

Chef José Andrés Announces Expanded \$1,000,000 Commitment to DC Central Kitchen's Innovative Healthy Corners Program

Long-time DCCK Volunteer & Advocate José Andrés Empowers an Award-Winning, Community-Driven Solution to Inequitable Food Access to Grow Locally and Nationally

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As [DC Central Kitchen](#) (DCCK) marks the 35th anniversary of its founding as the nation's first 'community kitchen' aimed at turning the traditional soup kitchen model on its head, one of the organization's best-known volunteers

and champions, Chef José Andrés, announced a major philanthropic gift to one of its most innovative programs: [Healthy Corners](#). The expanded gift brings Andrés's total commitment to Healthy Corners' ongoing expansion to \$1 million over the past two years. The funding will help the program bring nearly 500,000 units of affordable fruits and vegetables to a growing network of DC corner stores while capturing and sharing what makes the program so successful to help more cities across the country build on Healthy Corners' success.

First launched in 2011, Healthy Corners took aim at DC's long-standing "grocery gap," as 160,000 residents of the city's historically underserved communities shared just a small handful grocery stores and had to travel long distances to meet their nutritional needs. The program combined last-mile deliveries of discounted, fresh fruits and vegetables, intensive business assistance to small corner stores, thoughtful community outreach and nutrition education, and job opportunities for graduates of DCCK's Culinary Job Training program with histories of unemployment, incarceration, homelessness, and trauma. For the past six years, Healthy Corners has partnered with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and DC Health to provide "nutrition incentives" that help low-income customers using Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits afford additional fruits and vegetables when shopping at participating local corner stores. Andrés's gift will create full-time job opportunities for more DCCK graduates as the program sources and re-distributes locally grown fruits and vegetables to up to 60



Photo of Healthy Corners produce in a refrigerator at a corner store in Washington, DC

locations in DC's low-food-access areas, reaching an expected 18,000 food insecure shoppers annually. With support from the Andrés-backed Global Food Institute at The George Washington University, DC Central Kitchen programming and evaluation experts will provide information and guidance to nonprofits and social entrepreneurs across the country interested in replicating Healthy Corners' success.

This gift builds on a long-standing partnership between DCCK and Chef Andrés. Andrés served as co-chair of the Bringing the Kitchen Home Campaign, a multi-year effort to help DCCK establish a brand-new 36,000 square foot community kitchen, training facility, and urban food hub named the Michael R. Klein Center for Jobs and Justice. The facility opened in March 2023 and its added capacity allowed Healthy Corners to increase sales by more than 16% in a matter of months. Andrés is also the founder and perennial host of DC Central Kitchen's signature fundraising event, Capital Food Fight, a Chair Emeritus of DCCK's Board of Directors, and has helped facilitate high-level visits to DC Central Kitchen in recent months by U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack and the President's Council on Sports, Fitness, and Nutrition.

"When we open our minds to what people can do when they work together, and we use food as a tool to build communities, powerful change can happen. Healthy Corners embodies that approach, uniting small businesses, local residents, family farmers, and graduates of DC Central Kitchen who have overcome immense barriers in life. Together, these partners are showing us all how we can make healthy food available, sustainably and with respect and dignity, in every community. I know this gift will help the leaders at DC Central Kitchen bring Healthy Corners to new heights while empowering other cities to build their own solutions to food access issues," Andrés said.

"Of all the ways we take on the root causes of hunger and poverty in our community, Healthy Corners is among the most dynamic, promising, and primed for growth," remarked DC Central Kitchen's CEO Mike Curtin, Jr. "We are thrilled to continue our decades of partnership with our friend José and boldly grow this sustainable, job-creating solution to DC's food access challenges. For José to make this commitment as we mark our 35th year is especially meaningful and reflects our shared commitment to making DC Central Kitchen's work bigger, badder, and bolder every single day."□

To read more about the Healthy Corners program, learn about the benefits it offers to DC shoppers, or download the Healthy Corners customer app, visit

<https://dccentralkitchen.org/healthy-corners/>.

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