

# Serving Princeton

Edition #3, 2015

Princeton Human Services Commission

Princeton, NJ

## Thank you, Send Hunger Packing!

I, Nakeisha Ammons and my family would like to extend our biggest Thank You, to the SHUPP staff for all you do throughout the Princeton Public Schools to ensure that children in low income households have the opportunity to obtain supplemental meals over the weekend. Families like mine dealing with economic difficulties found relief in feeding our children through SHUPP.

I learned about this program when I resigned from my job to take care of my child with Asperger's syndrome. My son's disability needed to be handled more attentively leaving our household with only one income. It was a major adjustment. We were in despair about how to feed our children as well as handling the household obligations. Then, I was introduced to SHUPP and their willingness to assist was a great relief to our burden.

Explaining my situation and that there are many others in this community just like me, to two members of the SHUPP team, they asked me to participate in a focus group to obtain data showing the actual need for supplemental food for families in the Princeton school district. It was a great honor to be able to help, and be a voice for my community.

The SHUPP program provides each of my children with a nutritional non-perishable breakfast, snack and lunch. These meals are packaged and given to my children discretely through the school, which is great for those who may be shy of their situation and who otherwise wouldn't join. My family is grateful to know that there is an organization that is ensuring a helping hand to families in need during these harsh economic times by assisting to feed our children at the end of each week.

I also would like to thank you for inviting my family to come out for a great evening of fun with Chef Brian Duffy. Chef Duffy showed us ways to prepare simple nutritional meals for our children. The children assisted Chef Duffy at the event empowering them to help out with meal preparations at home. For all you do, thank you.

Respectfully,

Nakeisha Ammons



## Community Oriented Policing

by Nick Sutter, Chief Princeton Police Department

Recent national events have proven the importance of communication between the community and local police. Many departments speak about Community Policing but often forget what Community Oriented Policing is.

Through experience, we have learned that to be effective local police cannot operate independently; community partnerships and support are essential to successful policing. We believe that all members of our community are stakeholders in our department, and each one brings a different perspective to police-community relations.

A police department that is representative of its service area's diversity is a department that gains the trust and understanding of its citizens.

As police officers in Princeton, we have the privilege of working in one of the most diverse areas in the United States. We contact individuals from many different cultural backgrounds, socio-economic classes, and religions on a daily basis.

While this is a benefit to all, it poses a unique challenge to our officers who must be prepared to address the members of our community in a respectful way by understanding different beliefs and customs that may be unfamiliar to them.

I am proud to report that the Princeton Police Department exceeds the ethnic diversity of our service area. Mostly due to the fact that we recognize the benefits of diversity, we have a vision of how our department should reflect the community, and we commit to these ideals in our recruitment plan. In this plan we identify diversity as a goal of the department and we implemented several proactive strategies to achieve this goal.

Although all of our officers receive training in cultural competency, we realize that this is not enough.

While there is always work to be done and progress to be made, I am confident that the Princeton Police Department will continue to grow as an organization that embraces diversity.



This month, I had the great opportunity to attend "My Brother's Keeper (MBK) Community Challenge National Convening" at the White House with Mayor Lempert.

The MBK challenge is an initiative of the Obama administration that calls cities, towns, and counties to action to develop and implement plans that ensure ALL young people, regardless of their race, background, and life circumstances, can achieve their full potential. Attending the workshop was a great opportunity to learn from other cities/counties about their successes, and challenges while working on this initiative.

Princeton has accepted the President's challenge to work with our community partners and leaders to identify areas of improvement and ensure ALL youth in Princeton are successful from the time they enter school to graduation. We are fortunate to have great services offered to our community and our youth has a number of support systems they can count on. While we don't share some of the same social issues happening in other cities, Princeton is not strange to families earning very low wages and struggling to make ends meet. Economic disparity plays a huge role in how prepared and equipped children are when entering school.

As a community, great support has been shown to initiatives like Send Hunger Packing (SHUPP) ensuring children come to school ready to learn by addressing food insecurity challenges. I hope we can continue these efforts to support children and families with lesser resources and make a commitment to ALL our youth to have a fair shot at success. I look forward to working with our partners and leaders in Princeton to take on this challenge.

## Princeton's Leadership in Immigration Matters

By Leticia Fraga Nadler & John Heilner

The Human Services Commission (HSC) working with community partners continues to make progress on issues deeply affecting our immigrant community.

After a one year absence, the Mercer County Community ID card is again being offered in Princeton. The ID cards are now issued every 2nd Tuesday of the month, at the Nassau Presbyterian Church, from 12 noon-2 pm, and from 5-7 pm. This is the result of an advocacy effort by Bill Wakefield of the church, in collaboration with LALDEF and HSC.

For many individuals who may not otherwise qualify for a government issued ID, it provides an invaluable lifeline to prove their identity in order to access basic needs. Although not accepted in place of a federal or state issued ID, and invalid for driving, we have heard from many grateful people who can now access medical care, cash checks, open bank accounts, use the library, and other community services. Most importantly, recipients of the Community ID appreciate that it affords them proof of their identity, and is evidence that they are truly residents of our community.

The need to prove residency in Princeton became a critical issue for a newly arrived young immigrant from Guatemala. Seventeen-year old Maria came to our attention when she applied for her Community ID last October. She had been attempting to enroll in school but didn't have all the identification requested. The ID card served as one of many required



documents she needed to enroll. It was a long process in which HSC and LALDEF intervened to facilitate her enrollment, help her get school supplies and the winter clothes she needed. Having demonstrated determination, perseverance and a strong will to overcome all obstacles to seek a better life for herself, she finally started school in December.

When President Obama announced his decision to take executive action on immigration, community leaders responded by offering an information session at St Paul's Church on December 1st to

provide resources to Princeton residents whose lives could be affected. The Executive Order will allow certain undocumented immigrants to adjust their legal status and remain in the US without fear of deportation. The hope is that Congress will finally be stimulated to revise our broken immigration system. This was one of a series of information sessions we will be offering over the next few months.

As a result of these efforts we are very proud that Princeton has been considered a model community by the League of Municipalities of New Jersey. Princeton's leadership in immigration matters was highlighted at the annual conference this year.

For 2015, we will continue to support and advocate for this community.



### Princeton Human Services

One Monument Hall , Princeton NJ 0854 Tel: 609-688-2055 website: princetonnj.gov

*Our mission: Through advocacy, leadership, and collaboration, the Department of Human Services helps to improve the quality of life of individuals in our community who are vulnerable, economically disadvantaged, or otherwise in need.*

Our services: General Assistance • Emergency Assistance • Rental Assistance • NJSNAP (Food Stamps) • Summer Youth Employment Program • Back Pack and School Supplies Drive • Holiday Gift Drive • Wage Theft • Information and Referral.