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Cigna Foundation Puts Kids on Healthier Path by Combatting Childhood Hunger in St. Louis

- *St. Louis, home base for Express Scripts, a Cigna company, is the first of multiple U.S. and international cities chosen as hubs to help today's kids grow into tomorrow's healthy adults.*
- *Shop & Grow Markets will provide free groceries and nutritional resources to students and families in two St. Louis Public Schools.*

ST. LOUIS - October 29, 2019 – Children shouldn't worry about where their next meal is coming from, yet an estimated 1 in 5 young people in Missouri will be going to bed hungry tonight¹. To tackle the widespread public health issues of child hunger, food insecurity and lack of quality nutrition, the Cigna Foundation is taking action to positively impact local communities like St. Louis where employees of Cigna live and work.

A Cigna Foundation grant will deliver fresh, frozen and shelf-stable foods at no cost to students and families of Ashland Elementary School and Yeatman-Liddell College Preparatory Middle School. The Foundation is partnering locally with The Little Bit Foundation and the St. Louis Area Foodbank to provide this offering. The Ashland Shop & Grow market opened Oct. 22, and the Yeatman-Liddell market opens today. A grand opening celebration is planned for Nov. 7:

Date: Thursday, Nov. 7
Time: 9 a.m.
Location: Ashland Elementary, 3921 N. Newstead, St. Louis, Mo. 63115
RSVP: Erin.lee@thelittlebitfoundation.org

"Schools are a focal point for addressing child health issues, and many already have programs and partnerships offering food and nutrition support," said Susan Stith, executive director of Cigna Foundation. "We want to work together to fill the gaps that exist in and outside the school environment. Ashland Elementary and Yeatman-Liddell are located in a region of the city often described as a 'food desert' because of the lack of grocery stores in the area. Through the Shop & Grow Markets, we're bringing groceries directly to them."

The donation is part of [Healthier Kids For Our FutureSM](#), Cigna's \$25 million, five-year global initiative to improve the health and well-being of children. Healthier Kids For Our Future addresses three key areas of children's health and welfare that align to the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) – good health and well-being, zero hunger and no poverty. The first year of the initiative addresses the second goal, zero hunger.

The Cigna Foundation is awarding up to \$5 million over the next year, and [nonprofit organizations are invited to apply for grants](#).

"We're grateful to the Cigna Foundation, The Little Bit Foundation and St. Louis Area Foodbank for helping to give our students the best opportunity to learn, grow and thrive," said Dr. Kelvin Adams, superintendent, St. Louis Public Schools. "The lack of quality nutrition negatively affects brain development, learning abilities and education outcomes. Whether a student just happened to skip breakfast or if their family is struggling to put food on the table, they now have free access to healthy food."

About the Cigna Foundation

[The Cigna Foundation](#), established in 1962, is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation (NYSE:CI) and its subsidiaries. The Cigna Foundation supports organizations sharing its commitment to enhancing the health of individuals and families, and the well-being of their communities, with a special focus on those communities where Cigna employees live and work.

About The Little Bit Foundation

Founded in 2001, The Little Bit Foundation (www.thelittlebitfoundation.org) works to eliminate barriers to learning by addressing the basic needs of students living in poverty in the St. Louis region. In area schools, Little Bit brings partnerships and programs that align with district and school performance goals and provide for the needs of the whole child. Working one-on-one with students, Little Bit supports personal care, classroom readiness, literacy, and health and wellness, and through unique high school programming, helps students stay on track for graduation and beyond. The results are positive personal growth and increased self-esteem in students impacted by poverty, leading to improved attendance, behavior and academic success. Follow Little Bit on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the St. Louis Area Foodbank

The St. Louis Area Foodbank began its service to the community in 1975. Since that time, the organization has grown to become the bi-state region's largest nonprofit 501c3 food distribution center dedicated to feeding individuals in need. Through a robust network of community partners and programs throughout 26 counties in Missouri and Illinois, the Foodbank helps provide 37 million meals annually. More than 392,000 people in the bi-state region rely on the Foodbank for assistance each year. For more information on the organization and the issue of hunger, please visit www.STLFoodbank.org, on Facebook at <http://facebook.com/STLFoodbank> and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/STLFoodbank>.

¹ <http://map.feedingamerica.org>