



Harry Chapin Food Bank OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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Newsletter — Fall 2011



As Holidays Near, Publix Gets Ready for Food Drive

When you shop, remember those in your community who are most at-risk — children, families and seniors. Please give what you can!

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WGCU, Walmart Team up Again to Support Food Bank

Hopes are high that WGCU's Fall Radio Membership Drive eclipses past efforts. This will be the third year WGCU Public Media, the Walmart Foundation and the Harry Chapin Food Bank partner during the drive. In 2009, The Walmart Foundation matched 10 percent of funds raised by WGCU to donate \$15,000 to the Food Bank. Last year the donation was \$18,500. This year, "Feed Public Radio... Feed a Family" will support a program match of \$16,000. So tune to 90.1/91.7 FM from October 17 to 28 to make your donation.



Children Have Most to Gain In Struggle to Combat Hunger

For some children, back to school means more food to eat.

Nearly two-thirds of students in the five counties of Southwest Florida receive free or reduced-cost meals. Yet at the end of the day, these children and their families face hunger at home.

People around the United States heard that message in late August, as ABC featured reports from its series *Hunger at Home: Crisis in America*. "Nightline" visited the Harry Chapin Food Bank, where President and CEO Al Brislain pointed to a dramatic increase in clients over the past few years. The show turned its spotlight on Don Orange, who visited the Food Bank's partner agency Bonita Springs Assistance Office Food Pantry for help in feeding his two daughters. Unemployment payments ended in April for this former manager of five shoe stores. "We wonder day to day where money will come from," he said. For now, the food pantry is his lifeline.

Behind these faces of hunger are devastating statistics. Nationally and locally, one in four households with children are hungry. Anti-hunger organization Food Research and Action Center ranked Cape Coral-Fort Myers 20th among metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in 2009-2010 with the highest rate of food hardship in households with children.

In Florida, 1.1 million children are food insecure, according to Feeding America's "Map the Meal Gap 2011." In Congressional District 14 alone, the number is 31 percent — 48,350 children.

The Harry Chapin Food Bank is committed to keeping them fed!

Charlotte Agencies Meet Across the Table To Improve Food Access for Clients

On August 15, the Harry Chapin Food Bank's Mobile Food Pantry drew up to St. Vincent de Paul-Punta Gorda loaded with food. Two hours later, thousands of pounds of fresh produce and food were in the hands of seniors, children and families.

On August 24, more than 100 people showed up for dinner at the Homeless Coalition of Charlotte County, which relies on the Food Bank for 40 percent of its food.

On September 28, as part of Days of Caring, United Way volunteers packaged beans and rice that the Food Bank provided at Charlotte HIV/AIDS People Support, Inc. (C.H.A.P.S.).

These are difficult times for many in Charlotte County, where 27 nonprofit food pantries and community service organizations received 1.7 million pounds of food from the Food Bank in fiscal year 2010-

2011. That's nearly three times what they received three years ago.

These partner organizations of the Food Bank, though, have a secret weapon. They meet quarterly through the efforts of Suzanne Foster, the Food Bank's Agency Relations Manager, and the exchange is improving the entire process of distributing food. At a recent meeting, for example, they tackled the issue of getting more fresh produce onto delivery trucks.

"The numbers of those in need keep growing," said Mercie Chick, C.H.A.P.S. vice president and pantry manager. For more than a decade, C.H.A.P.S. has been a "choice" pantry for its clients, who are referred by the county health department. As their immune systems change from month to month, so do their food needs. A

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Charlotte County agencies collaborate to improve the entire food distribution process.

For every \$1 donation, the Food Bank can source and distribute \$6 worth of food! Please give generously!



Harry Chapin Food Bank OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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www.harrychapinfoodbank.org

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Call to Action Delivers 45 New Volunteers

Hunger doesn't stop for summer, nor does the need for volunteers.

Hundreds of thousands of pounds of food pour into the Harry Chapin Food Bank warehouse following the annual Letter Carriers' drive in May just when snowbirds who volunteer in high season for the Food Bank leave Southwest Florida behind.

So it was especially gratifying when readers of the Fort Myers News-Press were quick to respond to articles, along with ads from the Food Bank, calling for summer volunteers. More than 45 new volunteers signed on, and volunteer hours in June and July increased 34 percent. *(The Food Bank thanks the News-Press for providing advertising space at no charge!)*

Dominick and Janice Aquila took the call to heart. The two moved to Lehigh Acres four years ago from Washington, D.C., where Janice retired from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Although Dominick is looking for a job now, the ad convinced them it was important to volunteer. Dominick

picked up the phone and called the Food Bank the very next day.

"Working at the Harry Chapin Food Bank is a way we can help others. My sister in Ohio has been out of work for four years. With two children at home, she gets help from her local food bank," Janice explained.

The couple volunteers on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Janice cleans and sorts donated food, making sure cans, bottles, and boxes are within code. These are then sorted into boxes, which are weighed and put into pallets. Dominick helps move those pallets around the warehouse. "The big guys do the heavy lifting," she laughed. "All the volunteers are really great, and they all work hard!"



Food Bank volunteers Dominick and Janice Aquila on the job.

Join the Harry Chapin Food Bank team of dedicated volunteers! And students, earn your Community Service Learning credit hours by volunteering. Call Bedzaida Bryen at 334-7007 x141.

Save the Date: Senior Hunger Summit, October 26, Florida Gulf Coast University, 8:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. Call 334-7007

Grants Provide \$210,475 to Food Bank

The Harry Chapin Food Bank recognizes the following grants:

Chico's Foundation: \$3,000

**Sanibel Congregational United Church of Christ/
Mission and Benevolence Committee: \$8,000**

United Way of Collier County: \$48,400

United Way of Hendry and Glades Counties: \$6,000

United Way of Lee County: \$116,325

Walmart Foundation (hunger relief): \$3,750

Walmart Foundation (state giving): \$25,000

(6/1/11 - 8/15/11)

Our Mission...To overcome hunger in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties through education and by working in a cooperative effort with affiliated agencies in the procurement and distribution of food, equitably and without discrimination.



Find the Food Bank on Facebook

WINK News Feeds Families Hunger Walk Sets \$250,000 Goal

A quarter of a million dollars is a big goal. But after raising \$225,000 last year, the 4th annual WINK News Feeds Families Hunger Walk at Miromar Outlets in Estero is pumped to break records again.

Panera Bread returns as presenting sponsor at \$15,000, and takes the lead in

the business community with its support for this year's walk, which will take place on Saturday, January 21, 2012. Walkers look forward to Panera's tent with an assortment of delicious pastries. Co-chairs are Alexander "Sandy" Robinson, President, Northern Trust NA, and Dr. Brian Schwartz, M.D., 21st Century Oncology and Florida Urology Physicians.

"While the Food Bank was able to increase food distribution more than 30 percent over 2010, an analysis of the

five-county area in Southwest Florida shows an unmet need for 113,000 people each month — almost 40 percent of them children," said Robinson. "Community support for the Hunger Walk will help us reach those 45,000 children."

Businesses interested in becoming a sponsor, forming walking teams, or providing additional support for the event should contact Marta Hodson, 334-7007, x132, or e-mail martahodson@harrychapinfoodbank.org.

Sweetbay's PB&J Jars Ease Summer Hunger



Sweetbay Supermarkets in Lee and Collier Counties delivered more than 4,000 jars of peanut butter and jelly to the Harry Chapin Food Bank thanks to a week-long promotion this past June. Customers left 2,040 jars of peanut butter and jelly in bins at the front of the stores; Sweetbay doubled that amount. (Photo l-r) Joyce Jacobs, Associate Director of the Harry Chapin Food Bank; Store Manager Beth Brawn and Assistant Manager Charles Seitz from the Mission Square Sweetbay Supermarket on Premier Way in Naples.

**Did you know you can donate securely online?
It's fast and easy!
www.harrychapinfoodbank.org/donate.html**

Diabetes Awareness, Cooking Demos Extend Mobile Food Pantries' Reach

A \$50,000 grant from Jane's Trust joins the fight against diabetes with the Harry Chapin Food Bank's mobile pantry distribution. The grant funds a "Food for Life" program that delivers information and assistance to adults and children at high risk of Type 2 diabetes.

The mobile pantry is distributing more fresh produce and meat to counter the onset or worsening of diabetes. People can sign up for the SNAP program (food stamps) right there. Cooking demonstra-

tions alongside give families tips on how to better maintain health. And the Lee County Health Department is on site to check blood sugar levels. Those who are in the diabetic range and meet income guidelines can participate in a free course in managing diabetes, along with a year's worth of testing supplies.



The first "Food for Life" mobile pantry with diabetes testing (above) took place on August 30 at Clemente Park in Fort Myers.

Fundraising and Food Donation Events Make a Real Difference in Southwest Florida

These recent fundraising and food-gathering events have made a real difference to the Southwest Florida community:

Fowler White Boggs hosted an open house that raised \$895 for the Food Bank.

The **American Culinary Federation**, Southwest Florida Chefs Association, held its second annual "chili cook off" in July at The Pink Shell Beach and Resort Spa on Fort Myers Beach to raise food and funds.

Dillard's hosted a day-long event in July that combined food, fashion, and firefighters, with a thank-you gift for a donation of money or non-perishable food for the Food Bank.

Through the end of September, **WCI Communities** gave a certificate for a complimentary round of golf for a foursome for a \$100 donation to the Food Bank and

the United Way of Lee, Hendry and Glades Counties.

LeeTran made its fleet of buses available on September 18 to collect donated food at all Publix locations in Lee County — the third annual "Fill our Fleet-Feed Our Hungry" program.

...And make sure to participate in this upcoming event:

Servpro's "Golfing for Charity" benefit for the Food Bank is set for Friday, October 7, at West Bay Club in Estero. Entry fee per player is \$100, which includes cart and green fees, two beverages on the course and Scoreboard Party following the shotgun tournament. Registration begins at 8:00 a.m., and sponsors are Spectrum Contracting, Aquatic Systems and Sherwin Williams. Non-perishable food items also will be collected.

Charlotte Agencies...

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choice of food items lets clients tailor their food selections, plus "shopping" for their families gives them a feeling of worth.

Like others at the meeting, Chick works hard to obtain fresh vegetables and fruits, since these are costly for clients to buy. She also seeks out items of hygiene that help prevent infection — bleach, detergent, different colored razors — but cannot be bought with food stamps.

Unfortunately, "we've been bleeding," said Clara Peters, president of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, St. Maximilian Kolbe Conference. "More is going out than coming in."

YOU CAN HELP! Please make a generous donation to the Food Bank!

Hughes, Snell 'Bean-counters' Do Just That in Team-building

When Laura Frost, CPA, heard about Feeding America on "American Idol," she determined to learn more about hunger in her local community.

She joined the Harry Chapin Food Bank's finance committee and brought the opportunity to volunteer back to her colleagues at Hughes, Snell & Co., PA (HSC). Their response? A resounding "Yes"!

"It's part of our culture to encourage our people to spearhead causes for team-building," said Jean Maye, Administrator.

One summer Saturday, 14 HSC associates arrived at the Food Bank warehouse at 8:45 a.m. for an eye-opening, 15-minute

tour. "A lot of employees didn't know the extent of the need or the size of the Food Bank operation," said Frost.

Then, their work began. In friendly competition, the group broke down 50-pound bags of rice and beans into two-pound bags — 1,400 each of rice and beans — for Food Bank agency partners to deliver to children, families and seniors in need. The big joke among the volunteers was that they truly were bean-counters that morning!

Still, they were serious about the impact of their work. "I felt I made a difference," said Keith Alexander, IT Manager

at HSC. "I also was able to interact with my co-workers on a more personal level, as we all worked toward a common goal outside of the office."

Frost is busy planning another rice and beans sort-and-bag in late October, and HSC is fielding a team for the WINK News Feeds Families Hunger Walk in January.



Associates from Hughes, Snell & Co., PA, are all smiles as they join in a team-building activity at the Food Bank.

Food Bank Meets Baking Group Safety Standards

Safety in handling and storing food is critical in distributing fresh food and baked goods. The Harry Chapin Food Bank is proud to be the only food bank in Florida recognized for achievement in meeting the American Institute of Baking International's stringent standards for sanitary food handling.

**Holiday Season Is Near!
The Harry Chapin Food Bank
asks you to give generously to
help your neighbors in need.**

**The Harry Chapin Food Bank
of Southwest Florida
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