

Feed The Need

Food Bank News

SUMMER 2010



Confronting the Statistics

An article recently appeared in newspapers across the country, written by a reporter from a national news service, about the sad fact that the eight-county Memphis metropolitan area ranks number one in food hardship, according to a poll conducted by the Gallup Organization for the Food Resource Action Center. An abbreviated version of the article is reprinted in this newsletter. The FRAC report confirmed what we already knew from our own hunger study, *Hunger in the Mid-South 2010*: an alarming number of people in our area are dealing with hunger and food insecurity. The problem is access.



Physical access if the grocery stores are far way, if the shopper is elderly or infirm or if public transportation is limited for those with no car. For some, there may also be fear because they live in a high crime neighborhood. In rural areas, there's the long trip over sparsely traveled roads.

But the larger problem is financial access – not enough money to buy healthy foods, which are, generally, more expensive than less healthy, high carbohydrate, fatty, sugary junk foods. Even with SNAP benefits (food stamps), there is just too much month left at the end of the money. Often people in these circumstances are the ones who seek help from our member food pantries, soup kitchens and other charitable feeding programs.

As we move into the summer months, we'll see a significant increase in the number of people coming to our agencies for help because children are out of school and, therefore, are not receiving the free or reduced-price breakfast and lunch they get during the school year. It can be tough for parents like Beverly, a mother of three who sees her expenses go up in the summer not only for food, but also she has to pay for child care. The food she gets from the food pantry at a church in her neighborhood is what keeps healthy food on the table for the summer. And she is so very grateful.

But you can help by supporting Mid-South Food Bank in our fight against hunger and food insecurity in our community. While we never discourage anyone from collecting non-perishable food for us, remember that by sending a check you are giving so much more because we can purchase \$4.18 worth of food for every dollar you give. Thank you for your caring and generosity.

Susan Sanford
President & CEO

Volunteers Earn the Spotlight

In 2009, nearly 3,000 volunteers donated 20,000 hours to Mid-South Food Bank. These volunteers sort and pack food in our warehouse, fill bags with food for the Backpack Program, help serve meals at Kids Cafes, and help with a variety of tasks in our pantry, office and at special events. In April, Mid-South Food Bank recognized the contributions of those volunteers at the Volunteer Stars event, held at the beautiful Water Works courtyard, thanks to the Palladio Group.



The Volunteer Company of the Year was FedEx EFP, with 195 total volunteer hours given.



Fullview Baptist Church was named the Faith-Based Organization of the Year. Members of the church volunteered 240 hours of service.



Shelley Camardese was the Operation Feed Volunteer of the Year for her work on the Steering Committee and at her company, Cummins Mid-South, which won awards for Most Points per Capita in their division and Most Points Overall as well as the Most Creative Campaign Award in 2009. Shelley is shown here with David Stephens, Food Bank vice president, community relations, and Susan Sanford, president & CEO.



City University School of Liberal Arts was named Volunteer School of the Year. Students gave 513 hours of volunteer service. Students worked in the warehouse, pantry and were especially vital to the success of the Action News 5 Holiday Food Drive.



The Junior League of Memphis, with 184 volunteer hours, was named Community Group Volunteer of the Year. Junior League volunteers fill bags with wholesome food for our backpack program every week.



Named for dedicated Mid-South Food Bank past board chairman and exemplary supporter James H. Prentiss, the Lifetime Achievement Award went to Nat Baxter. For many years, Nat has spent countless hours traveling around the area, stopping at participating grocery stores to restock the Feed the Need scan cards. Nat makes sure each display has cards and looks good. The Feed the Need scan card program is an important fundraiser for the Food Bank and Nat's contribution to keeping it fresh makes a big difference. Nat is also the founder of the Food Bank Golf Classic.



David Hayes was recognized as the Individual Volunteer of the Year. David gave 67 hours of volunteer service at our warehouse on Heistan Place, sorting and repacking food and helping with whatever tasks needed to be done.

Amid Recession, Memphis Becomes America's Hunger Capital

By Shashank Bengali | McClatchy-Tribune Newspapers
Used by permission

It wasn't long ago that Rachel Cales volunteered at her church's food pantry, bagging canned goods and emergency provisions for families that had fallen on hard times. Last May, however, Cales lost her job managing a yogurt shop. Her elder daughter was about to be married and her two teenage children were living at home and looking for work. Suddenly, she couldn't afford the groceries her family needed, and she had to turn to the pantry for help.

"I never thought we'd have to ask anyone for food," said Cales, who lives on a tree-lined street in eastern Memphis, in a two-story house with prim blue shutters.

She's far from alone. This Southern city, long famous for blues and barbecue, has earned a grim new distinction: the hunger capital of the United States.

As more and more Americans struggle to pay their bills, a recent survey co-sponsored by Gallup found that 26 percent of people in greater Memphis couldn't afford to buy the food their families needed at some point over the previous 12 months, the highest rate in the nation. The nationwide recession has compounded the region's economic woes, which experts say stem from the steady decline of family farms, a shortage of skilled workers and few major employers. Slammed with job losses, many middle-class families such as the Caleses find themselves forced to choose whether to pay their house, car, utilities and medical bills — or buy groceries.

Cales never thought she'd be in her position. She and her husband, Donald, bought their home seven years ago and felt comfortable enough to spring for a few creature comforts: a big-screen TV, the premium cable package. While her husband's job as a truck driver covered most of the family's bills, over three years Cales worked her way up to become the manager of a TCBY yogurt shop. Her \$13.50 hourly wage gave the family a slight financial cushion, but last May the owner came in and told Cales that her position was being eliminated.

Now the premium cable is gone. Cales and her husband shopped around and found a cheaper car insurance policy. Every Friday after he's paid, they huddle around a computer and pay their bills, hoping there's some cash left over.

"Groceries are always last on the list," Cales said. "We pay our house note, pay the bills, get all that stuff out of the way, and sometimes there's just not enough left."

There's always something in the cupboard at home — pasta, maybe, or some instant meals — but when there isn't money for fresh meat and produce, Cales visits the food pantry at her church, Raleigh Assembly of God. Her husband was reluctant to ask for help at first. Even now, Cales won't take a full bag of free groceries, like the ones she used to pack as a volunteer. She takes just enough to get the family through until her husband's next payday.

"What we know from studying earlier recessions is that unemployment is a lagging indicator ... and poverty lags unemployment by one or two years at a minimum," said Elaine Waxman, the director of social policy research for Feeding America. "We're not likely to get back to the poverty rates we saw pre-recession for at least the next 10 years."

One of the city's "new hungry" is Debra Williams, 45, who was laid off from her job as a school janitor last May after eight years. She lives with her husband and two children in a single-story frame house with a patchy lawn and a rusting Mazda sedan parked in the driveway, its left taillight busted. Her husband's steel factory job pays \$400 per week — barely enough to cover their bills — and they don't qualify for government assistance, she said.

She started visiting church food pantries on weeks that their money ran out. She and the children don't have health insurance and haven't seen a doctor in more than a year, so she's tried to ensure that the family eats healthfully: cooking at home almost every night, meat whenever possible and not skipping meals.

As she searches the want ads fruitlessly, there's one bright spot: Her 16-year-old son, Jordan, just started a job as a cashier at a McDonald's, working after school and on weekends. Whatever he earns he'll keep for himself, Williams said; she'd rather he learn how to manage his own finances. The family will continue to scrape by with help from their church.

"We're living day by day," Williams said, wiping away a tear.

Students Show the Way with KIDS KAN

Students from Memphis City Schools, Shelby County Schools and Memphis Catholic Diocese Schools showed that kids really can make a difference with the 24th annual KIDS KAN school food drive. Sponsored by Kroger, KIDS KAN students in 121 elementary and middle schools collected 227,294 pounds of food and \$21,000.



Bellevue Middle School collected the most food overall and was first among city schools for the 18th year in a row. For the county schools, the winner was Germantown Elementary. Among Catholic schools, the winner was St. Benedict at Auburndale.

The food is distributed to Mid-South Food Bank's network of more than 300 charitable feeding programs in west Tennessee, north Mississippi and east Arkansas. Kroger was the lead sponsor of KIDS KAN, as they have been every year. Other sponsors were FedEx, Fox13, KIX106, Comtrak Logistics, and Wendy's. KIDS KAN is an opportunity for children to learn about the problem of hunger in our area and to feel that they are doing something to fight it with their donations. More than one-third of all the people who rely on emergency food from Mid-South Food Bank are children.

Letter Carriers "Stamp Out Hunger"

On Saturday, May 8, the 18th annual National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) "Stamp Out Hunger" Food Drive collected more than 136,000 pounds of food in Memphis and the surrounding area including Union City, Covington and Jackson, Tennessee. The local NALC Chapter added a \$500 contribution to Mid-South Food Bank. Several Schnucks stores also had special collection bins set up for donations. Other sponsors included the United States Postal Service, Val-Pak, AFL-CIO and Campbell's Soup Company.



THANKS

Cargill Incorporated recently donated \$10,000 to Mid-South Food Bank, designated for purchase of wholesome food. Because of the decrease in donated food, the Food Bank now purchases more than a million pounds of high nutritional value foods every year. For every dollar donated, the Food Bank can distribute \$4.18 worth of food.



Chris Foeller, Danae Gigstad and Matt McLeane present the Cargill check to Estella Mayhue-Greer, Food Bank Senior Vice President & COO

Smithfield Foods, along with their spokesperson, **Paula Deen**, donated a truckload of Smithfield products equivalent to 150,000 servings of protein to

Mid-South Food Bank as part of the "Feeding the Hungry" program sponsored by Smithfield, Kroger and the United Food and Commercial Workers.



Paula Deen with the Food Bank staff

Mid-South Food Bank received a grant of \$20,000 from the **Nationwide Insurance Foundation**. The Food Bank is receiving the funds as part of a \$750,000 donation being made to the national office of Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger relief organization, and 19 of its member food banks in communities where Nationwide Insurance associates live and work.

Golf for the Food Bank



The Mid-South Food Bank Golf Classic presented by AutoZone and Kroger is set for September 17, 2010, at the beautiful Links at Galloway. There are sponsorship opportunities and player opportunities available now. Contact David Stephens, vice president of community relations, at 901-497-1153 or dstephens@midsouthfoodbank.org.



Sponsorship Opportunities

Cart Sponsorship - \$ 1,500

Your company name/logo on the front of carts
Two teams of four players

Scoring Sponsorship - \$1,000

Your company name/logo on 100 score cards and banner at scoreboard area
One team of four players

Hospitality Cart Sponsorship - \$750

Signage on the hospitality cart & refreshment stands at holes 1 & 10
One team of four players

Putting Contest Sponsor - \$300

Four Closest to the Pin Sponsors - \$300 each

Signage at designated contest area
Two positions on a team

Hole Sponsorships

18 holes available at \$100 per sign/hole

Team of Four - \$500 Individual Player - \$150

Entry fee includes
Welcome Lunch
Food Bank golf shirt
One sleeve of golf balls
Golf tees
Goodie bag with lots of surprises
Free beverages
A great round of golf at the Links at Galloway