



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER • Winter 2007-08

Channel One and Food Banks Around the Country Struggle with Increased Demand and Decreases in Food Supplies

Need is High Nationwide

The demand for food assistance is strong in our region and throughout the United States. The ailing economy and rising food and fuel prices are taking a toll on struggling families' budgets. Moms and dads face impossible decisions like whether to pay to heat their homes and keep their children warm or buy groceries to feed them. When they find themselves in desperate need, they turn to Channel One and the agencies we partner with for help. Right now Channel One and many of the food shelves we serve are seeing increasing numbers of working families reaching out for assistance.

The Farm Bill

Meanwhile, food banks nationwide are experiencing dramatic declines in food aid from surplus commodity purchases by the federal government. Minnesota food banks, including Channel One, have seen a 70% decrease in federal commodities since 2004. This has occurred because a healthy farm economy has required less intervention in order to support prices.

The Farm Bill, which at the time of printing was stalled in the Senate, authorizes funding for nutrition and food assistance programs for low-income families. Enacting a new Farm Bill would strengthen a long-term successful partnership between food banks and USDA, and provide much-needed food for those most in need throughout our nation.

America's Second Harvest food banks and the people we serve need a strong nutrition title in the Farm Bill enacted as soon as possible to begin replenishing dwindling inventories. Additionally, we need help from corporate and individual donors to help us replenish empty shelves.

How You can Help

Make a Donation: The best way to help local people struggling with hunger is to make a financial donation to Channel One. Your donation will help us secure and distribute food that will benefit the local people that we serve through our agency partnerships and our direct service to Olmsted County residents. Help give struggling families a reason to be hopeful this holiday season. You can make a secure contribution online at helpingfeedpeople.org, or you can also contribute by mailing in a check in the envelope provided with this newsletter.

Urge Your Senator to Pass the Farm Bill: You can also help by visiting the Hunger Action Center at www.hungeractioncenter.org to contact your senators and urge them to push for the quick passage of the Farm Bill; please urge them to also support increased resources for federal nutrition programs, including \$250 million with indexing for TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) food purchases for distribution to food banks.

As you prepare for the abundances of the holiday season, more than 38,000 of our neighbors are relying on feeding programs that partner with Channel One. Support is urgently needed to stock our inventories and get food and groceries to those in desperate need.

Now is the time to give your most generous gift. The need is more critical than ever.

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HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

Message from Cynthia	Page 2	Empty Bowls 2007	Page 3
Scouting for Food	Page 4	Food Shelf: Offering Food and Hope	Page 4
Holiday Honorary Gifts	Page 5	How Food Moves to those in Need	Page 5



Cynthia's Corner
Cynthia Shaffer, Executive Director

Allow me to introduce myself. I am Cynthia Shaffer, the new Executive Director of Channel One Food Bank and Food Shelf. Since October 1st, my start date, I have had an opportunity to meet many warm and welcoming people. In addition to receiving much appreciated advice on how a southerner should dress for winter, I have received many offers of help in finding my way around the social service and political landscape. Through all these conversations, one thing has consistently been stated: Channel One is an excellent organization providing an important service to Southeastern Minnesota's residents.

I have much respect and admiration for my predecessors who built a strong organization and made it an integral part of the community. Thanks to their hard work, I have inherited an agency with strong staff, numerous community partnerships and a positive community image. The building addition is complete and staff and board are looking forward to the future....a future of aggressively tackling hunger.

Having worked with older adults, I am all too familiar with the realities faced by today's growing population of seniors. We have all heard the stories about elderly having to make choices between purchasing food and medication. Well, these stories have names and faces. The suffering they experience is very real. Americans are living longer causing many seniors to outlive their retirement funds; medical bills wipe out their savings and inflation out paces their fixed incomes. Whatever the reason for hunger, many elderly in our region do not have enough to eat or know where their next meal is coming from.

With decreasing food donations and stagnant government funding in a time of exploding prices, we are finding it continually harder to supply food that helps seniors have enough to eat and purchase their medications. Help us provide that next meal.

No one in this country of plenty should have to make that choice.

Best wishes to you and yours for a safe and joyful holiday season,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cynthia". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Empty Bowls 2007 a Great Success!

The third annual Empty Bowls event took place Thursday, October 18th at the Rochester Art Center. The event raised \$36,500 to support the hunger relief work of Channel One. This total is a strong increase over the nearly \$20,000 the event raised last year.

Channel One would like to extend a generous thank you to everyone who came down to the Art Center for the event--it was a great success and we look forward to seeing you again next year!



Photo by Lisa Loucks Christenson

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The Channel One Food Shelf Program: Providing Much More than Just Food Assistance

Channel One's primary mission is to help feed people in need but when individuals and families come to us for food, they often have other needs as well.

Jane* visited the Channel One Food Shelf for the first time in 2007. She never believed she would have to do this, but that day there just was not any other choice. The company Jane's husband works for reduced his work hours. Jane was in a car accident recently, and the resulting injuries had left her unable to work. Then, Jane's husband developed health problems. Jane didn't know where to turn for help, so she came to Channel One for food.



Pictured Above: Jane and April Gonzales-Moeller talk at the intake desk at the Channel One Food Shelf.

At Channel One Jane found people who truly care. She met April who told her about different programs in Olmsted County for which she and her family might be eligible. April wrote out a list for Jane to help her keep track of where to go, what to bring and the questions she should ask.

By following through with her list, Jane received gas vouchers to help her with her transportation. Her husband discovered that he is eligible for Veteran's benefits. With his Veteran's benefits the family will receive help covering their housing and utility bills.

Jane came for food when she visited Channel One, but she left with so much more. In Jane's words, "I was extremely stressed when I came to Channel One for help. I started talking to April. I found great warmth...and she gave us much information that helped turn our situation around. I found courage to put one foot in front of another, and we are very thankful for Channel One..."

Through the help and support of each of our donors and volunteers, the Channel One Food Shelf is here for individuals and families who struggle to meet basic needs. Thank you for all that **YOU** do to help make this possible.

**Name has been changed to protect privacy.*



Scouting for Food

The annual Scouting for Food Drive throughout the Gamehaven Council of the Boy Scouts of America took place on Saturday, November 10. The spirit of helping others was strong again this year, resulting in donations of food for many area food shelves throughout Southeast Minnesota. The 2007 collection from Olmsted County resulted in 33,298 pounds of food that was donated to Channel One. This is up from 27,000 pounds in 2006.

Pictured at left: A Rochester Scout delivers food donations to Channel One.

Holiday Food Drives

Many local grocery stores in the Rochester area have recently kicked off their holiday food drives to support Channel One. Customers have the opportunity to purchase a bag of food, or a food voucher to provide the most requested food items that Channel One has identified. The food is then delivered to Channel One. As you shop during the month of December, pick up a bag to help feed people in need!



Holiday Honorary Gifts

Channel One is pleased to offer a giving option to recognize your loved ones during the holidays. Through this program you can make a gift in honor of family, friends, neighbors, or co-workers and Channel One will send your honoree a hunger-themed holiday card recognizing your gift.

The cards we will be sending will include a message that reads:

A gift has been made in your honor to Channel One Food Bank and Food Shelf by (donor name will be inserted here). This honorary contribution helps us provide food to families at risk of hunger. For these families, our work helps bridge the gap between having enough food and sometimes going without.

On behalf of the entire Channel One family, we wish you a joyous and safe holiday season.

The card that will contain this message is pictured on the right. To make an honorary contribution, please make a financial gift in the amount that works for you and send it to Channel One along with the name(s) and address(es) of who the gift is made in honor of. Channel One will take care of mailing out the tribute card acknowledging your gift.

If you have further questions on this giving option please contact our development director at 507-424-1721.



How We Move Food to Those in Need

The hunger relief work of Channel One is more complex than you may imagine. We receive food from a variety of sources and we distribute it to people in need in a variety of different ways. The graphic below illustrates the various ways we work in partnership with others to help feed people in need.





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Rochester, MN 55904

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Channel One Food Bank and Food Shelf is a proud member of the following organizations:

