



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **ABCCM, Bounty & Soul, and MAHEC Create New Collaboration for Community Health**

*Innovative Program Incorporates the Core Strengths of Each Organization to Address Food Insecurity and Wellness for Low-Income Families in Buncombe County*

(Asheville, N.C. – January 23, 2019) — Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry (ABCCM), Bounty & Soul, and the Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC) are collaborating on a new program to address food insecurity and related health risks. Low-income populations are at greater risk for chronic diseases associated with lack of resources and poor diet.

The three not-for-profit organizations are working collaboratively to bring Bounty & Soul’s mobile food markets and educational programming to ABCCM sites in 2019. The first of these weekly markets will launch in February at ABCCM’s Hominy Valley Crisis Center, which is co-located with the MAHEC Family Health Center at Enka/Candler at 1914 Smokey Park Highway in Candler, NC.

Both ABCCM and MAHEC are well-established with decades of service in the community. ABCCM’s large network of local churches and volunteers feed up to 500 families each week. The organization connects families with community resources to help them move out of crisis and into stability.

“We are a listening ministry that starts with honoring each person, validating the challenges, and coming alongside to equip and empower families with fresh strategies and choices,” explains ABCCM’s Executive Director Reverend Scott Rogers. “We put real resources into people’s hands to achieve real solutions.”

“This opportunity reflects the larger body of Christ and Community, bringing each one’s strengths and gifts together for strong, healthy, and better-educated families,” says Rogers. “ABCCM has built safe places that families trust where the strengths of MAHEC and Bounty & Soul can gather to help families achieve their greater potential and build a stronger community.”

Bounty & Soul’s programming and resources take a “whole person” approach to food insecurity and wellness through evidence-based curricula and consistent weekly access to fresh produce and whole grains. Nutrition education, wellness lessons, and cooking demonstrations provide participants with the knowledge and resources to create healthier lives for themselves and their families. Data has proven the program’s impact to successfully address chronic health issues and, in some cases, reverse them.

“We are very excited about the prospects of this alliance,” says Bounty & Soul’s Executive Director Bruce Ganger. “This is three successful organizations contributing what each does best to create a comprehensive support net for individuals and families who find themselves hovering around that flimsy line between just getting by and going under. It creates a truly collaborative model based on strengths.”

This partnership will provide hands-on training and research opportunities for MAHEC’s health sciences learners—including medical residents, dietetic interns, and medical and public health students—who

**Mountain Area Health Education Center**

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will work with Bounty & Soul to provide programming to increase participants' knowledge of the relationship between nutrition and health as well as skills to use the healthy food offered at the market.

"Here in Western North Carolina, we struggle with higher rates of poverty, hunger, and chronic diseases such as diabetes," shares MAHEC's CEO Jeff Heck, MD. "We're excited to partner with ABCCM and Bounty & Soul to help more families access nutritious food and health education to prevent and even reverse these diseases."

For more information about Bounty & Soul's partnership with ABCCM and MAHEC or the planned weekly mobile market at ABCCM's Hominy Valley Crisis Ministry, please contact Bruce Ganger at 828-419-0533 or [bruce@bountyandsoul.org](mailto:bruce@bountyandsoul.org).

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**Asheville Buncombe Community Christian Ministry** began as a small collaboration of churches in 1969 and is now generously supported by over 289 WNC churches of all denominations. ABCCM provides emergency assistance to over 32,000 under-served individuals and families in Buncombe County struggling with poverty, hunger, homelessness, and access to healthcare. ABCCM has played a significant role in meeting emergency assistance needs for families in crisis. ABCCM's four crisis ministry centers provide individuals and families experiencing financial crises with a hot meal at its Cumberland location, food boxes, gently used clothing, utility and rental assistance, and financial counseling. To learn more, go to [www.abccm.org](http://www.abccm.org) or call (828) 259-5300.

**Bounty & Soul** is a nonprofit community-based organization that connects people to healthy food, wellness, and one another through their five weekly markets serving multiple counties. Bounty & Soul provides fresh produce and other healthy staples, nutrition literacy, and wellness resources to more than 700 individuals a week for 51 weeks of every year at no cost to the participants. Bounty & Soul programming focuses on whole person health which integrates a nutrient-dense diet with physical movement, stress reduction, and social connections at every age. Bounty & Soul markets are a place where people come for meaningful emotional support, social connections, as well as food and personal well-being. Since its founding in 2014, Bounty & Soul has conducted over 1,200 wellness, nutrition, and cooking classes and distributed over 1,500,000 pounds of nutrient-dense foods to almost 150,000 individuals. To learn more, go to [www.bountyandsoul.org](http://www.bountyandsoul.org) or call 828-419-0533.

**Mountain Area Health Education Center** was established in 1974 and is a leader in healthcare, education, and innovation. Located in Asheville, MAHEC serves a 16-county region in Western North Carolina. It is the largest [Area Health Education Center](#) in North Carolina, which evolved to address national and state concerns with the supply, retention, and quality of health professionals. MAHEC's mission is to train the next generation of healthcare professionals for Western North Carolina through quality healthcare, innovative education, and best practice models that can be replicated nationally. MAHEC's Biltmore campus is also home to [UNC Health Sciences at MAHEC](#), an academic health center in partnership with UNC-Chapel Hill that includes programs from the UNC School of Medicine, UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, and UNC Eshelman School of Pharmacy. For more information, visit [www.mahec.net](http://www.mahec.net) or call 828-257-4400.