

FEEDING THE BRONX

Phillip Grant, M.B.A. '08, CEO of World's Largest Wholesale Produce Market, Gives Back to His Community



Photo by Richard Louissaint

Phillip Grant, M.B.A. '08



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here do most New Yorkers get their fresh produce? Odds are it comes through the Hunts

Point Produce Market, the world's largest wholesale produce market located in Bronx, New York.

Phillip Grant, M.B.A. '08, Chief Executive Officer of Hunts Point Produce Market, is a Mercy College alumnus who exemplifies the spirit of volunteerism and giving back that runs through the Mercy alumni community. He is committed to using his position of leadership to address food insecurity in the Bronx.

Thousands of pounds of fruits and vegetables arrive daily at Hunts Point Produce Market, sourced from local farms and international importers. From there it is distributed across the region—not only to retailers and restaurants, but also to food pantries, soup kitchens and directly into the hands of hungry people.

During the week of Thanksgiving 2021, Grant ensured that food insecure students and their families who rely on Mercy College's Mav Market food pantry had an ally. The Hunts Point Produce Market distributed fresh food items to the Mav Market. This was a benefit to all Mercy students who use the market and were facing additional burdens during a holiday season that saw an increase in food costs. Registered members of the Mav Market, mostly Mercy students and their families, picked up bags of fresh and nonperishable food, snacks, toiletries and baby supplies.

The Mercy College Mav Market is an inclusive and confidential environment where Mercy students, faculty, and staff can get wholesome foods and personal items. The Market helps students reduce the struggle of having to balance classes and being able to feed themselves and their families. Over the five years it has been in operation, the Mav Market has grown from a single food pantry on the Bronx



Campus to locations at all of Mercy's Campuses.

Grant's reasoning for supporting Mercy's Mav Market, besides being a proud alum, was based on the pantry's impressive outreach and support of students in the Bronx—the community in which Hunts Point Produce Market primarily serves. "What really struck me was when I saw the Mav Market's data points"—serving as many as a thousand members and distributing 48,000 meals totaling more than 57,000 pounds of food since

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its inception. And with more than 40 percent of Hunts Point Produce Market employees living in the Bronx, "it felt like a good match," said Grant. "This is our community. We're a part of it, and Mercy is a part of it. It's an important relationship."



Julie Cruickshank

According to Julie Cruickshank, Mercy's basic needs manager, "Food insecurity is not just about people being hungry. It's also about obtaining food that's fresh, nutritious and of good quality." It can be a challenge to find fresh produce in traditional food banks, where canned and packaged foods are the norm due to shelf stability. "What the Hunts Point Produce Market offered the Mav Market meant the world to us and our members," she said.

