

## **Swipe Out Hunger at the University of Pennsylvania**

A proposal for the administration of the University of Pennsylvania, including Dining Services and the Office of Residential Life

### **I. Background and Mission of Swipe Out Hunger**

Swipe Out Hunger (“Swipes”) is a national, 501(c)3 non-profit organization that has been recognized by President Obama as a “Campus Champion of Change.” Swipes partners with universities and their students to fight local hunger through unused points on students’ meal plans. Its first chapter was founded in 2009 at the University of California, Los Angeles and has since spread its mission to 14 universities, including USC and Northwestern with 90 other schools developing.

Since its start in 2010, the organization has donated more than 1 million meals through more than 15,000 student donors. You can read more on Swipes here [www.swipehunger.org](http://www.swipehunger.org)

### **II. Mission Statement for Swipe Out Hunger at UPenn**

Philadelphia is a city full of opportunity, but one that is also full of need. One in four residents is at risk for hunger, a rate twice as high as the national and state levels. This epidemic is not a result of lack of resources; it has occurred because the existing resources aren’t being allocated in a way that effectively serves the community. Our immediate goal for bringing Swipes to Penn is to utilize **unused meal swipes** of UPenn students on their dining plans to feed the larger Philadelphia community. Students have fully paid for these unused swipes, and they go to waste at the end of each semester. There is no reason why these unused swipes cannot be translated to enrich the lives of homeless by providing nutritious sustenance. We hope to work with Dining Services to establish a formula for swipes to be converted into their equivalent value in food that can be donated to local communities (via Philabundance or Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger).

Long term, we hope to introduce an educational component to our swipes program where Penn students mentor local students in classrooms and shelters on sustainable nutrition habits. We additionally plan to organize service days where students directly engage with the recipients, helping to eradicate stigmas related to homelessness. By raising awareness about food insecurity and homeless, we can break cycles of malnutrition in our community, leading to a healthier, more nourished, and productive population.

### **III. Students Giving Back**

Penn promotes a culture of students who are change agents, both independently and through efforts coordinated by the Netter Center and the Civic House.

Swipes is a way to foster Penn's passion of giving back by utilizing resources that already exist and are going to waste.

#### **IV. The Need in the Community**

This year, \$5 billion was cut from the food stamp budget, so the need in our community will be amplified.

- As of January 2014, nearly 500,000 people (31% of Philadelphia residents) received food stamps. 150,000 more people are eligible
- 30% of the hungry in Philadelphia are children
- 31% of the hungry in Philadelphia are employed full or part-time, 27% are looking for work, 24% are students
- There is a network of 700 food pantries just in our city that fight hunger.

#### **V. How does hunger affect our community?**

Hungry people are:

- 30% more likely to be hospitalized and require long hospital stays which public taxes often pay.

Hungry children are:

- 60% more likely to miss school & 50% more likely to repeat a grade
- Twice as likely to be suspended from school

Hunger costs the State of Pennsylvania \$3.25 billion each year. This includes:

- \$2.4 billion for medical and mental health care
- \$330 million in lost educational achievement and worker productivity
- \$517 million in costs for charities that work to relieve hunger

#### **VI. Solution**

By introducing a Swipes Out Hunger program at Penn, we would directly impact local hunger and raise the awareness of our fellow students on the issues of hunger and homelessness.

Our plan to collect swipes has two elements. **This is your space to custom design your program. Below is the most traditional/common model.**

1. Set up tables **outside of Dining Halls x, y & z** near the end of each semester. Students will then approach our tables and select a number of meals from their meal plan that they'd like to donate and provide their information on "swipes collection sheets."
2. These sheets are submitted to Penn Dining who will tally the total number of dollars that students have donated from their student dining plan. These funds are then accumulated and donated to a local anti-hunger organization. Alternatively, Penn Dining

can order large, additional quantities of foods through **Food Service Provider** and donate them directly to local shelters and food banks.

We predict that many of the funds which student do not use are already accounted for and may disrupt prepared budgets. We are excited to work together to find a model which does not place any financial burdens on Penn Dining, **Food Service Provider** or the Office of Residential Life. Previous successful swipes models include a conversion rate for each dollar a student gives or creating meal vouchers which we've expanded on below.

## **VII. Potential Partner Organizations**

**Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger:**The Greater Philadelphia Coalition Against Hunger strives to build a community where all people have the food they need to lead healthy lives. The Coalition connects people with food assistance programs and nutrition education; provides resources to a network of food pantries; and educates the public and policymakers about responsible solutions that prevent people from going hungry.

**Philabundance:** Philabundance is the region's largest hunger relief organization, providing emergency food and access to services to approximately 900,000 people. The mission of Philabundance is to reduce hunger and food insecurity in the Delaware Valley by providing food access to people in partnership with organizations and individuals. Philabundance provides food to 72,000 people each week.

<http://www.hungercoalition.org/hidden-epidemic>

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**[I always think more info looks more legit but it might be unnecessary, feel free to trim]**