



fighting hunger and feeding hope in montgomery county

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY PEOPLE AT-RISK FOR HUNGER IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY?

Sometimes it's hard to imagine that hungry people live in a place where it's not uncommon to see fancy sports cars driving down Rockville Pike or to overhear a fashionably-dressed couple at Starbucks discussing which Caribbean Island sounds best for a summer vacation. It can be difficult to understand why one of every four children in the county is at-risk for hunger when most people in the County enjoy a stable, even luxurious, lifestyle.

By and large, people in Montgomery County are hungry because the cost to live in this wonderful place is unbelievably high – and getting higher all the time. Families need supplemental and emergency food because the wages they earn simply are not enough to cover their basic expenses. When funds are short, the rent, utilities, and gasoline bills get paid first; often there just isn't enough after paying the bills to buy groceries.

Let's do some quick arithmetic. Marco and Angelica live in Silver Spring with their second grade son, Theo and their 4 year old daughter, Kaylee. Marco is a construction worker who earns \$11.50 an hour, and his wife is a cashier earning \$7.50 an hour. Together they earn about \$40,000 annually and consider themselves luckier than most because Angelica's company pays for half of their health care plan. The rent on their two-bedroom apartment is \$1,200 a month, the insurance and car payment for their 1994 Honda Accord costs \$280 each month, and utilities cost another \$175 each month. Pre-school and child care consumes another \$575 each month. Gasoline costs \$75 monthly, and the portion of their health care premium is \$400 a month. Angelica and Marco pay approximately \$600 a month for payroll, state, and federal taxes. Before Marco and Angelica have bought a gallon of milk, a pair of shoes, or school supplies, they have spent \$3,305 of their monthly income of \$3,333.

Twenty-eight percent of Montgomery County households earn less than \$50,000; more than 250,000 of our neighbors are at-risk of hunger. That's why your support of Manna Food Center is so critical. Manna is experiencing a 9% increase in the number of households picking up food, and we are only able to provide these families with the food they need so desperately because of your generous support.

Together, we truly can fight hunger and feed hope in Montgomery County. ■