

Feed The Need

Food Bank News

SPRING 2009



Ready for the New Year

Susan H. Sanford, President & CEO

In his first nationally-broadcast press conference, President Barack Obama cited the nation's increasing hunger crisis. One in eight people in this nation of plenty live in food-insecure households. The President said, "Local TV stations have started running public service announcements that tell people where to find food banks, even as the food banks don't have enough to meet the demand."



We are so pleased that President Obama made special mention of the current hunger crisis in America today. As a result of his remarks, here in the Mid-South, we are seeing many new faces volunteering to help at our member food pantries and soup kitchens. Volunteering is essential as are operating funds and contributions to purchase food. We are in the midst of the worst poverty since 1945. And in mid-February, the number of Americans filing for unemployment benefits hit a record high of almost 5,000,000 a week. Statistics of dire proportions hold true for our area also. Between 2007 and 2008, Mid-South Food Bank has seen a 35 percent increase in food pantry use in Shelby County and a 21.4 percent increase in pantries in our whole service area.

The recession and continued job losses are expected to increase through 2009. But with your extra help this year and Mid-South Food Bank's experience and knowledge, we know that we can meet the challenge. March and April present the first opportunity to stretch your donation through the Feinstein Challenge. Then food and funds drives like Kids Kan, Stamp Out Hunger and Operation Feed give everyone a chance to help. I ask that you continue to join us to fight hunger in 2009. It's not going to be easy, but together, we will make a difference in the lives of hungry and needy people.

Economic Recovery and Reinvestment Act Helps Hunger Relief

The economic relief bill signed by President Obama represents a step forward in the fight against hunger. Included are increased funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). The bill's increases for SNAP are larger than the Farm Bill, and the additional funding for TEFAP will help meet the increased food needs that food banks see every day.

Other nutrition funding in the bill that benefits low-income Americans include additional funds for the Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) and for the Emergency Food and Shelter Program under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to assist organizations that provide emergency services, including food banks.

Part of the mission of Mid-South Food Bank is to advocate on behalf of hungry people. President & CEO Susan Sanford, along with board members and other local hunger advocates, communicated with elected officials to request that these provisions be included in the economic stimulus package. Hunger is a symptom, not a cause, so this help for hungry and needy people enables them to overcome the challenges they face and is essential to the overall recovery effort.

School Children Fight Hunger with KIDS KAN



Mid-South elementary and middle school students showed that kids really can make a difference with the 23rd annual KIDS KAN school food drive, sponsored annually by Kroger. KIDS KAN students collect thousands of pounds of food each year.

FOX13 produced PSAs that ran for a four-week period leading up to and during KIDS KAN, which was the last week of February. FM100, FedEx, Wendy's and COMTRAK Logistics also supported the drive.

Children account for more than one-third of all people who rely on emergency food from Mid-South Food Bank and their numbers served at emergency food pantries increased by 18 percent from 2007 to 2008. KIDS KAN is an opportunity for all children to learn about the problem of hunger in our area and to feel that they are doing something to help through their food donations.

Second Annual Action News 5 Holiday Food Drive a Huge Success

For the second year, Action News 5 personalities, Mid-South Food Bank staff and volunteers braved a cold, wet December day that started at 5:30 a.m. and lasted until 6:30 p.m. to collect more than 71,000 pounds of food, plus more than \$30,000 in cash contributions, which was used to purchase food. Add to that a \$25,000 contribution from Kroger and it equals 226,175 pounds of food, far exceeding the 200,000 pound goal and beating last year's total of 151,000 pounds.

The partnership between Mid-South Food Bank and WMC-TV included news stories about Food Bank member agencies feeding hungry people and commercials for the drive promoting it for weeks. On the day of the drive, live broadcasts from six locations throughout the Mid-South saw Joe Birch, Kym Clark, Dave Brown and others collecting food along with some special guests like Shelby County Mayor A C Wharton, Covington Mayor David Gordon and even Santa Claus.

For Mid-South Food Bank, which serves hundreds of agencies in 31 counties, surplus donated food has decreased while demand for food assistance grows. This is at the same time that the Tennessee Department of Human Services report 15 percent more families are receiving food stamps. The Action News 5 Holiday Food Drive made a big impact.



HUNGER — IN — AMERICA 2009

Feeding America (formerly America's Second Harvest) and its members, including Mid-South Food Bank, aims to conduct extensive research into the distribution of food assistance services to low-income Americans through its comprehensive network of agencies. *Hunger in America 2009* and the local information, *Hunger in the Mid-South 2009*, will provide authoritative, comprehensive, and statistically valid demographic profiles of households seeking food assistance at emergency food providers, including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. This research documenting the prevalence of domestic hunger will provide an in-depth study of the scope of the hunger problem, why low-income people utilize private non-profit organizations for hunger relief, and the general state of private hunger relief agencies that provide food assistance through the Feeding America network.

This study is unique in that it surveys charitable relief organizations from across the country, and the clients who access services, determining why recipients need charitable assistance, measuring their food security status, and the material hardships they face. This study enables us to more effectively quantify the needs in our community and analyze our capacity to meet those needs. *Hunger in America 2009* and *Hunger in the Mid-South 2009* will provide statistically valid information for management, advocacy, policy, and community information efforts. *Hunger in America 2009* is the fifth national hunger study conducted by Feeding America and its member food banks.

Volunteers Needed Now!

Mid-South Food Bank is sending out a call for volunteers to help sort and repack food in our warehouse to get it ready for distribution to Mid-South Food Bank member agencies that feed hungry and needy people in west Tennessee, north Mississippi and east Arkansas. Individuals or groups are needed Monday through Friday any time from 7:30 a.m. through 4:30 p.m.. Groups of 10 or more may also schedule times on Saturday or Sunday. Children age 10 and up may volunteer if accompanied by adults. Children 13 and up can volunteer without adults. To volunteer, contact Alicia White or David Stephens, 901-527-0841 or go to our web site, www.midsouthfoodbank.org and click on How To Help.



Maximize Your Donations During the Feinstein Challenge

Make a contribution to The Food Bank from March 1—April 30 during the Alan Shawn Feinstein Foundation \$1 Million Challenge and your money will be matched on a percentage basis. The more money donated during the Challenge, the more Mid-South Food Bank receives from the Feinstein Foundation. Last year, the Feinstein donations was more than \$22,000.

Alan Shawn Feinstein is a Rhode Island philanthropist who, for the 12th year, is giving \$1 million to hunger-relief organizations in the biggest grassroots campaign to fight hunger in the nation. Many contributors to Mid-South Food Bank have made it a habit to give as large a gift as they can during this time, knowing that they are leveraging their dollars to feed hungry and needy people.

Donations can be mailed to Mid-South Food Bank at 239 S. Dudley St., Memphis, Tennessee 38104 or made online at www.midsouthfoodbank.org. For more information on the Alan Shawn Feinstein \$1 Million Challenge, log on to www.feinsteinfoundation.org.



It's Not Too Early!

Operation Feed, the workplace food drive, is May 11 through June 19. Get your company involved in the largest food drive of the year. Contact David Stephens, 901-527-0841 or dstephens@midsouthfoodbank.org.

THANKS

The Junior League of Memphis awarded Mid-South Food Bank a grant of \$13,500 for 2009 – 2010 sponsorship of their Food for Kids Backpack Program at the Lucille Devore Tucker and Mertie Buckman Wing at Girls Incorporated of Memphis. Dedicated Junior League volunteers fill backpacks at the Food Bank every week. This is the third year The Junior League has sponsored a backpack program.

Memphis University School, Hutchison School, Lausanne Collegiate School and St. Mary's Episcopal School joined together for the 2008 "Gobble Gala" and raised \$5,000 for Mid-South Food Bank.

The Harrah's Foundation gave \$3,500 for support of the Food for Kids Backpack Program at the Boys & Girls Club in Sardis, Mississippi.

During the holiday season, generous Mid-Southerners held more than 80 food drives for Mid-South Food Bank, collecting much-needed food and funds. From a Sunday school class to an office project to a birthday bash, people collected food to help feed hungry people in the Mid-South. Community food drives supply approximately 10 percent of the food distributed by Mid-South Food Bank. For information on how to have a successful food drive, go our web site for a list of most-needed items and a downloadable how-to brochure, www.midsouthfoodbank.org.



FOX 13 Vice President & General Manager John Koski holds a plaque honoring FOX 13's contributions to Mid-South Food Bank through its support of Kids Kan, Operation Feed, the Good Morning Memphis Summer Tour and Hunger Action Day. Koski is also a Food Bank board member.



Mid-South Food Bank was recognized recently as the 2008 Non-Profit Organization of the Year by the Community Foundation of Northwest Mississippi



Penny Aviotti and Kim Cherry (seated) of the First Tennessee Foundation present a check for \$20,000 to Mid-South Food Bank President & CEO Susan Sanford and Senior Vice President and COO Estella Mayhue-Greer.