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EDITOR'S NOTE: Photo is attached. **CREDIT:** Steven Laschever Photography

University of Saint Joseph Professor Publishes Research on Innovative Hartford Food Pantry

WEST HARTFORD, Conn. (November 6, 2013) – The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) announces that Katie S. Martin, Ph.D., assistant professor of Nutrition and Public Health and director of the bachelor's degree in Public Health program, has published a peer-reviewed article entitled, "A Novel Food Pantry Program - Food Security, Self-Sufficiency, and Diet-Quality Outcomes," in the November 2013 issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. View abstract: [http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797\(13\)00430-3/abstract](http://www.ajpmonline.org/article/S0749-3797(13)00430-3/abstract)



According to Dr. Martin, who served as lead researcher for this study, "As a nation we have been building more and bigger food pantries for over 30 years, yet food insecurity remains a major public health problem. Our results show there is an alternative approach for addressing hunger. We hope this can serve as a model for other food pantries."

The article highlights research conducted at Hartford's innovative Freshplace Food Pantry, a collaboration that began in 2010 between Foodshare, the Chrysalis Center, the Junior League of Hartford, and a team of researchers formerly from the University of Connecticut and now with the University of Saint Joseph. Freshplace was designed to address the underlying issues of poverty and to help break the cycle of the food pantry line. Results from the 18-month evaluation show that when compared with people who visited traditional food pantries, those people who attended Freshplace:

- Consumed more fruits and vegetables
- Were less than half as likely to experience hunger (multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake), and
- Had increased self-sufficiency (holding a paying job or being in a state of well-being, with limited reliance on welfare benefits)

Although the notion of emergency food was created in the late 1970s to supplement government assistance programs, more and more people rely on “emergency” assistance on a chronic basis. The Freshplace food pantry model takes a different approach to hunger by addressing the root causes of poverty and assisting people with the underlying issues causing them to rely on emergency food on a regular basis. Freshplace enables clients to choose their own food, a very different philosophy than traditional food pantries. The pantry also provides clients with one-on-one appointments with a project manager, computer access, job referrals, nutrition and cooking classes, as well as lessons on how to shop on a budget. Other food pantries around the nation can learn from the Freshplace model and help those in need gain the necessary resources to provide food for their families without relying on food pantries on a regular basis. At Freshplace, it’s about much more than just the food; instead, participants report benefitting most from the other services offered at the pantry.

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The University of Saint Joseph (USJ) offers a wide range of graduate, undergraduate, and certificate programs that combine a professional and liberal arts education with a focus on service. Coeducational graduate master’s and doctoral degree programs are taught on the University’s two campuses in West Hartford and Hartford, Connecticut; at off-campus locations throughout the state; and online. Undergraduate programs for women and for coeducational adult students take place on our beautiful suburban campus and include more than 22 majors and six pre-professional programs, each of which provides personal attention in a caring environment. Founded in 1932 by the Sisters of Mercy, the University of Saint Joseph welcomes students from diverse backgrounds and religious traditions. To learn more, view our website at www.usj.edu.

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