

THE EXTRA

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PAULETTE WHITE Transitions

Food Recovery Program helps homeless, community

Transitions

Most people, if they have heard of Transitions, think of a 260-bed homeless shelter that provides meals. In fact, food and shelter are one piece of what Transitions offers.

The Food Recovery Program, launched in 2016 and operating five days a week year-round, recovers food that would otherwise end up in the Richland County Landfill. McEntire Produce, Fort Jackson, Costco, USC, Whole Foods, Publix, Southern Way Catering and Capital City Catering have provided food.

Both Transitions clients

and the environment benefit: Transitions can offer its clients a healthier menu to its clients, and food stays out of the landfill.

“Perfectly good food continues to be tossed in the trash because we haven’t found a way to connect the need with the resources,” said Transitions CEO Craig Currey. “This program is effectively doing that.”

Approximately 60 percent of the food served at Transitions’ lunches and dinners is from its Food Recovery Program. Vegetables made up 47 percent of the food recovered during the first six months.

According to program records, Transitions recovers approximately 11,900 pounds of food a month. In addition, the center has extended its fresh salad bar offering to five days a week because of the increase in fresh produce.

“Clients are really happy to have the salad bar,” said Debbie Lane, director of operations, “and it’s a great way to start building healthier eating habits.”

In addition to food recovery, Eau Claire Health Center has operated a clinic on-site for several years. Outside independent analysis shows that the health clinic at Transitions

has helped save the community between \$7 million and \$8 million annually in health service charges.

Combine Transitions’ commitment to health and focus on healthy meals with its job training, search and recruiting programs, and it’s easy to see how the organization has helped more than 1,842 residents transition back into stable, permanent housing.

“We estimate that it only costs \$22 a day for someone to be at Transitions and receive all the services and support we make available,” said Liz Igleheart, vice president of advancement.

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