



Association
of Arizona
Food Banks

A . R . I . Z . O . N . A FOOD LINES

MARCH 2008

Focus On: Serving Diverse Locations in Arizona

Food assistance to rural areas of the state can be especially challenging when you take into consideration that basic infrastructure is often lacking.

Serving Rural Areas – A Special Challenge

Food banks quite literally go the extra mile to serve families living in the rural areas of Arizona. Bob Evans, President & CEO of United Food Bank in Mesa speaks of the challenge of getting food to northeast Arizona, with far flung pockets of poverty that do not have the resources which might be available in more populated areas such as Payson. The food bank manages to reach families from the White Mountain Apache Reservation, Pine, Strawberry, Concho, Heber Overgaard, Show Low, Springerville and points in between. The food bank takes a variety of food organized and wrapped on pallets to a number of drop spots along the way. Community agencies meet the truck and take the food back to their small hamlets for distribution.

Ronna Stubbs, President & CEO of Yuma Community Food Bank echoes the challenge of getting food to rural areas. She cites the difficulty of serving areas that do not have adequate cooling or storage to keep food. The food bank sends a truck on a regular basis to these communities, an hour plus away from the food bank. It coordinates with a network of local



community contacts to get the word out about the schedule. Families wait in line to receive the food. Because the exact demand can be unpredictable the biggest challenge is sending a sufficient amount of food to meet the need, even when the lines might be long.

Eric Wolverton, General Manager with St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance (SMFBA) in Flagstaff meets another challenge serving families on the Navajo Nation, where even in good weather the lack of basic infrastructure – electricity, paved roads, and water can make deliveries difficult. But recently a heavy snowfall followed by a rapid rise in temperature and subsequent snowmelt washed out roads and left many families stranded in remote areas. As illustrated in the picture to the left, three organizations collaborated to bring relief. SMFBA, with the help of the Association of Arizona Food Banks delivered food, water and other essentials each day for a week to the Chinle Police Department. From there the police used all-terrain vehicles to take the supplies to families in need.

These are only selected examples of the dedicated and innovative work of Arizona food banks, serving families in suburban, rural and remote locations in expected and crisis situations.

New Partnership to Increase Food Donations

The shortage of large food donations, particularly produce, is a disturbing situation for our member food banks. Responding to this dilemma the Association has developed an innovative partnership with the California Association of Food Banks, thanks to a generous grant from Kraft Foods. Together we have hired a Food Resourcer, Steve Sharp of Holtville, California to establish new/expanded relationships with growers and wholesalers in the Yuma-La Paz AZ area, and the Coachella and Imperial Valleys in CA. Steve started his work as a Food Resourcer Feb. 13th and is already making a difference in this agricultural mecca of southern California and southwestern Arizona. At the same time, AAFB is also working with Community Food Bank in Tucson to re-establish food donor relationships in southern Arizona. Our goal – to bring more produce to Arizona food banks before the end of this growing season and in subsequent seasons.





*"Helping
Make Food
Banking
Better Since
1984"*

Association
of Arizona
Food Banks

1-800-445-1914

2100 North Central Avenue, Suite 230
Phoenix, Arizona 85004-1400

www.azfoodbanks.org

OUR MISSION

To deliver food and quality services to food banks and foster relationships in support of our commitment to eliminate hunger.

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Dear Friends,

This issue of FOOD LINES describes the unique dimensions of hunger in the rural areas of our sprawling state and the significant challenges of getting food to needy Arizonans living there. I know you will be impressed with the creativity and determination our member food banks bring to this special task.

The Association delivers food and services to food banks and advocates for improved food assistance programs at the state and federal levels. Considering these benefits and recognizing there is value in collaboration and strength in numbers, six regional food bank warehouses around the state are members of the Association. This spring, member food banks are all writing their supporters, encouraging them to learn more about and contribute to the Association. The goal...to raise awareness of and support for our collective actions to reach hungry families today and build a healthier and secure Arizona for tomorrow.

In the legislative arena there are bills addressing homelessness, work force development, and the charitable donation tax credit - all may impact our work. Of course the resolution of the current state budget deficit is the immediate priority. Hopefully by the time you receive this letter that situation will be resolved without having cut critical funding for health and human services to vulnerable Arizonans. However, we will then move to the even more painful budget process for the 2008/2009 fiscal year. So far the line items that concern food banking have not been proposed for cuts, but we are watchful and ready to make our case should that happen. This is not the time to cut the lifeline to our most vulnerable Arizonans. The economic slowdown, record foreclosures, job losses and increases in fuel, food, child and health care costs are bringing more families to the brink - and to food banks. Our member food banks are seeing 15-20% increase in demand over last year, at the same time, the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture commodities sent to food banks have decreased markedly over the last year and our large volume food donations from other sources are down. (See "New Partnership to Increase Food Donations" in this issue)

You may have recently received a letter from me asking for your financial support. If you have sent a contribution, thank you on behalf of the 857,000 Arizonans living in poverty and likely to need our services this year. If you have not yet contributed, please consider it. And yet another request - tell a friend about hunger and what the Association is doing about it. Invite us to speak to your professional, community or faith group. Call with questions about programs, policies or legislation that impact the hungry. Visit us at www.azfoodbanks.org or in person. You can be part of the solution to this unacceptable problem of hunger.

Sincerely,

Ginny Hildebrand
Executive Director





ARIZONA STATEWIDE GLEANING PROJECT

"A program of the Association of Arizona Food Banks"

(602) 528-0740

"Getting the Produce and Getting it Out There"

By Jami Kakinuma

Historically, the Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project has worked with the Arizona food banks to find more, new and varied ways to get fresh produce to the rural communities in Arizona by encouraging food banks and their agencies to handle produce properly, to order the right amount of produce for their distributions and to include produce in their school distributions and back pack programs. In doing this we discovered that the rural agencies often were only accepting as much produce as they could distribute in one day.



The Association is employing new strategies to address this situation; the first to increase the produce available throughout the network and the second to build the capacity of rural agencies to accept, store and distribute more produce.

The Arizona Statewide Gleaning Project, past and present staff included, has been working with Community Food Bank of Tucson to develop new produce donors in Cochise and Santa Cruz Counties.

The Association of Arizona Food Banks, working with the California Association of Food Banks, has hired a joint food resourcer to develop new produce donor relationships (See related article "New Partnership to Increase Food Donations" on page 1.)

Working with our member food banks the Association will be placing refrigerated cargo containers at several rural agencies, increasing their ability to bring fresh produce to needy families.

It is once again citrus season here in Arizona and our member food banks are busy coordinating citrus gleaning, collection and distribution. After our Arizona food banks take the citrus they need for their food distributions, they are still overwhelmed with the amount of citrus remaining. The food banks then offer this citrus to out of state food banks through the Gleaning Project. This out of state citrus distribution began the last week of January and by February 21, 2008 the Project has already coordinated the distribution of 21 truckloads, or 637,555 pounds of citrus, to our out of state food bank partners.

The top three donated produce items to date this year are:

- melons
- cabbage
- packaged salad and spring mixes.



AAFB CREDIT CARD DONATION FORM

2100 North Central Ave., #230 Phoenix, AZ 85004

Tel: 800-445-1914 Fax: 602-528-3838

YES! I want a hunger free Arizona. Please charge my one time tax-deductible contribution in the amount of \$ _____ to my credit card.

I would like to be a monthly donor by using my credit card.

I authorize AAFB to make a monthly deduction from my credit card in the amount of \$ _____ on the 5th or 20th (circle one) of the month starting _____. This authorization will remain in effect until I notify AAFB in writing that I wish to discontinue the contributions.

Simply check the card type, fill in your card number, expiration date, 3-digit security code from the back of your card, and sign this form. Then just clip and mail in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you for your donation!

CARD TYPE: Visa MasterCard American Express Discover/NOVUS

Card Number

_____/_____
Expiration Date

3-Digit Code

Signature of Cardholder

Daytime Phone

Questions? Please call our Director of Development at (602) 528-3434, ext. 18.

Did you know....

- In 2006, 94,749 – 26.2% of rural children in Arizona were poor.
- 607,097 people - 11.8% of the population – live outside of metropolitan areas in Arizona.
- 17.5% of all rural households with children are food insecure (low food security and very low food security), an estimated 1 million children nationally.
- 12% of rural households are food insecure, an estimated 2.3 million households nationally.
- 31.5% of client households served in non-metropolitan areas in Arizona reported that their children often or sometimes did not eat enough during the past year because there was not enough money to buy food.
- More than 38% of all client households served by the America's Second Harvest network in Arizona reside in suburban/rural areas.
- Non-metropolitan area children are more likely to receive food stamps and free or reduced-price lunches at school compared to urban children.
- Rates of food insecurity, the statistical measurement of hunger or near hunger, among rural households is generally lower than urban households, but slightly higher than the national average.
- The irony is that many of these food-insecure households are in the very rural and farm communities whose productivity feeds the world and provides low-cost wholesome food for American consumers.
- Challenges facing rural areas differ from metro/urban areas in several significant ways:
 - Employment is more concentrated in low-wage industries
 - Unemployment and *underemployment* are greater
 - Education levels are lower
 - Work-support services, such as flexible and affordable child care and public transportation, are less available
 - The rural marketplace offers less access to communication and transportation networks
 - The rural market place offers companies less access to activities that foster administration, research and development
- The fact that so many people need to turn to a food bank or church pantry just to eat in the very same communities where the food is raised is a sad reminder of how much more needs to be done.
- The Association of Arizona Food Banks and its members are working together to reach more people in rural areas.
- Together, we can create a hunger-free Arizona.
- Nearly one in six non-metropolitan children lived in food insecure households in 2006.



Holiday Support Helps Fill Shelves for Food Banks

In lieu of doing a holiday food drive, **Safeway** gave the Association of Arizona Food Banks a donation of \$25,000 to be used for food purchases. Food purchased benefited members of the Association of Arizona Food Banks. We were able to leverage their donation to purchase 34,054 pounds of potatoes, 38,549 pounds of carrots and 18,117 pounds of peanut butter for a total of 90,720 pounds of food at an average cost of 28 cents per pound. Thanks Safeway!

Many thanks to **CBS 5 and Bashas'** for supporting food banks with a holiday food drive. The December drive collected donations amounting to 110,106 pounds of food to restock food bank shelves. Member food banks of the Association of Arizona Food Banks and also Society of St. Vincent de Paul benefited from the food collected.

Mark Your Calendar!



Taste of the Nation
7-10 P.M.
Friday, April 25, 2008
Jokake Inn at the Phoenician

The **Association of Arizona Food Banks** will benefit from this **Taste of the Nation** event. We hope you will join Governor Janet Napolitano, Honorary Chair, for this delightful and delicious evening!

Taste of the Nation, a project of Share Our Strength, presented by American Express, is the nation's preeminent culinary benefit. Share Our Strength is a nationwide organization of chefs, restaurateurs, and community leaders who use their talents to fight childhood hunger.

Join us and 30 of the Valley's finest chefs for an exclusive evening of epicurean adventure. Tastings of great food paired with excellent wine, an expansive silent auction and live entertainment will offer something for everyone.

Dress up your jeans but PLEASE leave your high heels at home to join us for an evening under the stars on the grounds of the historical Jokake Inn. Tickets can be purchased online at www.tastephoenix.org. We hope to see you there!

Annual Statewide Conference on Hunger Food Distribution in the 21st Century

April 17, 2008
8:00 am – 3:00 pm

Registration: \$15 per person or \$10 per person when two or more from the same organization attend.

Desert Willow Conference Center
4340 East Cotton Center Blvd.
Phoenix, Arizona 85040

Dynamic Workshops * Relevant Information * Motivating Speakers * Personal Development

Registration information available at www.azfoodbanks.org or by calling 1-800-445-1914.

“Last year’s conference was the best they ever attended anywhere – they appreciated the low cost, learned so much, had fun, found the participants welcoming and look forward to coming again. This year three Board members are taking the time to come, sending a message to the staff about the Board’s commitment.”

--Sr. Frances Vista, Executive Director of St. Jude Food Bank in Tuba City sharing what her supervisors working in the distant areas of the reservation had to say.

FOOD LINES

a newsletter of **Association of Arizona Food Banks**
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<http://www.azfoodbanks.org>

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