

Feed The Need

Food Bank News

WINTER 2009



Hunger Around Us

The numbers recently released by the U.S.

Department of Agriculture about the pervasiveness of hunger in our nation paint a particularly bleak picture. Forty-nine million Americans, including 16.7 million children are food insecure. The number of individuals who are food insecure increased 36 percent over 2007. There are 17.3 million individuals with very low food security – meaning they could suffer from hunger any day – an increase of 45 percent since 2007. This is the largest increase in food insecurity ever reported by the USDA. I've never seen such dire conditions.



Approximately 18 percent of the population in Tennessee, and 24 percent in Mississippi turn to food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters each year. As unprecedented and sobering as these numbers are, statistics and generalizations offer just a glimpse of the escalating human crisis and don't do justice to the individual people and families in our community dealing with the painful reality of hunger and food insecurity every day.

Stories of individuals and families struggling with hunger are right here in our backyard and they're all too real. Stories of jobs eliminated in Dyer County, where more than 700 people turned up to receive food at the Food Bank's recent mobile pantry distribution. Or the elderly woman who began to cry when she saw the frozen meat she could get at our mobile pantry in Marion, Arkansas. And the people laid off from their jobs who come to the Food Bank, not knowing that we don't feed individuals. As these stories suggest, it can happen to almost anyone. And it happens to people you know.

Hunger in the Mid-South is a solvable crisis that requires conversation, commitment, leadership and partnership at all levels. Nationally, the private sector is playing a greater role, serving as a leading force in the fight against hunger. The ability to reach millions and engage the public in becoming part of the solution to hunger is vital. Locally, we are calling on individuals at all levels to follow suit and become more actively involved in helping eradicate hunger.

There is both a moral obligation and an economic imperative for public and private sectors to work side by side to build a bridge for those who are facing hunger today and those who may be affected down the road. We must be willing to share responsibilities and resources to achieve sustained results in reducing and preventing hunger and food insecurity. Please help as much as you can.

Mid-South Food Bank Recognizes Hunger Action Month in September

In September, Mid-South Food Bank joined Feeding America and its member food banks for national Hunger Action Month with events and volunteer opportunities to raise support for the thousands of individuals facing hunger in our community. The theme was "Give a Little, Feed a Lot."



Fred Jones, founder of the Southern Heritage Classic, thanks Tyson Foods for their generous donation to Mid-South Food Bank.

Hunger Action Month kicked off with Tyson Foods' Southern Heritage Classic donation of a truckload (approximately 40,000 pounds) of high-quality chicken products to Mid-South Food Bank. City Council members and Fred Jones of the Southern Heritage Classic joined Susan Sanford and the rest of the Food Bank to thank Tyson for their generosity. This is the fourth year Tyson has made the donation to Mid-South Food Bank in honor of the Southern

Heritage Classic and Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU). This year, Tyson followed it up with the Southern Heritage Classic Tailgate Food Drive at the Liberty Bowl parking lot.

The Hunger Action "Fill the Truck" Food Drive in Poplar Plaza Shopping Center allowed the public to bring

Kids from Campus School brought food they collected for Hunger Action Month.



nonperishable food items to fill up an 18-wheeler. Kroger, Fox 13 and KIX 106 sponsored the event. It was part of the Hunger Action Weekend, sponsored by the Memphis Restaurant Association, which featured participating restaurants as drop-off locations for non-perishable food items and monetary donations.



Macy's introduced its Come Together Campaign inviting the public to embrace the cause of fighting hunger by hosting special dinners in their homes, asking guests to pledge a donation to Feeding America/Mid-South

Food Bank. Macy's matched these donations dollar for dollar. Macy's Culinary Council held a special event featuring Chef Carla Hall from TV's *Top Chef* and Gina and Pat Neely from Food Network's *Down Home with the Neely's* at Macy's Oak Court. Finally, Mid-South Food Bank and some of its member agencies sold Macy's "Shop for a Cause" discount vouchers for \$5 each. More than \$3,000 was raised by the Come Together Campaign.

The month concluded with the AutoZone Food Bank Golf Classic. Unfortunately, a torrential rain kept the golfers off the course, but they enjoyed the great barbecue from



Corky's and put their names in the hat to win the door prizes anyway. Even with the rain, the golf tournament raised more than \$14,000.

High Schools Fight Hunger with Student Food Drive 2009

Mid-South Food Bank kicked off the high school-based Student Food Drive with a Halloween motif at the Food Bank warehouse. Thirty-two local high schools planned and organized their food drives, held events and contests to promote the drives, and packaged and delivered the food to the Food Bank. More than 71,000 pounds of food were collected. The Student Food Drive is sponsored nationally by Tyson Foods and Feeding America. Local sponsors are WMC-TV 5, Kroger, Paragon Bank, ESPN Radio and Victory Packaging. Mark Prestidge, president of Kroger Delta Marketing Area, served as the drive chairman.



Students from St. Benedict at Auburndale are joined by a "guest ghoul" at the Student Food Drive kick off. St. Benedict was the number one school for the third year in a row.

Participating Schools

Booker T. Washington High School	Melrose High School
Briarcrest Christian High School	Memphis Catholic High School
Christian Brothers High School	Memphis University School
Concord Academy	Northside High School
Craigmont High School	Overton High School
DeSoto Central High School	Raleigh Egypt High School
Douglas High School	Treadwell Middle School
East High School	Southwind High School
Evangelical Christian School	St. Agnes Academy
Fairley High School	St. Benedict at Auburndale
Frayser High School	St. George's Independent School
Harding Academy	White Station High School
Kingsbury High School	Wooddale High School
Lausanne Collegiate School	Word of Faith Christian Academy

Unilever Sponsors New Food for Kids Backpack Program

The 12th Food for Kids Backpack Program kicked off in November at Children & Family Services in Covington, Tennessee. Sponsored by a grant from the Unilever Foundation, the program enables Mid-South Food Bank to distribute backpacks filled with nutritious, child-friendly food to more than 100 children living at risk of hunger in Tipton County.

"Unilever in Covington is a long-time supporter of Mid-South Food Bank with both food and monetary donations. We are so grateful for this donation from the Unilever Foundation and their continued efforts to help us feed hungry and needy people in the communities where their employees live and work," said Susan Sanford, president & CEO of Mid-South Food Bank. In addition to the grant for the backpack program, Unilever also made a \$6,500 contribution to the Food Bank.



A special guest at the Unilever backpack program kick-off was Kevin Saslawsky, who chose the backpack program as a service project for his Bar Mitzvah. Kevin asked relatives and friends to donate food to the backpack program, furnished the bags and filled them, then donated them to Mid-South Food Bank.

Mid-South Food Bank's other Food for Kids Backpack Programs are in Memphis and north Mississippi. This is the first program in Tipton County.

Kevin Saslawsky (center) with the kids and their backpacks in Covington.

Eye-Catching Truck from Walmart Enhances Food Bank Fleet

Walmart and the Walmart Foundation continued the "Walmart Gives Back" campaign with the donation of a 24-foot refrigerated truck to Mid-South Food Bank. The truck is one of 35 trucks given to Feeding America member food banks across the country through a competitive grant process. In addition to the truck, Walmart also donated 12 pallets of food and grocery items to Mid-South Food Bank, including Great Value-brand peanut butter, vegetables, paper products and fresh apples.

Valued at \$85,000, the new truck will be used for retail donation pickups, including local Walmart, Kroger and other stores. Retail store pickups have become a significant source of food for Mid-South Food Bank in the last year.



Local Walmart managers and associates join Mid-South Food Bank to celebrate the new Walmart truck.

Action News 5 Holiday Food Drive Stars Again

For the third year, Action News 5 spearheaded the largest one-day food drive of the year. The Holiday Food Drive collected more than 57,000 pounds of food and \$40,600 while broadcasting live throughout the day from Mid-South Food Bank and five Kroger stores around the Mid-South. Whether it was Joe Birch in the early morning at the Food Bank in Midtown, Dave Brown at noon at Kroger in Cordova or the end of the day with Andy Wise at Kroger in Bartlett, generous Mid-Southerners came by to drop off donations in a steady stream all day long. Businesses held food drives and brought their donations in boxes and bags. Some organizations took up collections and brought checks to present. All the money will be used to purchase food for distribution to Mid-South Food Bank's member agencies.



(front l to r) Felicia Hartsfield, COO, City University School, WMC-TV weatherman Ron Childers, Susan Sanford and WMC-TV General Manager Lee Meredith present a certificate of appreciation to the volunteers from City University School, who have helped collect food and funds at the Holiday Food Drive for all three years.

Mobile Pantry Takes Off

Last month in Dyer County, hundreds of people in need came out for Mid-South Food Bank's largest mobile pantry distribution to date. Four truckloads, with more than 60,000 pounds of food were delivered to the National Guard Armory in Dyersburg. Coordinated by the Salvation Army, with help from the Dyersburg Noon Rotary Club, all recipients had been pre-screened and had vouchers to receive the food. More than 100 volunteers were on hand to help with the well-organized distribution.

"Our goal is to make sure that we distribute no less than 30 pounds of food annually per person in poverty," said Estella Mayhue-Greer, chief operating officer of Mid-South Food Bank. "We were looking at the numbers in Dyer County, and the amount of food that was being distributed from our two agencies was not adequate so the mobile pantry was scheduled."

More than 186,000 pounds of food have been distributed through the mobile pantry since its inception in September. The program is designed to

reach those counties in Mid-South Food Bank's service area that are underserved, according to a report designed by Feeding America. Using the formula of 30 pounds of food per person in poverty, the Food Bank is able to identify those areas where not enough food is available through its network of food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other agencies. The mobile pantry features wholesome food, with an emphasis on perishable products such as fresh produce and bakery items, but also dry products including canned goods, snacks, condiments and other items from the Food Bank warehouse. One feature of the mobile pantry distribution is boxes of specially packaged USDA foods for distribution in Tennessee only. Each box contains a variety of USDA commodities.

Mid-South Food Bank is currently seeking sponsorship of the mobile pantry program so that it can continue in 2010. For more information, contact Susan Sanford, 901-527-0841 or ssanford@midsouthfoodbank.org.

President Obama's Call to Action: *Feed a Neighbor*

President Obama has issued a special call to action to support food banks in light of the recent USDA food insecurity report that 49 million Americans are struggling with hunger. The President, in conjunction with the Corporation for National and Community Service and USDA, is asking all Americans to "Feed a Neighbor" by supporting their local food banks. There are three ways to get involved: donate, advocate and volunteer.

Visit www.serve.gov, to learn more about the initiative. The Feed a Neighbor call to action has a special code that will designate Mid-South Food Bank for donations from any donor in our service area by zip code. Those who want more information about volunteering or becoming hunger advocates can also get information at the web site.

THANKS



Cargill presented Susan Sanford with a check for continued sponsorship of their **Food for Kids Backpack Program**. Susan is shown with facility manager J. J. Zmudzinski (right) and several of the volunteers from Cargill who fill backpacks at the Food Bank every week.

Girls Incorporated of Memphis held a "Trick or Treat for Others to Eat" food drive at Halloween and delivered more than 1,500 pounds and \$500 to Mid-South Food Bank. Shown with Susan are Girls Inc. Executive Director Deborah Hester Harrison and staffers Netisha Burnett, Dory Lerner and Simone Blackiston.



A food and funds drive before a recent **Memphis Grizzlies** home game collected 309 pounds of food and \$1,024.



Downtown Elementary School held a food drive and collected 658 pounds of food. Here's Susan again; this time with Principal Marcia Wunderlich and teacher Michelle McKissack.



Omega Psi Phi fraternity once again donated more than 20 frozen turkeys to Mid-South Food Bank just in time for Thanksgiving.



Mid-South Food Bank recently received major grant funds from the **American Recovery and Reinvestment Act** through the **State of Tennessee, Shelby County Government** and the **Southwest Human Resource Agency**.