New warehouse brings more space to anti-hunger programs

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PHILIPSBURG — A recent 15,000-square-foot warehouse is helping the Moshannon Valley YMCA collaborate with anti-hunger programs during the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Anti-Hunger Program Director Mel Curtis.

The new warehouse, which was made possible through the Moshannon Valley Economic Development Partnership, accommodates the growing population that is lacking access to food, according to Curtis. The warehouse began use about two months ago.

"Before, we were sitting around 5,000 square feet, and we couldn't keep enough food on hand to get out," said Curtis. "It was really a nightmare for us."

The pandemic put a strain on many individuals and families, impacting the usage of anti-hunger programs.

"We've grown way bigger than we ever thought we would be," said Curtis.

Prior to the pandemic, there were one in seven children facing food insecurity. That number has grown to one in four.

Surrounded by canned soup and packaged goods, YMCA Anti-Hunger Program Director Mel Curtis stands in a recently donated 15,000 square feet warehouse.

Warehouse

Curtis said. All food distributions, according to Curtis, are seeing more people.

The YMCA has many programs to help those needing food. The Backpack Program provides students with meals and snacks for the weekend. The Fresh Express program, which is income based, provides fresh fruits and vegetables.

Even with more vaccinations administered and more people returning to work, the YMCA anti-hunger programs' numbers continue to grow.

"Just because businesses reopened, there's a ton of people who still have not got back to work," said Curtis. "It's still really bad."

Curtis encourages any person in need to reach out.

"If people are facing food insecurity, if they ask us, we can get them food," said Curtis. "There's no questions asked."

For more information on how to access the food programs available at the YMCA, contact Mel Curtis at mcurtis@ymcaacc.org or 814-342-0889.