 require a 72-hour turnaround, and that's
5 part of the contract that the City puts
6 out with the vendor when they put in the
7 bid. They require a 72-hour turnaround
8 to get them made and get them to us.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Do you know
10 approximately how much you pay per meal?

11 MS. KERAWICH: We pay for
12 lunch, I believe it's, 2.65.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And then how
14 about do you do dinner or is it just
15 lunch?

16 MS. KERAWICH: During the
17 school year we call it -- it's our supper
18 program, but it's similar to what a lunch
19 would be.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And then how
21 about during the summertime, you'll do
22 breakfast?

23 MS. KERAWICH: During the
24 summer we do breakfast, lunch, and snack.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: What would

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2 be the approximate prices for those per?

3 MS. KERWAWICH: The breakfast,
4 I believe, is \$1.80, \$1.82, and snack is
5 usually around 70 cents, 75 cents.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And is
7 supper the same as the lunch?

8 MS. KERWAWICH: Excuse me?

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Is the 2.65
10 still the same for lunch in the
11 summertime as well as after school?

12 MS. KERWAWICH: Yes.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank
14 you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
16 Councilman Domb.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
18 Chairperson Blackwell.

19 I have a question for you. I
20 still go back to the backpack, because it
21 sounds like to me -- I'm not that
22 knowledgeable about this because I'm
23 learning about it, but it sounds like all
24 these other things are corrective. Storm
25 happens, how do you get food in the hands

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2 of people. The backpack is a preventive
3 method, puts nobody at risk, there's no
4 overtime going on, people aren't
5 traveling, the food is in the home. Am I
6 missing something here? That seems like
7 the solution.

8 MS. KERWAWICH: Well, we have
9 actually looked into the Backpack Program
10 as well. Our problem there is getting
11 the food, because with the program that
12 we run, it's -- all the costs are
13 reimbursable by the state, and the state
14 does not allow us to send food home. So
15 when the kids eat the meals, they have to
16 eat them on site. So we've been looking
17 for possible sponsors or other ways of
18 doing a similar backpack program so that
19 we can send food home with the sites, but
20 we just haven't been able to figure out
21 how to get the money to pay for those
22 meals yet.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
24 you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Any

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2 more questions for the Commissioner?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you. Thank you.

6 Ms. Hersh.

7 MS. HERSH: Hi. My name is Liz
8 Hersh. I'm the Director of the Office of
9 Supportive Housing. Our job is to
10 coordinate resources, mobilize resources
11 to make homelessness in Philadelphia
12 rare, brief, and non-recurring.

13 The Office of Supportive
14 Housing also provided food in 2014 for
15 1.6 million meals that were served in
16 soup kitchens and 4.2 million meals
17 served on site in emergency housing
18 facilities, shelters.

19 In FY16, the Office of
20 Supportive Housing received an allocation
21 of over \$4 million through the State Food
22 Purchase Program, SFPP. Of that
23 allocation, OSH contracts with the Share
24 Food Program and provides Share with an
25 allocation of \$2.9 million. And I know

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2 that you're going to hear from Steveanna
3 in a little while, who can talk more
4 about what Share does.

5 Through the OSH warehouse, 26
6 contracted providers receive food and
7 commodities. These providers in turn
8 provide three daily meals and a snack to
9 individuals and families experiencing
10 homelessness and living in emergency
11 shelters in accordance with the state's
12 food program. Providers that serve
13 children also have to meet the State of
14 Pennsylvania's Child Adult Care Food
15 Program requirements.

16 The Office of Supportive
17 Housing warehouse also provides food to
18 approximately 33 soup kitchens that have
19 shown proof of their not-for-profit
20 status and a description of their
21 emergency meal program, including how
22 many persons they will feed. Based on
23 that information, the warehouse Director
24 and staff determine how much food each
25 kitchen will receive. The kitchens enter

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2 into a three-year agreement that has been
3 approved for use by the state's food
4 program.

5 At specified monthly intervals,
6 the kitchens pick up their food and
7 commodity allotments from the warehouse.
8 Many of these entities are faith-based
9 organizations staffed by volunteers and
10 feed on specific days and times to
11 specific populations; for example,
12 Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to
13 noon, et cetera, dinners only, seniors
14 only, women only, et cetera. A quick
15 canvas of the kitchens that OSH supplies
16 to indicates that there are about nine
17 located in North Philadelphia, nine in
18 West Philadelphia, six in the Northwest,
19 four in the central part of the City, and
20 five in Lower Northeast and Kensington.

21 While OSH provides food to
22 kitchens that operate varying emergency
23 meal programs, Share also provides food
24 to pantries and food cupboards,
25 groceries. So I'll let Steveanna cover

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2 that.

3 OSH wholeheartedly concurs that
4 hungry children need to be fed on snow
5 days and supports the concept of kitchens
6 serving hungry children on those days.
7 We look forward to working with the soup
8 kitchens as well as with the other City
9 agencies, the School District, the
10 Mayor's Office of Community Empowerment,
11 and the Office of Sustainability to
12 explore how we might work together to
13 accommodate children getting meals on
14 snow days.

15 Thank you very much.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you, Ms. Hersh.

18 This is not narrowly a student
19 issue, but we have so many people who are
20 still on the streets who still need food,
21 and there are many agencies. Reverend
22 Brian Jenkins is behind you and Wayne
23 Autry from my church, Sharon Baptist, and
24 other people who try to do their part.
25 Do you have any idea what our need is and

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2 how close we might be at least in our
3 city to not having people to be hungry or
4 on streets?

5 MS. HERSH: I actually don't
6 know a number. We know that there were
7 about 15,000 people counted in the
8 Point-of-Time Survey last year. We don't
9 have the numbers yet from this year. And
10 I do know that with the transfer
11 ordinances, that there will be a new
12 approach to feeding that's going to be
13 adopted in Center City that the food
14 providers are participating in. But in
15 terms of more detail, no. I would have
16 to get back to you on that, which I would
17 be very happy to do.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you. We have been involved in that issue
20 and Reverend Jenkins can tell you we're
21 still in a court situation with regard to
22 feeding on Love Park that we really
23 shouldn't be in. That was my editorial
24 note. But I'm glad that we're -- I
25 appreciate us working on that, because

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2 this has been a few years now since we
3 were in court with our former Mayor. So
4 I'm hopeful that we have a solution and
5 that we're coming up with one where
6 people in Center City and anybody down
7 here -- we know that people come a lot to
8 Center City because they feel protected
9 in numbers and there are many agencies
10 and there's much help and many people
11 congregate and support one another, so
12 they come to Center City, albeit we have
13 others around the City in certain areas,
14 especially North Philadelphia and West
15 Philadelphia. But I will be glad when
16 one day we won't have this kind of an
17 issue to have to deal with, except for an
18 emergency, which can happen. Anybody can
19 have an emergency or fire or be evicted
20 or have an argument with their family and
21 put out of their homes, but people in
22 this country should not have to go around
23 hungry.

24 Thank you.

25 MS. HERSH: Thank you,

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2 Councilwoman.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Any
4 questions?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
7 you.

8 Please identify yourself for
9 the record and begin.

10 MR. BENFORD: Good morning. I
11 am Joe Benford, Deputy Director of
12 Customer Engagement at the Free Library.
13 Siobhan Reardon sends her regrets. She
14 could not attend today.

15 Councilwoman Blackwell,
16 Councilman Domb, and members of the
17 Committees on Education and Housing,
18 Neighborhood Development and the
19 Homeless, thank you for the opportunity
20 to appear before you today to discuss
21 Resolution No. 160077 regarding feeding
22 needy children during snow emergency and
23 when schools are closed.

24 The Free Library has a special
25 commitment to meeting the needs of our

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2 children. It is among the highest
3 priorities in our strategic plan and part
4 of our staff's work every single day. We
5 are committed to building the skills of
6 our young people and working with them
7 towards their academic and life success.
8 Every year we welcome tens of thousands
9 of children to our after-school program.
10 LEAP provides literacy enrichment,
11 homework help, and other educational
12 services to students after school hours.

13 Other Library initiatives that
14 are meeting the literacy needs of our
15 children include the Words at Play
16 Vocabulary Initiative designed to close
17 the 30 million word gap, the disparity
18 between language development and reading
19 in children from different socioeconomic
20 classes; Building Bridges with Books, an
21 intensive partnership with the School
22 District, which embeds library
23 programming into the curriculum; and
24 Homework Help On-Line, which offers live
25 tutoring, a writing lab, and test prep.

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2 Additionally, Summer Reading
3 welcomes thousands of children annually
4 and provides a variety of enrichment
5 programs to stave off the so-called
6 summer reading loss. Science in the
7 Summer is an interactive program designed
8 to make science fun with hands-on
9 teacher-directed experimentation. And
10 Jump Start, an end-of-school initiative,
11 prepares children to return to school.

12 These activities occur in our
13 54 neighborhood libraries, all beloved by
14 their communities. Each location is
15 chock full of materials and equipment, so
16 much so that we have launched the 21st
17 Century Libraries Initiative in part to
18 create more space for our most critical
19 activities. The literacy needs of our
20 children are great, and we are committed
21 to meeting them in the best possible
22 ways.

23 We applaud your initiative in
24 seeking a viable way to meet the
25 nutritional needs of the City's children

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2 during snow emergencies. Our librarians
3 report that there are children who spend
4 the entire day at the library during the
5 summer without lunch or snacks or cash to
6 pay for them. While we have not found a
7 feasible way to meet this need, we do
8 recognize its urgency.

9 I look forward to further
10 discussions of this challenge and would
11 be happy to answer any questions you
12 might have.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you very much. We talked with
15 Ms. Reardon. She told us about your
16 large room on the bottom floor and how
17 she's willing to try to work with us, if
18 need be, because you have it now where
19 they are -- when you feed or have a lunch
20 program, there's a room that you use now.
21 So we're grateful to have that.

22 Councilwoman Gym.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Hi. Good
24 morning.

25 MR. BENFORD: Good morning.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So the Free
3 Libraries are closed during snow
4 emergency days; is that correct?

5 MR. BENFORD: That's correct.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: There's
7 never been any situation in which
8 libraries would be called in or opened up
9 for short periods of time?

10 MR. BENFORD: It hasn't
11 happened so far.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And then,
13 Ms. Hersh, could I ask the same question.
14 Could you talk a little bit about what
15 happens with the food pantries and other
16 places on inclement weather days?

17 MS. HERSH: Yes. To the best
18 of my knowledge, there's nothing in the
19 contracts that we have with soup kitchens
20 or with Share that dictates that they
21 need to be open on snow emergencies or in
22 anticipation of a snow emergency. It's,
23 as I understand it, at the discretion of
24 the individual soup kitchen or food
25 pantry provider. I think those, I think,

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2 are three-year contracts. We do not
3 currently have any kind of compliance
4 mechanism to add new requirements. That
5 would be something that would have to be
6 worked out. It's never really been built
7 in, to be perfectly honest, to the best
8 of my knowledge.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And do you
10 track which soup kitchens do kind of try
11 to stay open during emergencies or snow
12 emergencies or weather related?

13 MS. HERSH: We have not
14 historically done that. It certainly, I
15 think, could be done or could be built
16 in. That would just take a little bit
17 of, you know, effort to kind of get it
18 worked in. I think that this Committee's
19 hearing has brought new awareness to this
20 issue and the need to coordinate and look
21 at that issue and figure out who is doing
22 what so we're not stepping on other
23 people's toes as well.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I think it
25 would be helpful if the City could start

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2 just keeping tabs on which soup kitchens
3 and/or places are able to remain open
4 during inclement weather, and it's
5 something that I think City Council
6 should be able to promote and advertise
7 and let other people know. But I know it
8 would be helpful if one of our
9 departments could at least be aware of
10 that. So maybe it could be a public
11 service announcement or something.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you very much.

15 The head of the Free Library
16 did say that if we provided food, they
17 would try to make the space available to
18 feed the youngsters.

19 Okay. Thank you very much.
20 Any other questions?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you very much.

24 Good morning and please
25 identify yourself for the record. Thank

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2 you.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

4 Good morning, Councilwoman Blackwell. My
5 name is Mike Carroll and I'm Deputy
6 Commissioner for Transportation for the
7 Philadelphia Department of Streets. Good
8 morning, members of the joint Committees
9 on Education and Housing, Neighborhood
10 Development and the Homeless. I'm here
11 to testify on Resolution No. 160077,
12 which explores the implementation of a
13 pilot program for needy children to be
14 fed when schools are closed due to an
15 emergency such as a snowstorm. We would
16 like to thank Councilwoman Blackwell for
17 inviting us to take part in this
18 discussion.

19 As you're aware, the Streets
20 Department is the lead agency for the
21 development and implementation of a snow
22 and ice removal program. Our overriding
23 goal during a snow emergency is to ensure
24 a continuity of City services by
25 reducing, if not eliminating, the

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2 occasions when the City government will
3 have to close or reduce City services due
4 to severe winter weather. The chief
5 objective for the Department in all
6 severe winter weather is to allow every
7 Philadelphian to return safely to their
8 normal daily activities as quickly as
9 possible.

10 In order to provide roadway
11 conditions that are safe for traffic on
12 primary, secondary, and tertiary, also
13 called residential streets, throughout
14 the entire City of Philadelphia, the
15 Streets Department develops a snow and
16 ice removal plan. This plan governs the
17 City's response to adverse winter weather
18 conditions. This plan is designed to
19 provide safe and efficient snow removal
20 for all City streets and its residents.
21 Altering the plan will delay the timely
22 servicing of many streets.

23 Primary routes include major
24 access roads through the Central Business
25 District and in and out of neighborhoods

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2 encompassing major and minor arterials,
3 which serve the highest traffic volumes
4 and distribute traffic throughout the
5 City. The secondary route system
6 includes other streets that convey
7 traffic within neighborhoods. Most SEPTA
8 routes fall within the boundaries of the
9 primary and secondary route system.
10 Tertiary routes are included during a
11 snow emergency. At those times, all
12 resources of the Streets Department and
13 supporting agencies are deployed to clear
14 all three route systems simultaneously.

15 Thank you for the opportunity
16 to testify today. This concludes my
17 testimony. I will be happy to answer any
18 questions you have.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
20 you, Mr. Carroll.

21 Are there questions for him?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So the
24 Streets Department is clearing streets
25 during that time.

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2 MR. CARROLL: That's right.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

4 Councilman Domb.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: This just

6 backs up the idea of backpacks, right?

7 When you think about it, we're not asking

8 anybody to come out, not asking any

9 overtime, just having the food --

10 preventing a problem before we have to

11 correct it.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm

13 sure you're not looking forward to

14 answering that question.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

16 Well, if people are moving around in the

17 snow emergency, it's something that we

18 would discourage. So I think some of the

19 others who have testified have indicated

20 that, you know, it would be a burden on

21 their operations or change from their

22 normal operation to have people out in

23 the street while we're trying to clear

24 the snow out. That's certainly the

25 message that we want to pass on to

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2 people. Unless they're having an
3 emergency of one sort or another, they
4 should stay home and let us get the
5 streets clear so everybody can do what
6 they need to do.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
8 you, Mr. Carroll.

9 Any other questions?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
12 you very much. Thank you very much, all
13 of you. Thank you.

14 Anne Ayella, Archdiocese,
15 Nutritional Development Services
16 Director; Ronald Hopkins, SEPTA,
17 Assistant General Manager for Operations;
18 Jeff Brown, Shop Rite, President and CEO;
19 Kathy Fisher, Hunger Coalition, Policy
20 Manager; and Kate Scully, Center for
21 Hunger-Free Communities, Policy Director.

22 (Witnesses approached witness
23 table.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much. Please feel free to

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2 identify yourself and begin your
3 testimony.

4 MS. AYELLA: Good morning. My
5 name is Anne Ayella. I'd like to thank
6 Councilwoman Blackwell for her leadership
7 and all of the members of City Council.
8 I'm happy to present some testimony on
9 Resolution 160077.

10 In my role at the Archdiocese,
11 I serve as the Director for Community
12 Relations for Nutritional Development
13 Services, and our office has served the
14 Philadelphia region for over 40 years and
15 we are very proud to serve as a sponsor
16 of many of the federally funded child
17 nutrition programs providing nourishing
18 meals to children in schools, child care
19 centers, after-school programs, emergency
20 shelters, and summer programs. So we
21 partner very closely with the folks that
22 you've already heard from earlier, from
23 the School District and Parks and Rec.

24 NDS serves programs in
25 Philadelphia and the surrounding

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counties. We partner with 92 schools, including 58 parochial schools, 25 charter schools, and 6 private schools. As a result of the Community Eligibility Provision, which came down several years ago, 71 of our schools are now able to make breakfast and lunch available to all their children at no cost. Last year, NDS served over 3.6 million meals in schools, with an average daily participation for breakfast of 7,000 and an average lunch participation of 13,000 meals per day. NDS staff sees the importance of the meals served to the children. Teachers and administrators confirm the benefits to the children in terms of their ability to concentrate and learn.

In addition to breakfast and lunch, NDS also provided a total of 1.1 million snacks or suppers to 198 after-school sites last fiscal year. During the summer of 2015 when school is in recess, NDS partnered with over 450

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2 sites and made 834,000 meals available to
3 children in summer programs.

4 In addition to school-age
5 children, we also provide breakfast,
6 lunch, snack, and supper to young
7 children in full-day child care programs.
8 And last year we provided 1.7 meals
9 across 71 child care centers.

10 We also fulfill our mission
11 through a privately funded program called
12 Community Food, and through that program
13 we collected the equivalent of over 2.1
14 million meals and shared them with local
15 food cupboards and soup kitchens.

16 As a result of our work with
17 children in a variety of settings over
18 these 40 years -- and I've been at NDS
19 for 38 years -- NDS sees firsthand the
20 value of meals to children and their
21 families and realizes how greatly
22 families rely on the meals.

23 We are very happy and available
24 to explore creative ways to meet the
25 nutritional needs of children in the

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2 community when school is not in session,
3 and we thank you for the opportunity to
4 do so.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much. Do you prepare food
7 when --

8 MS. AYELLA: No, we do not.
9 Our meals are pre-packaged meals that are
10 delivered into the sites. We don't have
11 any self-prep sites, Councilwoman.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So if
13 the weather is bad, are they still able
14 to deliver them to you?

15 MS. AYELLA: The one good thing
16 about our school year program is the
17 meals are always delivered several days
18 in advance. So they're never waiting for
19 a meal on a given day. So their Monday
20 food would have gotten there on Friday,
21 and then on Monday they would get their
22 food for Tuesday, Wednesday. They're
23 always two days ahead.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And
25 what about the summer program?

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2 MS. AYELLA: The summer, it is
3 same-day delivery. Just to keep the
4 numbers tight and make sure we don't have
5 too much excess, we do same day, but we
6 are able to accommodate changes. If a
7 site calls us by 12:00 noon on a given
8 day, we're able to adjust their meals for
9 the next day.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you.

12 Questions?

13 Councilman Domb.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have two
15 questions. Thank you for your testimony.

16 MS. AYELLA: You're welcome.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Who is paying
18 for all these meals?

19 MS. AYELLA: This is also the
20 United States Department of
21 Agriculture-funded program. So it is no
22 cost to the City. We serve, similar to
23 Parks and Rec and the School District, we
24 serve, in essence, as a school food
25 authority. So it passes through to us

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2 out to all of the sites that I mentioned.

3 It's our tax dollars at work.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: That's great.

5 If we had a snowstorm coming
6 and we had a day or two notice, does your
7 supplier have the ability to provide
8 pre-packaged meals in a backpack style
9 for them to take home so they could eat
10 at home if the storm occurred?

11 MS. AYELLA: Typically the
12 meals we're serving in schools are
13 actually pre-packaged frozen meals that
14 are reheated at the schools. The
15 after-school snacks are more
16 non-perishable in nature. So there would
17 be some possibility, but I think the
18 nature of the Backpack Program is usually
19 more canned and packaged non-perishables,
20 which is really not the way our program
21 operates. But we would definitely be
22 happy to explore the whole backpack
23 option with non-profits.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
25 you.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
3 you very much.

4 MS. AYELLA: You're welcome.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
6 Mr. Hopkins.

7 MR. HOPKINS: Good morning.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
9 morning.

10 MR. HOPKINS: My name is Ron
11 Hopkins. I'm SEPTA's Assistant General
12 Manager for Operations. Thank you,
13 Councilwoman Blackwell, for the
14 opportunity to speak today.

15 SEPTA works closely with City
16 Council, the School District, and the
17 City's Office of Emergency Management
18 during any major event, including snow
19 emergencies, and is pleased to be part of
20 the discussion today.

21 As the head of Operations, we
22 have the overall responsibility for all
23 our subways, our buses, our trolleys, and
24 our commuter railroad bringing many
25 workers as well as students into the City

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2 of Philadelphia and the surrounding
3 counties. In an emergency, SEPTA's
4 number one priority is the safety of our
5 passengers and our employees and
6 obviously the students.

7 During any snowstorm, we have
8 very lengthy conversations with the
9 School District on potential school
10 closures and as we progress through the
11 storm with the Office of Emergency
12 Management on any type of response for --
13 if there's an early dismissal or if we're
14 going to be shut down for a period of
15 time.

16 One of the things that we have
17 done -- and you heard from the Deputy
18 Commissioner for Streets -- is that we
19 work very closely with the Streets
20 Department on what routes are available,
21 because we try to keep our bus routes
22 running throughout the storm system. Our
23 subways and our trolleys generally will
24 run through the entire snow, as they did
25 even during the severe storm of Jonas

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2 this past winter, but our buses are the
3 ones that get most severely impacted and
4 are also the ones that provide a lot of
5 our service to the school students.

6 As we progress through this
7 ordinance, we want to be part of the
8 decision. We look forward to working
9 with Council and the School District and
10 continuing the discussion on how we can
11 support this effort.

12 Thank you very much.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you.

15 Questions?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you very much. So you all -- do you all
19 have any function in transportation when
20 it comes to this bad weather and trying
21 to help deliver things like meals or make
22 sure that certain streets are clear so
23 that food and other emergencies that are
24 needed can take place?

25 MR. HOPKINS: We don't have the

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ability to transport the food, but we have worked as we come out of the storm with the Streets Department. We work very closely with the primary roads that were previously mentioned, the primary routes where our bus routes will run, as well as the secondary routes, and sometimes we actually partner together to clear out some of the streets between our snow removal forces as well as the City's.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

Any questions?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

MR. HOPKINS: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Shop Rite.

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Kathy Fisher, Hunger Coalition.

MS. FISHER: Good morning. My

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING
2 name is Kathy Fisher and I'm the Policy
3 Manager at the Greater Philadelphia
4 Coalition Against Hunger. Thank you for
5 taking the time to consider this
6 important resolution, to all of its
7 sponsors and to Councilwoman Blackwell
8 for inviting us to testify today.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you.

11 MS. FISHER: The Coalition
12 works to build a community where all
13 people have the food they need to lead
14 healthy lives. We connect families with
15 SNAP, which is food stamps -- I'll say
16 SNAP throughout my testimony because it's
17 shorter -- and other food resources;
18 provide food pantries' capacity-building
19 assistance; and we advocate for policies
20 that improve access to nutrition
21 supports.

22 As you well know, poverty and
23 food insecurity are the day-to-day
24 reality for far too many Philadelphians.
25 These challenges negatively impact

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2 health, learning, and human potential as
3 well as impede the progress of our city.
4 Currently, nearly half a million
5 Philadelphia residents receive SNAP
6 benefits, roughly one in three
7 Philadelphians. About 40 percent of them
8 are children. The average monthly
9 benefit, \$134 per month per person, which
10 is 1.43 per meal.

11 We know for the vast majority
12 of families who participate in SNAP its
13 benefits are not enough. We receive
14 calls every day from those who need food
15 pantries to help them get through the
16 month. The inadequacy of SNAP is also
17 documented by research. In 2011,
18 Children's Health Watch and Drexel's
19 Center for Hunger-Free Communities found
20 that USDA's Thrifty Food Plan, which is
21 what SNAP is based upon, is unaffordable
22 even with the maximum SNAP grant.

23 Philadelphia's SNAP
24 participation remains 60 percent higher
25 than it was pre-recession. Despite slow

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2 improvements to the economy, more
3 families rely on part-time low-wage work,
4 which often provides both unreliable
5 hours and limited or no benefits. Those
6 who had once made occasional trips to the
7 food pantry now turn to them on a routine
8 basis, and the informal and growing
9 network of food pantries across the
10 country, which had once been referred to
11 as the emergency food system, is
12 increasingly being recognized as a
13 supplemental food system.

14 Food insecurity is exacerbated
15 by the fact that other safety net
16 programs have not responded to growing
17 needs. TANF, Temporary Assistance to
18 Needy Families, or cash welfare for
19 families with children serves just a
20 fraction of those who are eligible.
21 Pennsylvania's General Assistance
22 program, cash assistance for those
23 without children, has been eliminated.
24 Housing and child care subsidy funding
25 levels are a fraction of what is needed,

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2 so tens of thousands of those who are
3 eligible remain stranded on waiting
4 lists.

5 The shortfall of those supports
6 combined with the fact that many families
7 must stretch their SNAP benefits to help
8 others - from those who have had their
9 SNAP benefits temporarily cut to family
10 members who have returned from
11 incarceration and who are not yet
12 connected to benefits - and food
13 insecurity deepens. Families do their
14 best to provide for their children, but
15 they cannot fully protect them from the
16 repercussions of scarcity.

17 Why am I giving you this
18 background on SNAP and the limitations of
19 other benefits? Because it helps to show
20 that every meal matters. Improving
21 access to food assistance is a key way to
22 support children's health and well-being
23 as well as to help families stretch their
24 limited income to provide for basic
25 needs.

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2 I won't read through the
3 numbers on how many meals are provided.
4 I think that's been covered. But when
5 schools close in emergencies, it not only
6 causes children to miss healthy meals,
7 but it often causes parents to lose
8 wages. When school is closed
9 unexpectedly, parents may miss work to
10 stay home with children, and in the case
11 of severe weather, many businesses close
12 or tell shift workers they do not need to
13 come in. So for parents who are paid
14 hourly and do not have sick leave, the
15 loss of school meals is a double whammy.
16 They not only have to provide meals to
17 their children that they would have eaten
18 at school, but they also have less money
19 to do so.

20 I am very pleased that this
21 resolution has proposed this pilot to
22 provide children with meals when schools
23 are closed due to emergencies. While the
24 logistics may prove difficult, I'm
25 certain they can be overcome by

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2 cooperation between City departments,
3 School District, SEPTA, and others.

4 However, I want to take this opportunity
5 to remind you that more can be done to
6 reach children not only on school days
7 that are closed for emergencies but
8 during regularly scheduled school breaks.

9 The federal Child and Adult
10 Care Food Program, CACFP, is an
11 incredibly flexible program that can be
12 used on weekends, school holidays, and
13 scheduled school breaks during the school
14 year. In addition to schools and child
15 care centers, recreation centers,
16 faith-based and other non-profit
17 organizations can provide sites and be
18 reimbursed for meals. In addition, while
19 Parks and Rec and other sponsors in the
20 City have done a tremendous job of
21 increasing access to summer meals for
22 kids throughout the City through the
23 Summer Food Service Program, there are
24 still gaps in summer coverage as well.
25 So like CACFP, the Summer Food Service

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2 Program can also operate seven days a
3 week at a wide variety of sites.

4 I hope this resolution is just
5 the start of plans to broaden
6 partnerships and use the federal
7 nutrition program so that no child goes
8 hungry when school is out for whatever
9 reason. I'd be happy to answer questions
10 you may have as well as provide further
11 information you may need as this pilot
12 moves forward.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
15 you.

16 Any questions?

17 Councilwoman Gym.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes. Thank
19 you so much, Ms. Fisher. I really
20 appreciate it and all the work that you
21 do to raise awareness about food security
22 issues. I was wondering if you could
23 talk a little bit about more -- and our
24 office will probably contact you
25 specifically more about this CACFP

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2 program, but this question about the
3 emergency feeding sites, about whether
4 you feel like that's something that can
5 occur without the School District's -- or
6 whether you think that there are entities
7 that are able to package the food on
8 behalf of the School District that would
9 be able to go to scale.

10 MS. FISHER: I think the
11 challenge with the federal programs is
12 they are typically -- the reimbursements
13 are for meals served on site. They are
14 not designed to be sent home. So as much
15 as a backpack program may work at times
16 for weekends, that is food that would
17 have to come from the emergency food
18 system, TEFAP, State Food Purchase
19 Program or private fundraising. So there
20 is a problem with tapping into the
21 federal programs for any kind of
22 sent-home food, because that is not what
23 those programs are designed for. And
24 Anne could certainly speak to the details
25 in terms -- even the summer meals, kids

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2 can show up, but they have to eat on
3 site. Those meals cannot leave the site,
4 and that is the same for CACFP.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And do you
6 feel like with the situation that we're
7 dealing with around the emergency days
8 and snow emergencies and those kinds of
9 things, is there like a recommended
10 option that you would see?

11 MS. FISHER: I mean, I think
12 what I would recommend is looking at the
13 variety of sites that could open, not
14 necessarily limiting it to schools but
15 looking at rec centers, looking at
16 libraries, looking at what makes sense in
17 terms of main thoroughfares, what's
18 cleared first, where the kids who need
19 the meals the most. Obviously it's
20 throughout the City, but kind of hubs
21 where kids could get to. And I
22 understand there are safety and logistic
23 issues, but I do think because of the
24 limitations of the federal programs that
25 they have to be eaten on site, it's

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2 definitely worth a pilot to see who would
3 come out and how it would work.

4 I unfortunately missed the
5 earlier testimony of the person from
6 Baltimore, but, you know, the fact that
7 it's being tried in other cities I think
8 goes to show that it's possible and that
9 we have to figure out for Philadelphia
10 what makes sense. And, again, I would
11 just urge you to think expansively about
12 not necessarily just emergency days but,
13 you know, do some rec centers offer
14 Saturday hours and how could they serve a
15 meal? Is there a way to expand the
16 summer calendar beyond just the camp
17 weeks at rec centers to other days?
18 Because those are -- it's no emergency.
19 There's not road problems. There are
20 days that kids are going without eating
21 that we could be tapping into these
22 federal programs.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Absolutely.
24 And would you recommend looking at the
25 hubs as a way to pilot also some of the

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2 shorter breaks, like spring break and --

3 MS. FISHER: I think that would
4 be great, and I would also urge

5 Council -- I know it's still in its very
6 infancy, but the communities in schools
7 office and that effort. I don't know --
8 obviously I know very little about the
9 planning for that, but I do wonder if the
10 community schools would be the
11 appropriate place to fold this into any
12 kind of planning, because they are
13 clearly meant to provide services to
14 communities beyond just the educational
15 component and the academics.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
17 very much.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much.

20 Kate Scully, Center for
21 Hunger-Free Communities, Policy Director.

22 MS. SCULLY: Hi. Good morning,
23 and thank you for opportunity to testify
24 on the need to provide school meals in
25 emergency situations. My name is Kate

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2 Scully and I am the Policy Director at
3 the Center for Hunger-Free Communities.
4 We are a research center that focuses on
5 addressing hunger and poverty through
6 numerous programs and research studies.

7 As the latest snowstorm hit the
8 East Coast, many families went to the
9 grocery store to stock up on milk, bread,
10 and eggs. The local news stations set up
11 in grocery store parking lots to show
12 shelves emptying of those staple items as
13 people prepared to ride out the storm.

14 But for far too many, like Kim
15 Williams, a member of Witnesses to Hunger
16 from Washington, DC, a snowstorm meant
17 missed work and the need to provide more
18 meals for her kids because school was
19 closed, something she did not have in the
20 budget.

21 Thankfully for many parents in
22 DC, there was an option for their
23 families. Ten schools throughout the
24 city opened up to provide meals to kids
25 who would usually get breakfast and lunch

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2 there every day. Kim was able to stretch
3 the food she had to get through the
4 storm, but she knows many families who
5 were happy to have the option of school
6 meals even if it meant walking through
7 the snow. Kim said, "One more day and I
8 would have been out there with my kids
9 looking for a hot meal."

10 That is just how serious hunger
11 is for so many families in DC and so many
12 here in Philadelphia. Just a few days of
13 additional meals, an unbudgeted and
14 unexpected expense can force an entire
15 family out in search of a hot meal.

16 When I asked Kim what she
17 thought about DC schools opening to
18 provide meals, she said, "I think it is a
19 great idea to open the schools to make
20 sure families are able to fill their
21 bellies. I think it was one of the best
22 decisions ever made."

23 Philadelphia faces deep
24 poverty, and families here often struggle
25 to make ends meet. Here over 142,000

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2 households rely on SNAP in order to put
3 food on their tables, and 45 percent of
4 those households include children.

5 Despite the incredible help SNAP
6 provides, over 21 percent of people in
7 Philadelphia are food insecure, including
8 80,000 children.

9 Food insecurity is defined as
10 not having enough food for an active and
11 healthy life. We know from our research
12 with Children's Health Watch that young
13 children in food insecure households are
14 more likely to be in fair or poor health,
15 to be hospitalized, and to be at risk of
16 developmental delays.

17 From our research, we also know
18 that families who are food insecure are
19 often also housing and energy insecure.
20 A few missed meals might not seem like a
21 lot, but when a family has to pull money
22 from their rent or utility bills to pay
23 for breakfast and lunch, it can start a
24 dangerous cycle of moving resources
25 around, but never fully covering

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2 expenses, leading to utility shut-offs or
3 even evictions.

4 Now, there may be questions
5 about how providing meals in schools
6 during snow emergencies will work, such
7 as how it would be safe for people to get
8 to the schools. Kim had a response for
9 that as well. "Those that felt like it
10 was unsafe stayed indoors. Those who
11 were hungry were relieved and thankful,
12 because they were hungry. There will
13 always be pros and cons to any and all
14 situations, but the fact that families
15 actually had an option for hot meals is
16 the true blessing. The option is the
17 blessing."

18 We hope that City Council will
19 provide the people of Philadelphia with
20 the same option and the same blessing.

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
23 you. Very important. It's all a
24 blessing.

25 Any questions?

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2 (No response.)

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We
4 thank you so much, each of you.

5 Steveanna Wynn, Share,
6 Executive Director; Emma Kornetsky,
7 Philabundance, Executive Department
8 Coordinator; Reverend Brian Jenkins,
9 Chosen 300 Ministries, Executive
10 Director; Mel Wells, One Day At A Time,
11 or ODAAT; Tianna Turner, Witnesses to
12 Hunger. And, Wayne Autry, we invite you
13 to speak, if you would like to. We thank
14 you for coming from my church, Sharon
15 Baptist Church.

16 We note before they begin that
17 we have a written panel that will be
18 submitted as though it were read from
19 Nathaniel Savio-Beers, DC School
20 District, Chief Operating Officer.

21 (Witnesses approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
24 you very much. Feel free to identify
25 yourself and begin your testimony, and

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2 thank you again for being here.

3 MS. WYNN: Good morning,
4 esteemed Chairwoman, Chairman, and
5 Committee members. My name is Steveanna
6 Wynn and I am the Executive Director of
7 the Share Food Program, which is located
8 at 2901 West Hunting Park Avenue, where
9 Henry, Allegheny, and Hunting Park
10 Avenues converge.

11 The year 2016 represents a
12 milestone for Share. We are celebrating
13 30 years of service to the community, and
14 I am proud to say that I have been at the
15 helm for 28 of those blessed years. I
16 want to thank you for inviting me to
17 speak today and will open my comments
18 with some background.

19 Share operates from a 130,000
20 square foot former industrial building, a
21 building we purchased in 2010 after
22 having been the primary tenant ever since
23 our founding. Our five-acre site, which
24 backs on to SEPTA's commuter rail
25 right-of-way, includes the Nice Roots

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Farm, an urban farm that features fruit trees, raised beds, two hoop houses, enabling Share to grow, cultivate, and harvest fresh produce for ten months of the year. Last year Nice Roots produced 20,000 pounds of wholesome fruit, vegetables, and herbs, a substantial quantity of accessible healthy food, but one that pales in comparison to the tonnage that enters our docks, our three loading docks.

The Share Food Program is responsible for the TEFAP program coming into Philadelphia, the United States Department of Agriculture's Emergency Food Assistance Program. We are similarly responsible for, however, the State Food Purchase Program, assuring that food cupboards have food, and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, the CSFP, which is known as the low-income senior package. Together, these critical food sources fill Share's warehouse with wholesome food, fresh, frozen, canned,

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2 boxed, and shrink-wrapped. Each month an
3 average of 24 tractor-trailers pull into
4 our bays, and each one of these trucks
5 holds an average of 22 pallets stacked
6 high with food. Over the course of a
7 typical month, unloading requires about
8 100 hours of man or woman power, plus the
9 forklift.

10 Last year, Share distributed 26
11 million pounds of food, most of which
12 arrived from these government sources
13 funded by our tax dollars. Other food
14 came from private sources, including
15 vendors, manufacturers, and caring
16 individuals.

17 And what becomes of that food?
18 Mountains of food, including frozen
19 chicken, canned salmon, applesauce,
20 raisins, cranberries, ground beef,
21 potatoes, onions, and much more. Through
22 a network of more than 500 food
23 cupboards, Share helped feed over 600,000
24 struggling Philadelphia residents,
25 600,000 people every month, 12 months of

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the year, low-wage working people,
mothers, fathers, children, senior
citizens, disabled and frail, our
neighbors, your neighbors, your
constituents who patiently wait in line
for a bag or two of food handed out by
the dedicated army of volunteers who
humbly struggle to meet the ever-growing
requests for food.

Stop for a moment and picture
what a line of 600,000 people looks like.
It's hard to imagine, but it's all too
real in our city. And among this group,
39 percent are children, children whose
health and well-being, whose future
depends in part of having regular access
to healthy food, children who depend on
adults to provide nourishment. Children
whose capacity to learn and assimilate
words, concepts, and simple arithmetic is
directly correlated to nutrition;
children whose minds and bodies require
regular meals, nutritious meals that
include protein, calcium, and essential

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2 vitamins.

3 Just as the food cupboards rely
4 on volunteers, so does Share. Our staff
5 of 14 puts in long hours, including two
6 weekends, but much of our work for
7 sorting, packaging, and distributing free
8 food to the cupboards is accomplished
9 with the help of over 2,000 volunteers a
10 month - school groups, corporate groups,
11 members of the synagogues, churches,
12 mosques, scout troops, fraternities,
13 sororities, college students, sports
14 teams. Together, these volunteers
15 contribute thousands of hours each month.
16 Our youngest volunteers work side by side
17 with their family members weighing and
18 bagging potatoes. Our special needs
19 volunteers proudly tackle simple tasks,
20 mastering their assignments and eagerly
21 displaying the fruits of their labors.
22 Middle school students relish the
23 opportunity to manipulate pallet jacks,
24 generally lifting and positioning case
25 lots of USDA commodities. College

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2 students devise assembly lines that
3 efficiently sort and stack donated canned
4 food. Share welcomes volunteers of all
5 ages and skills, including those among us
6 who face special challenges. It is their
7 service and compassion that enable us to
8 provide food to over 600,000 people
9 monthly.

10 Despite the 13,000 tons of food
11 distributed by Share, our neighbors still
12 endure food security, and the children in
13 these households are especially
14 vulnerable to the cumulative impact of
15 nutrition deficits. Others testifying
16 today will no doubt overwhelm you with
17 the well-documented evidence of hunger
18 effects on children.

19 I stand here before you to
20 explain Share's role in the region's
21 anti-hunger food distribution system and
22 to suggest a role that we might play in
23 addressing access to meals during
24 weather-related school closures.

25 As we've heard from Baltimore,

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let me suggest one option that we might try here in Philly, and it's something I'll call a K-Pack, or emergency rations for kids. While adults do battle with the elements - snow, rain, black ice - our children can avoid hunger by picking up K-Packs from nearby food cupboards or their schools or other local community organizations in their neighborhoods. Share could order, store, sort, and package emergency rations just as we do with our low-income senior food packages. K-Packs could include kid-friendly foods, such as macaroni and cheese, soup, canned tuna, peanut butter, applesauce, canned fruit, and shelf-stable milk. Relying on our army of volunteers, Share could assemble these K-Packs and, at the start of the winter season, include them in our regular monthly cupboard distribution packed in cartons perhaps two dozen to the box. Each cupboard participating in the K-Pack program would have to agree to open its doors either before or during a

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2 weather-related school closure and
3 maintain a record of its distribution.

4 Just as Share coordinates the
5 United to Feed packing event each spring
6 for United Way, Share could dedicate a
7 day each summer or early fall to a K-Pack
8 event at our warehouse. During the
9 summer months, Share enjoys visits from
10 large groups of high school and college
11 students, and with adequate planning,
12 these volunteers and others could
13 assemble the K-Packs, box them, stack,
14 shrink-wrap, and label boxes as K-Pack
15 provisions destined for the cupboards.

16 When I landed at Share in 1989,
17 I quickly learned there was no right way
18 to reduce hunger. Flexibility,
19 creativity, tenacity, and sometimes just
20 plain old gumption are the hallmarks of
21 my approach to problem-solving. I am
22 certain that where there is a will, there
23 is a way and that together with all of us
24 we can find a way to connect children and
25 meals when mother nature shutters

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2 schools.

3 In closing, I want to invite
4 each of you to visit Share. If you're
5 new to Share, I'm certain you will be
6 amazed by the vastness of our warehouse
7 and quantity of food it holds. If you've
8 made the trek there before, you will have
9 the opportunity to see how we've changed,
10 improving systems, expanding our urban
11 farm operation, and incubating both small
12 businesses and non-profits. And whether
13 you're a new friend or old, you will no
14 doubt notice the tarps we have suspended
15 from our ceilings doing rainwater
16 harvesting inside our building.

17 A few weeks back, a series of
18 Philadelphia Inquirer stories highlighted
19 the impact of the state budget impasse on
20 the Commonwealth's Redevelopment
21 Assistance Capital Grant program, also
22 known as RACP. The articles pointed out
23 the construction of Center City hotels,
24 shopping malls, and pedestrian byways is
25 stalled because developers are awaiting

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2 the release of RCAP grant funds. Share
3 and other non-profits are also affected
4 by this delay. Quoted in one of these
5 Inquirer stories was a University of
6 Pennsylvania real estate professor that
7 said, "Uncertainty is death for real
8 estate projects." That might well be
9 true, but for a 130,000 square foot
10 warehouse in North Philadelphia, the
11 uncertainty about a \$2 million RACP award
12 will have a far more devastating effect
13 felt by 600,000 low-income
14 Philadelphians.

15 If food security for our
16 low-income constituents is a priority,
17 then please help Share by supporting the
18 RACP grant request deserves your
19 attention and investment of your
20 political capital. I urge you to weigh
21 in on this matter, and I am available to
22 explain how you might do that.

23 Thank you for your time and
24 consideration and for your interest in
25 the food needs of Philadelphia's most

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2 vulnerable residents.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
4 you. Very, very important testimony.
5 Certainly we want to take you up on your
6 offer. So we certainly will be staying
7 in touch with you and certainly agree.
8 God bless you.

9 Any questions?

10 Councilwoman Gym, then
11 Councilman Domb.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Hi. Good
13 afternoon probably now.

14 MS. WYNN: Good afternoon.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So thank you
16 very much for your testimony, Ms. Wynn,
17 and I know that a lot of organizations
18 all across the state are suffering with
19 the state budget impasse. It's wholly
20 unconscionable, but to the extent that
21 our Council can be supportive, let us
22 know.

23 MS. WYNN: Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: My question
25 is a little bit about your K-Pack and a

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2 little bit very quickly about capacity.

3 So I know that you service 600,000 in the
4 tri-state area or regionally?

5 MS. WYNN: Only in Philadelphia
6 County.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Oh, only in
8 Philadelphia County. And how long do you
9 think it would take to get some of these
10 K-Packs ready? What is their kind of
11 shelf life and how much advanced notice
12 would an organization such as yourself
13 require?

14 MS. WYNN: So we pack about
15 6,000 senior commodity boxes a month and
16 there are about 14 or 15 different items
17 in each of those boxes, and we can pack
18 those within a week with the volunteer
19 force that we have at Share. They can
20 easily pack a thousand or more boxes --
21 actually, if it's a corporate group,
22 we've had corporate groups pack 4,000
23 boxes a day.

24 We're currently -- and I don't
25 like cell phones particularly, but today

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I'm thankful. Now I know why I have one.

We currently are working in a

collaborative partnership with the Food

Trust doing a -- it's called Go Food

rather than a backpack program, and I

e-mailed my staff that are working on

that, and we're working with four rec

centers currently and we are ordering the

product, packing the boxes, and

delivering those boxes to approximately

80 kids every Friday. And one of your

questions was what was in the box, and in

this box -- just so you know, it's \$7.

The price of this box is \$7. In these

boxes there are two apples, two oranges,

low-sodium canned corn, low-sodium black

beans, canned chicken, 6 ounces of

applesauce, 12 ounces of V-8 juice, one

pound of whole wheat pasta, and two

medium cereal boxes, and the cost for

those are \$7.

COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And what's
the shelf life on that?

MS. WYNN: These will last a

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2 couple months, except for the apples and
3 the oranges.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So the
5 School District of Philadelphia's average
6 daily breakfast delivery is around 47,000
7 students and for lunch in September was
8 at 92,000, which is a low number for
9 them. So 6,000 boxes would be one meal;
10 is that right?

11 MS. WYNN: Yes. Actually, it
12 would be more than one meal, because it
13 would have -- I mean, like with the
14 cereal and the pasta, it would be
15 probably three or four meals in a box.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how long
17 do you think that would last? I mean, I
18 know that the shelf life is several
19 months, but how many -- if you say that
20 three or four meals in there, are you
21 talking about breakfast and lunch?

22 MS. WYNN: Breakfast, lunch,
23 and dinner.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Do you
25 consider that to be a one or two-day kind

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2 of ration?

3 MS. WYNN: The hope is it would
4 be a two-day ration. Children get it on
5 a Friday afternoon and it would be food
6 for them on Saturday and Sunday.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. Thank
8 you.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you for
10 your testimony.

11 MS. WYNN: Yes, sir.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I took a tour
13 of your facility.

14 MS. WYNN: Yes, you did.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I think it
16 was like May or June of last year.

17 MS. WYNN: Yes, sir.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Very
19 impressive. Very impressive. I'm glad
20 you have these K-Packs. You may be a big
21 part of helping us with the solution,
22 because you do what we're looking to, I
23 think, accomplish. You're already doing
24 that, and you're providing two meals.
25 And that meal you described just now in

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2 an emergency is probably a pretty good
3 meal, some fresh fruit in there and some
4 other things. And for the price of \$7
5 for two days of food is cheaper than
6 anything else I've heard. So we have to
7 figure out how we can work together and
8 maybe accomplish that goal.

9 MS. WYNN: Let us know. We're
10 more than willing to step up and help.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

12 MS. WYNN: Thank you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
14 you. We certainly agree and made a note
15 of that.

16 Emma Kornetsky, Philabundance.

17 MS. KORNETSKY: Good afternoon.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Good
19 afternoon.

20 MS. KORNETSKY: My name is Emma
21 Kornetsky and I'm the Government
22 Relations Associate at Philabundance.
23 Thank you, Councilwoman Blackwell, for
24 inviting me to speak at this hearing and
25 thank you all for taking the time to

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2 consider this important resolution.

3 Philabundance is a Feeding
4 America food bank located in
5 Philadelphia, working with over 350
6 agencies in five counties in Pennsylvania
7 and four counties in New Jersey to
8 alleviate hunger in our communities. We
9 serve 90,000 people each week, one-third
10 of whom are children, through our
11 agencies and other direct programs.

12 In Philadelphia County, over 23
13 percent of children are considered food
14 insecure by Feeding America. This means
15 that there are approximately 80,990 kids
16 in our city that have limited or
17 uncertain access to sufficient food.
18 Many of these kids have one lifeline, a
19 nutritious and reliable breakfast and
20 lunch at school five days a week. The
21 Philadelphia School District serves on
22 average -- I have different numbers
23 perhaps than we've heard earlier, but
24 88,000 lunches and 55,000 breakfasts to
25 schoolchildren each day. When schools

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2 are closed due to emergencies, it is
3 likely that many of these children come
4 from families that don't have the
5 resources to easily replace those meals
6 and they are left hungry. This is
7 unacceptable.

8 There is a significant amount
9 of research showing that food insecurity
10 has incredibly negative impacts on
11 children's health and well-being.

12 Children who are food insecure are more
13 likely to require hospitalization. They
14 are at a higher risk for certain chronic
15 health issues and mental health issues.
16 They are at higher risk for behavioral
17 issues such as anxiety, bullying,
18 fighting, hyperactivity, aggression, and
19 mood swings, and they are more likely to
20 struggle academically.

21 We need to do everything we can
22 to give our children the opportunity to
23 flourish, and making sure that every
24 child has enough to eat every day of the
25 year is at the heart of this. Providing

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2 meals on days when schools are closed due
3 to emergencies is a great start.

4 Thank you for your
5 consideration of this resolution and for
6 all the work you do to invest in our
7 children and our community. I'd be happy
8 to answer any questions you may have and
9 be at the table as you consider how to
10 move this forward.

11 I will also add that we are
12 currently sort of looking into our
13 children's programming and thinking about
14 how we're going to expand it over the
15 next -- we're sort of going through that
16 process now. So it's a good time to have
17 this conversation.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
19 you very much. Philabundance has always
20 been there and we're grateful for all
21 that you do.

22 Tianna Turner, Witness to
23 Hunger. Reverend Jenkins, we held you
24 out on purpose.

25 MS. PERRONE: Good morning. My

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING
2 name is Callie Perrone. I'm testifying
3 on behalf of Tianna.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What's
5 your name again?

6 MS. PERRONE: My name is Callie
7 Perrone.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Spell
9 it.

10 MS. PERRONE: C-A-L-L-I-E,
11 P-E-R-R-O-N-E. I work with the Witnesses
12 to Hunger program that Tianna is a part
13 of. She had an emergency this morning,
14 so she's not able to be here, but she
15 wanted me to read her testimony on her
16 behalf.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
18 you.

19 MS. PERRONE: Good morning and
20 thank you for the opportunity to testify
21 on the need for emergency school meals.
22 My name is Tianna Gaines-Turner. I am a
23 37-year-old woman and I'm an active
24 member of Witnesses to Hunger, a research
25 and advocacy program that features the

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2 photographs and voices of those who know
3 the experience of raising children on a
4 limited income firsthand. We are a
5 growing group of parents who speak out as
6 the true experts on hunger and poverty in
7 America.

8 My husband and I have three
9 children in the Philadelphia public
10 school system, a son in 6th grade and
11 twins in 2nd grade. As a low-income
12 mother of three children with
13 disabilities, I know the importance of
14 school meal programs. My family is one
15 of over a hundred thousand low-income
16 Philadelphia families that depend on free
17 school breakfast, lunch, and after-school
18 snacks to guarantee that my children have
19 access to nutritious food. They ensure
20 that my children receive a quantity and
21 quality of food that I could not
22 otherwise afford even as a SNAP benefit
23 recipient. These school meal programs
24 ease the financial burden on my family,
25 allowing us to put money that would

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2 otherwise be spent on food towards other
3 necessities like housing, utilities, and
4 medical costs.

5 Unfortunately, my children are
6 not always able to access the necessary
7 school meals due to unforeseeable
8 circumstances. For some children, snow
9 days are a cause for celebration, but not
10 for families like mine that rely on
11 public assistance programs. When school
12 is unexpectedly closed for emergencies
13 such as snowstorms, it is often a
14 struggle to feed my children healthy and
15 filling meals. Every month I carefully
16 budget and allocate my funds and benefits
17 to make sure I can keep my family housed,
18 healthy, and fed. We are spread thin as
19 it is. It is difficult enough to budget
20 for my children's upcoming spring break
21 and all the extra meals I'll have to
22 provide, and that is something I am able
23 to plan for in advance. Unlike spring
24 break, I cannot adequately plan for
25 emergency school closings, which places

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2 an unexpected and undo burden on my
3 family and low-income families like mine.

4 The struggle is even worse when
5 schools unexpectedly close near the end
6 of the month. Anyone who has experience
7 with SNAP benefits knows that the end of
8 the month is always difficult, because
9 many low-income families run low on food
10 by the end of the month. If schools
11 close unexpectedly near the end of the
12 month, it is nearly impossible to provide
13 the quality and quantity of food that my
14 children deserve on an insufficient
15 income. And we cannot expect local food
16 pantries alone to solve this problem.

17 There is already too much strain on
18 pantries. They can't guarantee enough
19 food or that the food is nutritious, and
20 most pantries are not even open when
21 schools are closed due to emergencies.

22 We want our children to have access to
23 the nutritional meals they have at
24 school, not the Oodles of Noodles we can
25 afford to provide them at home.

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2 When schools unexpectedly close
3 and I can't rely on school meals to feed
4 my children, it has a ripple effect on my
5 family's ability to pay for other
6 essential expenses. Most low-income
7 families already have to play the
8 juggling act. PECO or Pathmark? Pay the
9 energy bills or buy food? Pay for
10 medical expenses or meals? Emergency
11 school closings increase the financial
12 burden and force parents to make even
13 more impossible trade-offs. No family
14 should have to choose between paying a
15 bill and putting food on the table. If
16 the City provided free breakfast and
17 lunch even when schools are closed, it
18 would ease stress and reduce the number
19 of impossible choices parents are often
20 forced to make.

21 No school also often means no
22 work for working parents. I work as an
23 after-school teacher. When school is
24 closed for emergencies, I am not able to
25 work and make an income. But this

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2 situation doesn't just apply to people
3 working in education. When schools are
4 closed for emergencies, working parents
5 often have to stay home with their
6 children, either because they don't have
7 another option for child care or because
8 their work is also closed. No work means
9 less income, and no school means more
10 money is needed to feed children who
11 would otherwise be receiving free school
12 meals.

13 When schools close
14 unexpectedly, it places a
15 disproportionate burden on low-income
16 families like mine and a disproportionate
17 burden on our city's most vulnerable
18 children. Because of these struggles
19 that my family knows firsthand, I support
20 the proposed bill to implement a child
21 feeding program when schools are closed
22 due to emergencies. There is nothing
23 like the pain of looking into your
24 child's eyes and telling them that there
25 isn't enough to eat. If the City

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2 provided meals during emergency school
3 closings, it would guarantee that our
4 children are well fed no matter what.
5 Families would be able to predict a
6 nutritious meal for their children even
7 if they can't predict the weather. It
8 would increase stability for low-income
9 families. It would reduce the amount of
10 impossible trade-offs and give us the
11 ability to put funds toward other
12 necessities. It would ease the constant
13 stress and struggle of being low income
14 in Philadelphia. This proposed bill
15 would make a huge difference in my life,
16 my children's lives, and the lives of
17 over a hundred thousand other low-income
18 families in Philadelphia who rely on
19 school meals to keep their children
20 happy, healthy, and well fed.

21 I don't want a handout. I want
22 a hand in creating a solution. As a
23 mother of three who is directly impacted
24 by emergency school closings, I hope you
25 will strongly consider my testimony going

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forward. Life is unpredictable as it is,
with medical situations, job losses, and
other crises. Wondering where your
children are going to get their next meal
when school unexpectedly closes should
not have to be added to that list. Our
children deserve access to nutritious
food regardless of the situation. No
child should ever have to go hungry. At
the end of the day, I urge you to think
about the children. I urge you to move
this bill forward.

Thank you for your time and
thank you for considering my testimony.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
you very much.

Any questions?

(No response.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All
right. We thank you both for coming.

Now Reverend Jenkins, Wayne
Autry, and the gentleman representing Mel
Wells. We're going to conclude with you,
and we're doing that on purpose because

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2 we'll know succinctly where we are and
3 what we need to do after we talk to you.

4 Thank you, ladies, very much.

5 And this is very, very important to you.

6 You gentlemen can come forward.

7 Is there anybody else who would
8 like to testify?

9 (No response.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you.

12 Wayne, we're going to call on
13 you first and then with the gentlemen who
14 is here for Mel Wells and One Day At A
15 Time. And I think you all can help us to
16 know what you think about the issue of
17 transportation. Reverend Jenkins, I'd
18 like you to talk about the case a little
19 so we know where we are and what we need
20 to do, and in general it will really pull
21 this hearing together in an organized
22 fashion.

23 (Witnesses approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Wayne.

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2 Now, this is from my church,
3 Sharon Baptist Church.

4 So we're very glad that you
5 came. We knew of your feeding program
6 for several years and we're glad you're
7 able to come. So spell your last name,
8 Wayne.

9 MR. AUTRY: A-U-T-R-Y.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you.

12 MR. AUTRY: I'm here
13 representing Sharon Baptist Church. We
14 are a ministry that provides food,
15 clothing, resources for the homeless and
16 the underserved. Currently, we are
17 serving the homeless once a month, every
18 third Saturday, and we are a group that's
19 out at 15th and Market or JFK at Love
20 Park serving the homeless. We serve over
21 215 homeless individuals once a month,
22 and there is a great need for resources
23 for them. Currently, we utilize our own
24 money to feed them and clothe them. We
25 have assistance from Shop Rite at times

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2 as well as Lowe's, who has recently
3 helped us to develop our basement at the
4 church, at Sharon Baptist Church. We had
5 a flood, and they came in and gave us
6 resources to rebuild a basement area.

7 We look forward to serving the
8 homeless more, but as a result of lack of
9 resources, we can't do but so much. We
10 believe that we do not just want to put a
11 Band-Aid on a problem but a solution to
12 the problem of homelessness. We believe
13 that via meeting spiritual needs,
14 developing the homeless population, we
15 can deliver them from their situations.
16 Many occurrences happen with the homeless
17 via drugs, mental issues. So with the
18 different programs the City has, we like
19 to allocate and direct them to the
20 different facilities, but most of all,
21 there's just a lack of funding to help us
22 to get where we would like to go.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
25 you very much. All that you do is

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2 appreciated, and we are grateful to you
3 and grateful for our church for all the
4 support that they do provide.

5 MR. AUTRY: Also I want to add
6 that currently we have permission to do a
7 feeding from 48th and Brown two days a
8 week, which would be Monday and Friday,
9 during the hours of 12:00 to 3:00, but we
10 lack resources to do that. We're eagerly
11 wanting to serve, but we lack resources.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you. Thank you.

14 Tell me your name again, Mel
15 Wells.

16 MR. SINGLETON: My name is
17 Davone Singleton. First name spelled
18 D-A-V-O-N-E. I'm here representing the
19 President of One Day At A Time, Mel
20 Wells. I'm a Program Coordinator at the
21 agency.

22 We're grateful to have this
23 opportunity today to testify on a food
24 program for our children here in the City
25 of Philadelphia, also grateful to

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2 Councilwoman Blackwell for always being
3 on the front line to serve the suffering
4 community, along with the President,
5 Councilman Darrell Clarke.

6 Washington, DC ran a pilot
7 program similar to the one we are trying
8 to implement today for our children, and
9 we are hoping to follow suit.

10 This program would allow our
11 kids to be able to have meals in case of
12 inclement weather when schools are
13 closed. Not all, but many of the kids
14 that we are trying to service live in
15 households that are already struggling
16 because of the nightmares in our
17 community that play out as drug
18 addiction, HIV and AIDS, violence and,
19 most importantly, poverty.

20 I'd like to speak personally
21 and share my experiences of growing up in
22 poverty in a single-parent household with
23 five siblings. All too often silence and
24 shame prevent us from sharing and adding
25 substance to the discussion of solutions.

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It's when we talk about silence and shame, we can also talk about the resiliency that is fostered from living in and surviving poverty. I think it is this passion of serving the community that brings us here today, and I believe we want that passion to carry over to our children, the passion awakening the day excited about the opportunities that lie in front of them rather than waking with the concerns of where their next meal will come from. I can recall experiences of my mother calling from her overnight job to ensure that we woke up early enough to make it in time for the breakfast meal at school, the days when the rumbling in my stomach and hunger overpowered the hunger for knowledge, practicing resiliency by making use of what little we had. My favorite was what I called the milkshake to hold me over until dinnertime, and this took the place of warm milk, sugar, butter, and a little bit of ground cinnamon. My brother had

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2 what he called his home-made pizza, which
3 was just bread, ketchup, and cheese.

4 It's been a time since those
5 days, but I can say that in this day and
6 time, it's safe to say we want to prevent
7 this sort of lifestyle from being a
8 reality for our youth.

9 One Day At A Time has been in
10 the front of the line of the community
11 for 33 years. We stand ready to serve
12 our community by using any means that we
13 can. Our volunteers, outreach street
14 teams, and our partners, we will all
15 gladly accept the challenge of making
16 sure that none of our kids go hungry.

17 And just to talk about some of
18 the gaps that were mentioned earlier with
19 some of the programs, our volunteers, we
20 have access to a network of 4,000
21 volunteers through our partnerships with
22 community and faith-based organizations,
23 many of which we have go through
24 background checks, which will be able to
25 assist with some of the programs and also

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2 the community outreach, and we're in the
3 process of working with transitioning one
4 of our shelter programs to provide soup
5 kitchen services as well. We've also
6 seen members of our programs go through
7 ServSafe certification.

8 I thank you in advance, and our
9 family at One Day At A Time thanks you
10 today for making this happen for our
11 children.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
13 you. You are also involved in
14 transportation; is that correct?

15 MR. SINGLETON: Right now what
16 we're doing is, we have a team of
17 individuals who do community outreach and
18 they provide transportation to the staff
19 that are involved in outreach.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: They
21 provide transportation to?

22 MR. SINGLETON: To the
23 community outreach team. So it's a car
24 share program.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.

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2 That's where I think we need more
3 information. When you say you provide
4 transportation, you provide it in concert
5 with Sister Mary Scullion's group? How
6 do you provide transportation and where?

7 MR. SINGLETON: Wait. In
8 reference to what statement?

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:
10 Feeding. In reference to feeding various
11 shelters. Is that so?

12 MR. SINGLETON: No. What we're
13 doing right now is, our program, AFCOM,
14 which is our recovery program for
15 transitional housing, we're in the
16 process of looking to supplement that
17 program with a soup kitchen.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So
19 you're talking about your own program?

20 MR. SINGLETON: Yes.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Just
22 One Day At A Time, or ODAAT. Okay.
23 Thank you.

24 MR. SINGLETON: You're welcome.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

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2 Reverend Brian Jenkins.

3 And I want to personally -- I
4 know we kind of saved this best for last.
5 I've worked with Reverend Jenkins for
6 many, many years, and even though he's
7 still young, he and his wife and his
8 children are involved in all that he does
9 here and overseas. But hands on I think
10 he knows as much about this homelessness
11 and feeding people as anyone in the City.
12 Thank you.

13 REVEREND JENKINS: Good
14 morning, Councilwoman. First of all,
15 thank you so much for all that you do.
16 As being an advocate for the poor, you're
17 compatible to James, the brother of
18 Jesus, who was the champion of the poor.
19 And so out of all of City Council, we
20 applaud you for your work, and I want to
21 thank you for all the representation in
22 City Council today.

23 Chosen 300, we're an
24 interdenominational and interracial
25 mission that currently distributes over

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2 150,000 meals a year throughout the
3 Philadelphia region, having three
4 regional locations - Center City, West
5 Philadelphia, and Pottstown - and as well
6 as an outdoor meal program from May
7 through October at 16th and the Benjamin
8 Franklin Parkway. Not only providing
9 meals, we're doing job training, the
10 computer labs, expungement services to
11 help people eliminate their records to
12 move towards employment, barber shops and
13 other services as well. We also have a
14 global impact in 22 locations around the
15 world distributing more than 300,000
16 pounds of food annually, doing
17 agricultural development, wellness and so
18 forth.

19 Councilwoman, you asked me to
20 comment briefly on the case. I don't
21 want to focus too much on that, but just
22 briefly, back in 2012, the wonderful
23 Mayor Nutter -- and I say that very
24 sarcastically -- decided to pass a ban on
25 outdoor meals to the homeless of

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2 Philadelphia. We, of course, won the
3 injunction of that, but with an
4 injunction, what most people don't know
5 is that although that the law is not able
6 to be enforced while the injunction is
7 placed, the injunction is a temporary one
8 that pends until trial occurs, and the
9 City has continued to push this back and
10 keep this law out there, which requires a
11 return back to court or to have our
12 attorneys notify the court of any
13 progress every 90 days, which is very
14 taxing, but also prevents the possibility
15 of other organizations who desire to
16 provide outdoor meals that's just as
17 necessary as the indoor ones that we
18 provide from doing so and is always under
19 a constant threat, which has reduced
20 tremendously the amount of outdoor meal
21 providers that I believe that is just as
22 necessary to be able to make sure that
23 people have ample food.

24 To center our attention around
25 the proposed resolution regarding

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2 children at school, one of the things
3 that we have encountered at Chosen 300,
4 particularly in our West Philadelphia
5 location where we not just deal with
6 homeless individuals but folks that are
7 dealing with food insufficiency, in
8 Philadelphia, as previously testified,
9 there's somewhere between a third to a
10 quarter of folks in the City of
11 Philadelphia that are at or below the
12 poverty rate. In addition, there's more
13 than 185,000 people throughout
14 Philadelphia that are far below the
15 poverty rate, living off of less than
16 \$10,000 a year. So with those dynamics,
17 what happens that when school is out, the
18 Backpack Program is helpful. However,
19 the Backpack Program, my understanding,
20 was designed to really target the issue
21 of the weekend where the children are
22 getting meals during the school times,
23 breakfast and lunch, but during the
24 weekend is more the critical time for
25 families. But also that time period

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2 after 3 o'clock when the children get out
3 of school until parents often get out of
4 work, children are idle, but also if the
5 parent doesn't get home until 6 or 7
6 o'clock in the evening, sometimes dinner
7 is an optional meal and may not ever
8 occur.

9 In dealing with the issues of
10 inclement weather and also when school is
11 completely closed, I know that Councilman
12 Domb was really driving home the Backpack
13 Program, but it doesn't solve the issue
14 of children that are below the age of
15 particularly 14 or 13 that do not have
16 the possibility of preparing food, that
17 they often are home alone, don't have any
18 way of actually obtaining food, so
19 they're often out looking for food. And
20 so if we utilize the existing facilities,
21 whether it be a soup kitchen or the fine
22 dining establishment like at Chosen 300,
23 those places can be utilized to be able
24 to provide meals during the day, which
25 are hot meals, but also provide a place

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2 of safety for them. And that is so
3 critical because of the fact that --
4 there's an old saying that the idle mind
5 is the devil's workshop, and if you allow
6 children, particularly adolescents that
7 are unsupervised during the day while
8 their parents are trying to still press
9 their way through the snow, through the
10 inclement weather trying to get to
11 work -- because if they miss a day's
12 work, that is literally one-fifth of
13 their income being eliminated for that
14 particular week. So they're trying to
15 make work because of the fact that if
16 they miss a day of work, it can be the
17 difference between life and death. It
18 can be the difference between them being
19 evicted from their home or their
20 apartment. So it's very critical that we
21 provide an avenue whereby children can
22 access meals during the day, and that is
23 so critical.

24 The other flip side of that is
25 that it was testified earlier that a lot

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2 of organizations close down during
3 inclement weather. One of the things
4 that I'm very proud of as an organization
5 is that in 20 years we have never shut
6 our doors. We have operated in Hurricane
7 Sandy. We operated in the last blizzard.
8 We operated in every single snowstorm
9 that has ever existed in the City of
10 Philadelphia and never missed a day in 20
11 years. However, that doesn't go without
12 cost, and what a lot of folks don't
13 understand is when there's an inclement
14 weather like a blizzard, there's
15 additional cost, like the renting of
16 vehicles. This past storm we had to rent
17 a 4-by-4 in order to be able to get food
18 and supplies around and to get volunteers
19 around. We had to put staff in hotels,
20 so that way that we can make sure the
21 facility got open because of all the
22 transportation was shut down, beside the
23 Broad Street subway and the El. And we
24 utilized the subway to be able to get
25 volunteers from the hotel to our

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2 facility. So all those extra costs come
3 into play. So where normally it would
4 cost \$2 to \$2.50 a meal, in an inclement
5 storm, it can cost somewhere between \$5
6 and \$6 per meal just because of the
7 additional cost that's involved.

8 So one of the things that's
9 important is that if we can provide an
10 avenue by which in these areas where
11 there are a tremendous lack of food
12 opportunities, particularly in indoor
13 facilities during the day for children,
14 we need to be able to open those doors
15 and provide resources and funding to
16 agencies.

17 But also I think earlier
18 Councilwoman Gym mentioned the concern
19 about the City not monitoring
20 organizations that are not open during
21 those inclement weather. We need to make
22 sure that we get organizations that have
23 a commitment and a contract and agreement
24 that when a snowstorm occurs, that they
25 will be pinpointed as an emergency place

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2 of providing food and it is a guarantee
3 that those places would be open, not an
4 option.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

6 Reverend Jenkins, what do you think about
7 this whole issue of -- so obviously this
8 whole issue of transportation. Do you
9 think we can collectively come up with
10 the food with all the agencies who were
11 here and who help, but that if we could
12 solve this issue of transportation, that
13 would help a lot during these times,
14 weekends, evenings, and certainly snow
15 and inclement weather.

16 REVEREND JENKINS: Well, during
17 the inclement weather, of course
18 transportation is a major issue. It has
19 to be the commitment of the organization.
20 I think the City can help provide some
21 avenues, whether it is by funding or
22 whether it is by the provision of
23 transportation. The reality is that the
24 food and the volunteers have to get
25 there.

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2 The housing staff is also
3 critical, because if the staff is not
4 within an immediate location of the
5 facility serving food, the only way to
6 ensure that people are actually going to
7 be there, if some type of housing,
8 whether it's hotel or whatever, is
9 actually provided because of the fact
10 that there has to be a guarantee that
11 that person is going to be there. Many
12 of my staff live an hour away on a normal
13 day. So in order to be able to get
14 through there, we have to make sure that
15 the staff is actually going to be
16 available. And sometimes it just takes
17 two people, and normally it's one hotel
18 room and it's one vehicle, but the
19 reality is over the course of a weekend
20 like the blizzard that we just had, we
21 spent in excess of a thousand dollars on
22 transportation and housing just for that
23 weekend, because getting a premium
24 vehicle to make sure that we could get
25 through the snow matter, we had to get a

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2 large SUV, not just like a Rav 4. You
3 needed a Suburban to be able to
4 effectively transport all the food,
5 supplies, and volunteers and making sure
6 that the food got there.

7 Like I said, we have a
8 commitment to the community, and that's
9 our personal commitment. We do not
10 receive much funding from the City. We
11 do receive the Philadelphia Activities
12 Fund annually and then also some funds
13 through the Mayor's fund as well as the
14 Meals for More program, and that might be
15 an opportunity there. But we have to
16 make sure that there's funding available.

17 Our space is available during
18 the day. We really don't use it during
19 the day. Our meals are in the evening.
20 However, it would be a wonderful
21 opportunity to tap into some of the
22 resources that are already available in
23 the City of Philadelphia such as
24 churches, places like Chosen 300 and
25 other organizations that have ample space

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2 but don't have the funding to be able to
3 provide staff and food to ensure that
4 these children have something to eat.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you.

7 Councilwoman Gym.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
9 much, Reverend Jenkins, for your
10 testimony and your work. I thought that
11 was very enlightening and helpful.

12 So I guess a couple questions
13 are, do you serve a lot of children
14 currently?

15 REVEREND JENKINS: We do. And
16 thank you so much for using for word
17 "serve." I get tired of that word
18 "feeding." It sounds like some pigs are
19 going to a trough somewhere. But we do
20 serve, yes, children at our --
21 particularly in our West Philadelphia
22 location, more than the Spring Garden
23 one. The Spring Garden one is primarily
24 adult homeless men, although there may be
25 10, 15 children that show up. The West

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2 Philadelphia location has more families
3 and children where half the population
4 are homeless, but half the population are
5 people that are coming out of homes that
6 are dealing with food insufficiency.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And do you
8 notice a spike or change around spring
9 breaks or like the holiday break or
10 anything like that when schools are
11 closed?

12 REVEREND JENKINS: Absolutely,
13 and that is because of the fact that
14 parents don't have those two meals that
15 the school provides as an option, and
16 then so their cost of providing food for
17 their children during the course of that
18 week escalates tremendously. And so if
19 you figure it costs us about \$2 a meal to
20 make for a person, it costs them about \$3
21 or \$4 a meal, because they're going to
22 have to buy in a smaller quantity, but
23 also they're not providing it at a very
24 bulk or large number of people. So,
25 therefore, it's going to cost them a lot

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2 more. So if you're adding \$5 to \$10 per
3 day to your expenditure during the course
4 of the week, it's going to be a lot more
5 difficult. So they will utilize our
6 place in order to serve.

7 The other dynamic is that
8 towards the end of the month is a more
9 critical time for them, particularly for
10 those that are on public assistance or
11 receive some type of monthly income.
12 Those folks also will come out more
13 during the end of the month than during
14 the beginning of the month.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And, I mean,
16 one of the things -- obviously spring
17 break starts next week, and so it's --
18 next week, it's March 22nd through the
19 27th. So we'll see six days of students
20 without having access to a stable source
21 of food, and I guess one of the questions
22 that I have is, do you feel like your
23 location -- it would help to have a
24 variety of people coming, not just those
25 who are on -- I mean, I don't know that

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING
2 we've looked at whether it's just those
3 who are on assistance who would receive
4 the free meal program. I guess it would
5 be, right? They'd have to be on TANF and
6 other types of things for the SNAP -- for
7 the free meals. But if we did that, you
8 may draw from a wider variety of people.
9 Like do you feel like your site would
10 be -- it would be good for your site to
11 have a larger variety of families, young
12 people coming through during like the
13 daytime and be able to handle some of
14 that?

15 REVEREND JENKINS: Absolutely.
16 We could handle it. The challenge is,
17 just to be straightforward, the challenge
18 is the funding. And I'll give you an
19 example. Right now we are doing six days
20 a week in our Center City location, three
21 days a week in West, another location
22 that's outside of the City as well. But
23 the challenge is is that -- we're able to
24 provide the evening meals currently. The
25 challenge is is that to add an additional

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING

2 time slot, you're dealing with an
3 additional cost. You're also dealing
4 with additional staffing, and those
5 things are critical.

6 One day a week costs about
7 \$20,000 per year for about 100 people,
8 and that's normally the approximate cost
9 in order to provide an outstanding meal.
10 One of the things that we thrive on is
11 excellence in providing the top of the
12 line meals, so that way when people come
13 in, they're treated with dignity and
14 respect, but they're also given something
15 that I would want to eat myself. And so
16 that's critical to us. But that's what
17 it costs to start a new meal per year, is
18 about \$20,000 per day. So if you're
19 doing one day a week, it's going to cost
20 about \$20,000 to serve approximately
21 about 100 people.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And what if
23 you were -- I mean, is it difficult for
24 you in terms of planning to be able to
25 handle like, say, something that isn't

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING

2 adding one full day a week every single
3 week of the year but is more like a
4 spring break kind of thing? So it's more
5 of a compressed short time.

6 REVEREND JENKINS: That's fine
7 as well. You know, you break it down
8 into a day, of course, and you do a very
9 short calculation. Maybe some increased
10 costs because of the fact that you're
11 doing it on a short period. You're not
12 spreading all the costs across the year.
13 But the reality is -- I'll give you an
14 example. Just for food alone, it costs
15 about \$300 per meal to be able to serve a
16 group of about 100 people. If you're
17 adding staffing, you're talking about
18 another 50 bucks. So feasibly just raw
19 costs of food and staffing, you're
20 talking about \$350 per meal to be able to
21 serve about 100 people.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: That's
23 helpful. Thank you.

24 And then you said that most of
25 your funding comes either from the City

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING

2 and through an Activities Fund, the

3 Mayor's fund?

4 REVEREND JENKINS: Actually, to
5 clarify that, a very small portion of our
6 funding. Most of our funding comes
7 through private donations. Matter of
8 fact, we received probably less than 5
9 percent of governmental assistance,
10 whether through federal, state or local.
11 Most of ours comes independently through
12 private donations, private foundations,
13 grants, and churches. There's about 105
14 churches in our network. And what we've
15 also tried to do to maximize effort,
16 minimize cost is to be able to utilize
17 the churches in the community. As we
18 start a new meal, we try to get churches
19 to be involved with sponsorship by having
20 them come in to help provide some of the
21 volunteer so that we can reduce the
22 amount of staff and just have one paid
23 staff person to ensure that the building
24 is open and things operate well.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: All right.

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING

2 Thank you so much, Reverend Jenkins.

3 REVEREND JENKINS: You're
4 welcome.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
6 you very much. It's so very important.
7 I knew it would be invaluable, and we're
8 always very impressed. We thank you for
9 all that you do and thank you for the
10 support you give us for the little we try
11 to do. We're just grateful to all,
12 Project Share, all who were here and who
13 realize that if we organize well enough
14 and if we're committed to the degree we
15 should, then certainly we can end hunger
16 challenges for our children and our
17 adults and those in our city. So let me
18 say thank you very much.

19 We're going to end this hearing
20 today, but we're not going to conclude
21 it. We're going to continue it subject
22 to the call of the Chair, because we
23 would like to, before our budget season
24 is over, to be able to submit to the
25 Administration some -- we're going to ask

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING
2 for some solutions, our suggestions as to
3 what we should do. And so we'll be
4 calling you, and what it will cost to
5 deal with this and ameliorate this to the
6 degree we don't have these big issues and
7 you having to report in court every 90
8 days for this. How long is it? Two
9 years?

10 REVEREND JENKINS: It's been
11 since 2012.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: 2012.

13 REVEREND JENKINS: And,
14 Councilwoman, if you don't mind if I just
15 add very quickly that as you come up with
16 the resolutions and ideas to be able to
17 get the necessary funding to be able to
18 create an avenue by which organizations
19 can do this, it's very important that
20 they also eliminate some of the barriers
21 for smaller organizations, churches, in
22 order to be able to effectively apply,
23 but also to have reasonable monitoring,
24 so that way they can make sure that they
25 implement what they have promised, but

1 3/14/16 - RES. 160077 - EDUCATION/HOUSING
2 without it being overbearing or prevents
3 barriers where people will not be
4 interested in helping the City to be able
5 to accomplish these goals.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I
7 understand. I understand. If we provide
8 more barriers, what have we done? We try
9 to solve it one way and create problems
10 in another. We understand.

11 Well, thank you very much. And
12 unless there's someone else who would
13 like to make any comments, we will
14 conclude this hearing for today, but we
15 will only postpone it so that we may meet
16 again.

17 Thank you, Sharon Knight. I
18 see you over there. Thank you.

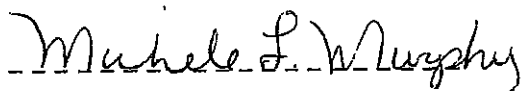
19 Thank you all. God bless.

20 (Committees on Education and
21 Housing, Neighborhood Development and the
22 Homeless concluded at 12:40 p.m.)

23 - - -
24
25

1 CERTIFICATE

2 I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
3 proceedings, evidence and objections are
4 contained fully and accurately in the
5 stenographic notes taken by me upon the
6 foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
7 correct transcript of same.

8
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10
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12 
13

14 MICHELE L. MURPHY

15 RPR-Notary Public
16
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18
19

20 (The foregoing certification of this
21 transcript does not apply to any reproduction
22 of the same by any means, unless under the
23 direct control and/or supervision of the
24 certifying reporter.)
25

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