New Ways to End World Hunger: Meds & Food for Kids Convenes Expert Panel in St. Louis on September 24

Innovators Take Action After the Dismantling of USAID in 2025; Forum Spotlights What is Working in Haiti



In Haiti, 85,000 children under the age of five suffer from severe acute malnutrition. Meds & Food for Kids produces a therapeutic food that saves the lives of malnourished children.

ST. LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, September 21, 2026 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Three experts in international humanitarian aid speak in St. Louis on September 24, 2026, about how the world can respond differently to hunger at a time of profound change. The need is urgent. The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) ceased operating as an independent agency in 2025; significant portions of U.S. foreign assistance were eliminated or transferred, and humanitarian funding worldwide has fallen sharply. At the same time, approximately 645 million people experienced hunger in 2025.

Meds & Food for Kids, a St. Louis nonprofit organization, hosts the forum called Zero Hunger: Doing What Works at the Hilton St. Louis Frontenac, 1335 S. Lindbergh Blvd., from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. on September 24.

While addressing challenges, the panel will highlight solutions that disrupt the status quo.

“The system that shaped international food assistance for much of the past 70 years is not simply under pressure; it is being reordered,” says Chris Greene, CEO of Meds & Food for Kids. “That creates an opportunity to rethink how we respond to hunger and build systems that are stronger in the long term.”

The speakers bring different perspectives and experience to the challenge:

Dianna Darsney is global humanitarian director for the non-governmental organization CARE. She was a senior official with USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance with direct experience overseeing global food aid and humanitarian response programming.

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Jamie Rhoads is the interim executive director and director of partnerships and strategy for the Haiti Food Systems Alliance, an organization focused on sustainable agriculture and community empowerment.

Chris Greene is CEO of Meds & Food for Kids, which operates a factory in Haiti producing therapeutic food for children suffering from malnutrition as well as nutritious foods for mothers and schoolchildren.

The moderator is Lora Iannotti, PhD, Lauren and Lee Fixel Distinguished Professor at the Washington University Bursky School of Public Health and co-director of the university's Food and Agriculture Research Mission.

The panel will examine the current causes of hunger in hot spots, including Haiti, Sudan, Yemen, Nigeria, and Gaza, and the bottlenecks preventing food from reaching the world's most vulnerable populations.

"Conflict and displacement are now the largest drivers of food insecurity, followed by weather and then economic shocks," Darsney says. "And these aren't clean, separate categories anymore; climate shocks and conflict now co-occur in more than 70% of crisis countries."

In Haiti, gang violence, displacement, political instability and economic disruption have intensified an already severe food crisis. The latest international analysis found that nearly 6 million people, more than half of the analyzed population, were experiencing acute food insecurity. Greene will discuss Meds & Food for Kids' localized approach to humanitarian assistance, which combines lifesaving nutrition programs with local manufacturing, Haitian employment, and investment in agricultural supply chains. The organization employs more than 80 Haitians at its factory and supports increased local production of peanuts used in its nutrition products.

Rhoads also emphasizes the importance of local solutions to feeding millions of hungry people.

"We need to move away from measuring success by dollars spent and toward the outcomes we are actually trying to achieve to end hunger for the long haul," Rhoads says. "More resources are needed, but we also need funding mechanisms that reward results and give local systems the time and space to build lasting capacity."

He urges humanitarian aid organizations to buy from local farmers whenever possible.

The forum’s name refers to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goal Number 2: Zero Hunger.

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