Life Science Cares and Biogen Foundation Help Launch Food For Free's Just Eats Program

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- ***$170,000 grants will fill critical gap for 3,000 food insecure families in Greater Boston via Food For Free's new grocery box program***

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., Feb. 24, 2021 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Life Science Cares Boston and the Biogen Foundation have teamed up as inaugural sponsors of Food For Free's new Just Eats Grocery Box program, a $170,000 effort to reduce food insecurity for 3,000 area families, starting this month. To launch Just Eats, Life Science Cares, the life science industry platform for giving back, has committed $50,000, and the Biogen Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Cambridge-based neuroscience pioneer Biogen Inc. (Nasdaq: BIIB), has committed $100,000, matching the $50,000 from Life Science Cares and donating an additional $50,000 to combatting food insecurity for children in Greater Boston. Committing an additional $20,000 toward the program is Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc., the largest and preeminent owner, operator, and developer of collaborative life science campuses in Greater Boston.

The combined funding will enable Just Eats to distribute 3,000 boxes of food per week through Food For Free's network of community partners in Boston, Cambridge, Chelsea, and Somerville, including food pantries, Cambridge Housing Authority sites, other low-income housing sites, and schools.

"Children cannot learn, employees cannot work, the sick cannot heal without food to fuel them. The Just Eats boxes are a vital tool to ensure families and children have access to fresh, healthy food," said Life Science Cares Boston Executive Director Sarah MacDonald. "We're honored to support this work and encourage others to step up with funding to meet these urgent and critical needs."

From May to October of 2020, Food For Free distributed USDA-organized boxes of fresh produce (the Farmers to Families Food Box Program), which were uniform, suitable for dietary restrictions, grab-and-go, and healthy. With access to the federal program becoming more limited since late fall, Food For Free intends to fill the gap with the Just Eats Grocery Boxes.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has created a growing hunger crisis. Children are especially vulnerable to hunger which can create far-reaching health and development consequences. Before the onset of the pandemic, one in eleven children in Eastern Massachusetts faced food insecurity. Now, it's one in five children," said Sasha Purpura, Food For Free's Executive Director. "Food For Free's Just Eats grocery box program helps address the urgent need for food and provides families with more consistent access to the healthy foods kids need. This would not be possible without the steadfast support we receive from Biogen and the Biogen Foundation, as well as from Life Science Cares and Alexandria Real Estate Equities. We are grateful that their generous contributions are enabling us to launch this new program, which will be a game-changer for the families who rely on us for support."

The Biogen Foundation began its collaboration with Food For Free in 2019, when Biogen provided space in its headquarters for the nonprofit's first permanent kitchen. In the past year, the Biogen Foundation donated nearly $3 million globally to nonprofit leaders who help people with food insecurity.

"Biogen, the Biogen Foundation and our employees have long been deeply committed to food security – particularly for the most vulnerable populations, like students. We are excited to build on our longstanding relationship with Food For Free and Life Science Cares to not only nourish 3,000 additional local families, but also to serve as a catalyst and inspire others in our industry to address this pressing need," said Kate Dawson, MD, Head of Therapeutics Development Unit and Chair of the Biogen Foundation. "It made sense for us to step up and help fill this critical gap, since promoting human health is core to who we are and what we do as a company. Addressing food insecurity – and the improved well-being of people and enhanced ability of students to learn that can come with it – is one of the many ways we advance our purpose and help our communities thrive."

The Just Eats Grocery Boxes will include fresh food items like potatoes, onions, carrots, apples, and oranges as well as staples like rice and dried beans. Food will be sourced both by purchasing and through non-profit partners such as the Greater Boston Food Bank and Boston Area Gleaners.

"We are extremely proud to be long-term supporters of Food For Free and its important mission to ensure that those in need in the Cambridge community have access to fresh, nutritious food," said Hunter Kass, Executive Vice President and Greater Boston Regional Market Director of Alexandria Real Estate Equities, Inc. "The new Just Eats program aligns with our commitment to advance human health, improve nutrition, and enhance the quality of people's lives in our local communities."

With these latest grants, Life Science Cares, the Biogen Foundation, and Alexandria reinforce their shared goals of creating an infrastructure so all kids have access to healthy food in Cambridge, Somerville, and beyond. Food For Free plans to use the funds to produce 1,000 boxes per week in their new East Cambridge food packing center and contracting another 2,000 through their partners the Boston Area Gleaners.

Life Science Cares has supported Food For Free's Family Meals program with grant funding and volunteer support since 2018. The additional $50,000 from the Biogen Foundation to combat food insecurity for children will support Food For Free's school backpack programs in 2021.

Life Science Cares will also recruit volunteers to help pack the Just Eats boxes in socially distanced volunteer shifts beginning February 24. Volunteers can register at http://boston.lsc.volunteerhub.com.

About Life Science Cares
Life Science Cares (LSC) is a collective effort of the life science industry connecting companies with nonprofits that improve the lives of people living in poverty in Greater Boston, Philadelphia, San Diego and the Bay Area. In Boston, LSC harnesses the sector's human and financial resources from companies and supports a portfolio of 27 nonprofit organizations. LSC's partner organizations work to address basic survival needs like food and shelter, improve education, and develop job skills that increase long term economic sustainability for the community's most vulnerable neighbors. For more information, visit: www.lifesciencecares.org.

About Biogen
At Biogen, our mission is clear: we are pioneers in neuroscience. Biogen discovers, develops and delivers worldwide innovative therapies for people living with serious neurological and neurodegenerative diseases as well as related therapeutic adjacencies. One of the world's first global

biotechnology companies, Biogen was founded in 1978 by Charles Weissmann, Heinz Schaller, Kenneth Murray and Nobel Prize winners Walter Gilbert and Phillip Sharp. Today Biogen has the leading portfolio of medicines to treat multiple sclerosis, has introduced the first approved treatment for spinal muscular atrophy, commercializes biosimilars of advanced biologics and is focused on advancing research programs in multiple sclerosis and neuroimmunology, Alzheimer's disease and dementia, neuromuscular disorders, movement disorders, ophthalmology, immunology, neurocognitive disorders, acute neurology and pain.

We routinely post information that may be important to investors on our website at www.biogen.com. To learn more, please visit www.biogen.com and follow us on social media – Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube.

About the Biogen Foundation
The Biogen Foundation supports access to science education and to essential human services for children and their families in the communities in which Biogen facilities are located. The Biogen Foundation is committed to sparking a passion for science and discovery, supporting effective science education initiatives and strengthening efforts to make science education and science careers accessible to diverse populations.

About Food For Free
Food For Free is a Cambridge-based, non-profit organization dedicated to providing the Greater Boston community with reliable access to fresh and nutritious food. Food For Free accomplishes its mission through food rescue, partnerships with schools, colleges, and community food programs, and our own direct service programs. In the last year, Food For Free distributed 3 million pounds of nutritious food to more than 30,000 people throughout Greater Boston. To learn more, please visit us at http://www.foodforfree.org/, or follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

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