



The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance is lead partner for the No Kid Hungry campaign in Arkansas.

## MEDIA RELEASE

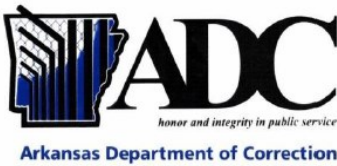
Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release. For more information contact Nancy Conley, Communications Director, [nconley@arhungeralliance.org](mailto:nconley@arhungeralliance.org) or Solomon Graves, ADC Public Information Officer, [Solomon.Graves@arkansas.gov](mailto:Solomon.Graves@arkansas.gov).

### HAWKINS UNIT COMPLETES COOKING MATTERS PILOT PROGRAM

**Little Rock, AR (January 31, 2018)**—The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance’s Cooking Matters team partnered with the Arkansas Department of Correction’s (ADC) Wrightsville Hawkins Center to pilot a program introducing nutrition education to the female inmates housed there who would be completing their sentences soon. The initial six-week pilot course graduated twelve -women from the Cooking Matters class, held as part of the prison’s *Think Legacy* re-entry program. *Think Legacy* is an evidenced-based program developed by the ADC designed to increase the potential for successful reintegration of participating inmates into the community. Cooking Matters, a program developed by Share Our Strength, a national non-profit dedicated to ending childhood hunger, teaches adults and others the skills they need to shop for nutritious ingredients on a budget and prepare healthy meals for their families.

The class was taught by Deputy Warden Mark Warner, who had the idea to bring Cooking Matters to the Hawkins Center. “I had been looking for a way to bring cooking and nutrition into the Think Legacy re-entry program,” said Deputy Warden Mark Warner. “When I learned about Cooking Matters, I knew it was exactly what I was looking for.”

“Cooking Matters is absolutely the most popular program we’ve offered at the Hawkins Center,” Deputy Warden Warner said. “We had better than expected results.” ADC Director Wendy Kelley said the following about the program, “The Governor’s direction to cooperate across agencies to better serve vulnerable populations is clearly met by this program. Releasing women with the



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nutritional education will make a difference in their lives and can make a huge difference in the lives of Arkansas families and children who benefit from healthier meals.”

Upon release from their incarceration, knowing how to shop for and prepare economical, nutritious meals is important so these former inmates can make the most of their food dollars and provide for themselves and their families. One participant commented on this importance, saying that Cooking Matters “has taught me how to cook. I’ve never been taught to cook a day in my life. I also have learned to cook healthy and feed me and my girls on a budget. I can now go home and teach my girls life skills they need.”

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#### **About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance**

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 550 hunger relief and advocacy organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit [ARhungeralliance.org](http://ARhungeralliance.org) for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.

#### **About Cooking Matters and Cooking Matters at the Store**

These unique nutrition education programs, developed by Share Our Strength, a national non-profit dedicated to ending childhood hunger, teach low income adults, teens and families the skills they need to plan, shop for and prepare economical, healthy meals on a budget. Participation in a Cooking Matters course decreases an individual’s chance of remaining food insecure by 50 percent. Cooking Matters is sponsored nationally by Walmart.

#### **About the Arkansas Department of Correction**

The Arkansas Department of Correction operates nationally accredited correctional facilities across the state with a mission of providing public safety by carrying out the mandate of the courts, providing a safe humane environment for staff and inmates, strengthening the work ethic through teaching of good habits, and providing opportunities for staff and inmates to improve spiritually, mentally, and physically. A part of the Wrightsville Complex, the Wrightsville Hawkins Center has the capacity to hold 200 women and 200 men. To learn more about the ADC, go to [ADC.Arkansas.gov](http://ADC.Arkansas.gov)