



MEDIA RELEASE

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Senior Hunger Champion: Union County Senior Services

The Department for Aging and Independent Living (DAIL) hosted the first Kentucky Senior Hunger Summit in November 2019, with the goal of *connecting community partners in finding real solutions for tomorrow to start transforming systems currently in place*. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the summit was not held in 2020. The 2021 Summit was held virtually on November 17, 2021. The virtual event ended with the presentation of three awards: Legislative, Corporate, and Local Senior Hunger Champions. GRADD would like to congratulate **Union County Senior Services** as the **2021 Local Senior Hunger Champion!**

Union County Senior Services was in a unique situation during the pandemic which provided an opportunity to make a tremendous difference in the lives of Union County senior citizens. Students at the Earl C. Clements Job Corps Academy had to leave the campus due to the COVID-19 shutdown, which left the academy with thousands of pounds of food needing to be dispersed. With an established reputation of providing quality services, Union County Senior Services served as the clearinghouse for those donations. Over 33 pallets of frozen and shelf-stable food were brought to the senior center on 10 occasions. Senior Services staff repackaged the food for distribution to the 195 Union County senior residents who were receiving meals, as well as reached 150 clients through the 3,200 commodities distributed since the start of the pandemic. They also served as coordinator and distributor for the Farms to Families program, helping to get over 5,800 cases of food to Union County residents.

Since March of 2020, they have served 59,000 meals to Union County senior citizens. With the donations from the Job Corp Academy, center staff prepared over 5,000 freezer meals to ensure meal clients had extra food during weekends, weather closures, or for use as a second meal for the day. Their on-site, raised bed garden program produced over 1,400 pounds of food this year that went into the homes of seniors. Recently, grant funding was secured to start a fruit grove for seniors. Going above and beyond the service to seniors, they also provided food to several local food banks, distributed food boxes thru local churches, and worked with the Audubon Area Head Start Program to help grandparents and great grandparents raising grandchildren. Along with the commodities, over 3,500 pounds of dog and cat food were distributed, helping seniors maintain their loved companions during a time of increased isolation.

The Green River Area Development District (GRADD) is a regional planning agency serving the communities of Daviess, Hancock, Henderson, McLean, Ohio, Union, and Webster counties. GRADD offers assistance in the fields of aging, health, and social services; community and economic development; transportation planning; and workforce development. Our mission is to afford local governments and citizens a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities, and to provide leadership in planning and implementing programs to improve the quality of life in our district.

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