

## Testimony

Hello, My name is Juan Pablo Montano and I am the Assistant Coordinator at the Oak Chapel Food Hub. I am writing this testimony to share my experiences from working at the Food Hub and hopefully give the council a better understanding of the true impact that we have on the 20906 community. At the Hub, we have multiple off-site distributions that are in specific locations that we have targeted based on income data that we have received from property managers and also local public school officials. I am primarily responsible for 2 distributions where I am consistently interacting with local participants and report their needs back to our Hub where we look for ways to further assist them with most commonly Case Management, employment, rental or utility assistance.

Strathmore Apartment Complex Distribution: I started with the distribution on July 6th, 2021. Every Tuesday from 1PM - 2 PM. We serve 80 families, 345 individuals, 116 kids and 60 seniors. It has been over 2 years since the pandemic hit Montgomery County and there is still a lot of need. I remember when the DHHS gave us the notice that they had decided to close our Hub on June 30th, 2022, I made sure to inform the families; They were in shock, their faces were filled with sadness and some of them cried...One Hispanic lady told me: "Please tell me that, you are joking"... I told her: "Madam, I'm not joking, this is true...We already got the notice. She was extremely disappointed, and told me: Where Will I get the food to feed my family; If you will not be here on Tuesday, July 5th?... I was speechless and the only response I could offer was: "Only God, knows madam...He will provide you the food". These last Tuesdays we added, sugar, cooking oil, yogurt, eggs and chickens. It was awesome, to see their faces of joy and a lot of gratitude; When they got them.

Harmony Hills Elementary School Distribution: We have been providing food at Harmony Hills Elementary School since the first week of September of 2021. This distribution reoccurs every first and third Friday of each month. From September 2021 to April 2022. We have served 4,962 Individuals, 2,435 kids and 843 Senior Citizens. This distribution has offered relief to many parents of school children and thank God it was made possible with great coordination between our Hub and School Administration. With all other Hubs serving their respective areas at capacity, we cannot assure that our services will remain in the apartment complexes that we serve and the schools that thousands of children attend. We are bringing this concern to the council with hopes that the need in our area is not ignored and something can be done to save these much-needed resources that we have been able to provide the 20906 area.