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Media Release

Equinox Shifts from Annual Thanksgiving Community Dinner To Year-Round Food Security Initiative

Partnering with the Regional Food Bank to transition Thanksgiving Tradition

Albany, NY – Equinox has announced it is shifting its focus and resources from the Annual Thanksgiving Dinner to year-round food security, aligning with its mission and other services offered 365 days a year.

Since COVID, Equinox’s traditional Thanksgiving Dinner has looked different: from a full-scale operation at the Empire State Plaza to meal preparation and delivery from local restaurants; and then last year, downsizing to take-out meals and a sit-down dinner at a local church - positioning the organization to phase out the dinner with nominal impact.

Regional Food Bank Launching Thanksgiving distribution in 2024

“We are pleased to announce that we are partnering with the Regional Food Bank to transition this cherished Thanksgiving tradition to their most capable hands,” commented Equinox CEO John Henley. The Regional Food Bank will be launching a Thanksgiving distribution this year. With their extensive experience and robust network, the Regional Food Bank is well-equipped to ensure that families and individuals in need receive support and nourishment they need all year long. Working with partner sites throughout the immediate Capital Region, the Food Bank will host a number of drive-thru style distributions the weekend before Thanksgiving featuring a combination of food boxes and prepared meals. More information will be forthcoming on their website, regionalfoodbank.net.

“We are so grateful to the team at Equinox for all they have done to assist neighbors in need for 54 years,” said Tom Nardacci, CEO of the Regional Food Bank. “We have big shoes to fill, but working together with Equinox, the community, our partners, volunteers, and staff, we can make Thanksgiving special for individuals, families, and seniors in need throughout the area.”

Equinox Announces Year-Round Food Security Initiative

Equinox, in partnership with its soon-to-be affiliate Whitney Young Health, is convening a Food Security Task Force to assess and define the needs of both organizations’ outpatient clients and patients – nearly 20,000 individuals, and their families, who rely on their Outpatient Services, including mental health and addiction treatment, adult and pediatric primary care and specialty medical care, dental care, domestic violence outreach services, youth supportive services, and specialty housing.

Currently, Equinox helps address food insecurity by providing three meals a day at its Domestic Violence Shelter and Mental Health Residences, a food pantry for homeless youth in its Transitional Living Program, as well as a hot lunch to individuals with addiction and mental health disorders in its PROS (Personalized Recovery Oriented Services) day program.

Currently, Whitney Young Health is committed to food insecurity prevention through its WIC Program – providing more than 2,200 women, infants and children with benefits to purchase healthy, nutritious foods, such as milk, yogurt, eggs, whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

In addition, nearly 15 years ago, WYH was an original partner with Capital Roots in launching the VeggieRX program and more recently partnering with the Food Pantries for the Capital District to serve as a Food as Medicine provider to address food insecurity among low-income, chronic disease patients.

As an integral part of this initiative, Equinox plans to collaborate and integrate with other community partners, who have a niche in the food security space, in the upcoming months.