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For Immediate Release

## **New University of Saint Joseph Study Shows Food Pantry Model Increases Client Confidence and Food Security**

WEST HARTFORD, CT – March 31, 2016 -- A food pantry model that provides individualized coaching and client choice helps increase clients' confidence and reduces food insecurity, according to a new study by the University of Saint Joseph.

The study published in the January 2016 issue of the journal *Social Science and Medicine – Population Health* compared clients going to Freshplace, an innovative food pantry program in Hartford, CT, to clients going to traditional food pantries. Being a member of the Freshplace food pantry increased clients' confidence in their ability to make changes (called self-efficacy) and reduced their likelihood of experiencing hunger.

“These results stress the importance of building relationships with food pantry clients to help them reach their goals. The emphasis is on boosting self-efficacy so clients can tackle the underlying issues of why they need food,” said Katie Martin, assistant professor at the University of Saint Joseph, and lead researcher on the study.

The food pantry model used at the Freshplace food pantry, called More than Food, uses coaching with motivational interviewing to help increase self-efficacy, and promote food security, health and stability. Results show that when people are confident in their ability to set goals and stretch their food dollars, they are less likely to be food insecure. The goal of this work is to help people address the root causes of poverty so that they no longer rely on food pantries on a chronic basis.

The More than Food model is now being replicated in additional food pantries nationally, including a new Fresh Start program at the Kelly Memorial Food Pantry in El Paso, TX. “Simply providing a referral is not always useful. When we spend the extra time helping clients access services in the community, they are eager to get the help and engaged to come back for their next appointment,” said Kathy Coronado, project manager of the El Paso program.

For questions about the study or about the More than Food model, please contact Katie Martin at [ksmartin@usj.edu](mailto:ksmartin@usj.edu). A copy of the article is available at: <http://authors.elsevier.com/sd/article/S2352827316000082>.

Funding for the replication of the More than Food model is provided by the Farmington Bank Community Foundation and the Global Obesity Prevention Center at Johns Hopkins University. The More than Food model is a collaboration between the University of Saint Joseph, Foodshare, and Urban Alliance.

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