



June 16, 2025

Acting Chief Ridle
Fort Pierce Police Department
920 South US Highway 1
Fort Pierce, FL 34950

Dear Chief Ridle,

I hope this letter finds you well. On behalf of Mustard Seed Ministries, I am reaching out to invite you and your department to partner with us in supporting families in crisis throughout St. Lucie County.

For the first time since the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report began tracking in Florida, the number of St. Lucie County households earning above the Federal Poverty Level but unable to afford basic living expenses has reached 51%. Despite working, these individuals and families often do not qualify for public assistance. This sobering milestone comes as no surprise to those of us working daily to meet our community's most basic needs.

Mustard Seed Ministries has served St. Lucie County residents in crisis for nearly 40 years through two food pantries, our Sarah's Kitchen hot meal program, and social services aimed at preventing homelessness and utility shutoffs. Our mission is to address immediate needs so families can stabilize and begin resolving the root causes of their crises. We serve over 22,500 unduplicated individuals each year and provide over 100,000 hot meals. Many of those meals were distributed to the youth participating in your excellent Courageous Kids program on Tuesday evenings. Our work is accomplished with a dedicated staff of 18 and a compassionate volunteer force of 150. Every person involved in our mission cares deeply for those who walk through Mustard Seed's doors seeking hope and help.

In the first quarter of 2025 alone, our food pantries experienced a 29% increase in visits — the majority from first-time clients. We hear repeatedly: "I've never had to ask for help before." The faces in our pantry lines reflect our community's workforce: teachers, healthcare workers, students, retail employees, and bank tellers. These families use the groceries they receive — shelf-stable foods, fresh produce, and frozen meats — to stretch their budgets and cover other critical expenses like rent, utilities, and transportation.



"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." - Matthew 17:20



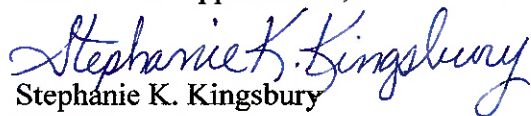
United Way of
St. Lucie & Okeechobee

With discussions underway about cuts to SNAP and disability benefits, the need will only continue to rise. Mustard Seed Ministries must be prepared to bridge those gaps and ensure no one in our community goes hungry. To help meet this growing demand, we respectfully request support from you and the Fort Pierce Police Department. Your leadership and generosity would mean so much to those we serve, as you play a vital role in ensuring the safety and well-being of our community. Funds from the Department would be used to continue the support of the Courageous Kids program, which I know offers children access to drug abuse education and helps create safe neighborhoods for our Fort Pierce children to grow and thrive.

We would also be honored to publicly recognize your support, showcasing the partnership between local law enforcement and community organizations working to strengthen St. Lucie County.

Thank you for considering this request and for your ongoing service to our community. I would welcome the opportunity to meet with you personally to discuss how we might collaborate to serve those who need us most. Please feel free to contact me directly at 772.465.6021 x106 or skingsbury@mustardseedslc.org. We are grateful for your leadership and your heart for our community.

With sincere appreciation,



Stephanie K. Kingsbury
Executive Director
Mustard Seed Ministries



"If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you." - Matthew 17:20



United Way of
St. Lucie & Okeechobee