5/9: Heat is on for homeless

http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/health/article_f80a373c-782a-11e0-9f00-001cc4c002e0.html

 Posted: Monday, May 9, 2011 7:45 am

 Valley of the Sun United Way urges local residents to donate water to help individuals experiencing homelessness.

 Locations to donate cases of bottled water include St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance, 2831 N. 31st Ave., (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday) and United Food Bank, 245 S. Nina Drive, Mesa (7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday). Additional donation sites are listed at www.cir.org. For more information about the Valley of the Sun United Way, visit www.vsuw.org.

5/9: Co-op helps Paradise Valley Unified School District keep school food costs in check


 by Eugene Scott - May. 9, 2011 01:41 PM - The Arizona Republic

 Food costs for the Paradise Valley Unified School District may increase next year, but vendors say the district is still saving money.

 "Our whole goal is, in an increasing food-cost environment, to minimize the increase of that cost," said Bette Thompson, director of Arizona School Partners in Nutrition, a food cooperative serving nearly 140 districts in Arizona.

 The Paradise Valley district's total food service budget for the 2009-10 school year was more than $4.25 million. Of that, the district spent more than $2.7 million on a contract with the co-op, which allows the district to buy produce, meats, starches and dairy at discounted prices.

 Paradise Valley serves more than 22,100 meals each day, and about 60 percent of the district's students are on free or reduced lunch.

 "A lot of districts have gone to the food cooperative model because it saves money," said Kathleen Glindmeier, the district's director of nutrition and wellness.

 So far this school year, Paradise Valley has spent about $2.4 million with Arizona School Partners in Nutrition.

 "It's actually down a bit from last year, but the year is not over yet," Thompson said.

 Total expenses this and next school year will hinge on whether food prices go up or down.

 "I won't have that data for another six weeks or so," Thompson said. "Sugar costs are up. Cocoa is up. Flour is up substantially. Beef sometimes goes up, but there might be other items like fruits, staples and pastas that might go down. I will not know until we get our pricing back."

 Even if food costs climb, Thompson said her co-op doesn't pass that full increase on to school districts.
"When inflation was up in about 2008, costs were up an average of 20 percent. Our costs were up 6 percent," she said.

The district spends nearly $69,800 on bread; more than $559,900 on dairy and more than $122,000 on produce. Nearly 11 percent - about $462,000 - of the district's food budget is spent on pizza.

Domino's Pizza, Papa John's Pizza and Sardella's Pizza and Wings provide daily ready-to-eat pizzas to all school sites.

"As for the pizza, it is the Number 1 item preferred by students. Each year we meet with groups of students at each school for food tasting (Grades K-6) and food focus groups (Grades 7-12)," Glindmeier said.

"All of the pizza served in PV has whole wheat crust and uses low-fat mozzarella cheese. Each serving has less than 400 calories," she added.

5/9: Eating by example
May 09, 2011 3:09 PM - BY LAURIE BLACK - FAMILY FOCUS

In the past three decades. Our country has seen childhood obesity rates triple. That means that over nine million children over the age of 6 are affected by obesity.

Though these statistics are staggering, it is often difficult to create a tangible feeling from nationwide numbers. Let's bring it closer to home, how does Arizona fare? According to the Centers for Disease Control, Arizona has the 15th highest rate of obese youths ages 10 to 17 in the nation. Clearly something has to change.

Much of the blame for this marked rise in childhood obesity can be attributed to improper dietary intake. Seventy-two percent of children are not meeting dietary recommendations for nutrients. But getting kids to eat healthy is not always easy. When given the choice between cupcakes and carrot sticks, what child wouldn't chose the former?

What we, as adults, often forget is that eating habits are learned behaviors. They will eat what we stock the cupboards with and they will come to understand portion sizes by watching us fill our plates. So, the burden falls on the adults to be a channel for changing the current eating trends.

Because mealtime remains fairly dependent on the guardian, transitioning to healthier eating via snacks is critical because this is the first stage of independence in self selecting food choices. Snacking accounts for approximately 20 to 30 percent of nutritional intake in children ages 6-18.

At the heart of bringing about healthy snack choices is education, first of the parent and then the children. In today's society, there is an overload of information on what constitutes “healthy” which often makes it difficult to decipher the good from the bad. Here are just a few tips for evaluating nutritional information:

• Sites ending in .edu, .gov or .org tend to be more reputable due to stricter regulations on the information posted.

• Pay attention to the credentials of the person distributing the information. Are they a registered dietitian or have a graduate degree in nutrition from a recognizable learning institution?

• Look for dietary recommendations that do not eliminate foods but instead promote a balance of all food groups.
Now the challenge becomes implementation. There are a few keys that will make or break success in this stage.

First, learn the art of compromise. Kids will still want their crackers and cookies but the trick is learning to view these foods as snack supplements rather than the whole snack.

Second, all things in moderation. A standard serving size is designed for an adult following a 2,000 calorie diet. Read the serving size on the side of the container and cut it in half for children.

Third, do not micromanage. Allowing kids to create their own healthy snacks encourages their independence.

Lastly, practice what you preach. Children are natural mimics despite any of our efforts to raise them otherwise. Not only will you get better buy-in from kids, but you will likely be making improvements in your own diet as well.

Changing the health of our community starts within the home, the health of our home starts within our cupboards. What is in yours?

For healthy snack ideas, check out www.eatright.org.

5/9: Fighting childhood obesity 1 kid at a time
http://www.ahwatukee.com/community_focus/article_3e4ed5c8-783e-11e0-a56d-001cc403286.html
Posted: Monday, May 9, 2011 6:00 pm | Updated: 5:26 pm, Fri May 6, 2011. - By Jessica Mayer Special to AFN Ahwatukee Foothills News

Childhood obesity has been rampant across the country for the past decade but an Ahwatukee Foothills' program is fighting the trend from spreading across the Valley.

The WiL Power Challenge is a free, 12-week program designed to fight childhood obesity by providing tools and education about nutrition and fitness to overweight children and their families.

Since its start in 2008, the program has serviced nearly 300 children across the Valley. Each cycle of the program has about 50 participants.

The program, operated out of Foothills Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation, represents its mission in its name. The "WiL" stands for "winning is losing."

WiL Power includes three supervised workouts every week with a trainer, as well as weekly nutrition classes with a registered dietitian or nutritionist. It is also modeled as a contest where winners, based on participation and percentage of inches lost from their waist, can receive prizes and scholarships of $1,000, $500 or $250.

A doctor's referral stating that the child is overweight or obese is needed for a child to participate in the program.

Participants typically range in age from 10 to 14 years old and are in at least the 85th body mass index percentile, meaning from moderately overweight to obese.

Karen Johnson is the board president of WiL Power. She got involved after working in marketing for Foothills Sports Medicine and Rehabilitation and Foothills Acceleration and Sports Training, or FAST. Both organizations are sponsors of WiL Power.
The 24-year-old said she has stayed involved with WiL Power because of the “amazing” impact it has on the participants and their families.

“It is truly an incredible thing to hear some of the stories of the families involved in our program and even greater to hear the follow up after they complete the program and continue on with the changes we encouraged them to make,” Johnson said.

She noted that it is common to get around 200 referrals from physicians of children in need of WiL Power’s services.

“We want to educate children and their families on ways to live healthy, active lifestyles in a fun and affordable way - ultimately decreasing the incidence of childhood obesity,” Johnson said of WiL Power’s goals.

She added that the program is continuing to grow as it spreads to schools and is to be implemented as an after-school program.

Kris Panigua is 11-year-old Maya Paniagua’s mother. Maya is a current participant in the program. Her starting body mass index was around the 92nd percentile.

“At the beginning of WiL Power she could only run continuously for about one minute without needing to stop. Now at the eight-week point she can run about a mile-and-a-half continuously, then do 30 minutes of strength work immediately following. There has been a huge increase in her confidence and physical stamina,” Panigua said.

The 38-year-old added that the program has inspired her daughter to be more conscious about healthful decisions for herself and her family.

“Maya has taken steps to make a lifelong change in her eating habits and is developing a healthy lifestyle,” Panigua said. “She has seen improvement in her physical fitness level and she is now seeing herself as someone who can be physically strong.”

In addition to Maya’s improvement, Panigua said the program has benefited the rest of her family, especially her younger son who has lost a pant size during the course of Maya’s involvement with WiL Power.

“Our whole family is now eating more fresh fruits and vegetables and lean protein as the main components of our diet,” Panigua said.

She called the program overall a “truly amazing experience.”

“It’s a very fun and positive environment and the trainers push the kids to bring out the best in each child,” Panigua said. “It’s a big commitment for a family to make and it requires you to think of long-term changes, but it is definitely worth it.”

Jeff Bloom is the facility manager at FAST, he coordinates all of the trainers and trains the children involved with WiL Power in Ahwatukee.

“We’ve had great success with this program over the years. There have been multiple kids that have lost 15-plus pounds and there have been a few that have lost over 20 pounds,” Bloom said. “The thing we’re most proud of is that most of these families keep working out and eating healthy even after the program is over.”

The 32-year-old said that because physical education programs are being cut at schools across the country, kids have been much less active than in the past. He said WiL Power gives children the solution to this problem.
“Our program is not only ‘helping children shape their lives,’” Johnson said. "We are literally changing lives and it is a great thing to be involved with."

5/8: Editorial: ‘Stamp Out Hunger’ drive coming
http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/opinions/articles/2011/05/08/20110508sunlets086.html
May. 8, 2011 12:00 AM

On behalf of those in our community who struggle each month to consistently keep food on their family’s table, I want to thank you in advance for your participation in the annual "Stamp Out Hunger" food drive, sponsored by the National Association of Letter Carriers.

On Saturday, place non-perishable food items by your mailbox before your letter carrier drives by and he or she will take them back to the station to be distributed to St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance and other local food banks in the Valley.

This event is the largest one-day food drive of the year with hundreds of thousands of pounds of food collected locally.

The food you donate arrives at a critical time for St. Mary's and our sister food banks. Summer is tough - children are out of school and without access to free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch programs; and parents have higher bills: child care, energy, fuel.

As a result, we distribute more food during the summer months than we do even during the holidays.

So, thank you for participating - and a very special thanks to the hard-working letter carriers who voluntarily and willingly have conducted this drive for 19 years now.

No small feat in the hot Arizona summer heat.

Your efforts that day will have a long and lasting impact for many months to come.

- Terry Shannon, Phoenix
The writer is president and CEO of St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance.

5/8: Stamp out hunger May 14
http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/the_valley/westvalley/article_59da7243-4c69-5a4f-898d-eef7f9779af0.html

Arizona’s largest single-day food drive — one which helps food banks survive during the summer — will take place May 14.

That is when more than 230,000 letter carriers nationwide, including more than 5,000 in the Valley, will pick up canned food donations on their regular mail routes during the 19th Annual National Association of Letter Carriers “Stamp Out Hunger” Food Drive.

In 2010, Arizona letter carriers collected more than 2 million pounds of nonperishable food, including almost 1 million pounds in the Valley. Throughout the week leading up to the food drive, letter carriers will drop off reminder post cards and special grocery bags at mailboxes. The letter carriers encourage those who can
help to fill the bags, or any other grocery bag, with nonperishable food items to leave them by their mailboxes on the morning of May 14.

5/8: Nationwide Insurance Foundation Donates $1 Million to Feeding America
http://pr-usa.net/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=719025&Itemid=29

Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization, announced today that Nationwide Insurance Foundation has donated $1 million to help fight hunger in America. The funds will be shared by the national office of Feeding America and 21 member food banks in communities where Nationwide Insurance associates live and work. A portion of the funds will be used to support Feeding America's National Produce Program, which distributes fresh fruit and vegetables to individuals facing hunger.

"We at Feeding America are deeply grateful to the Nationwide Insurance Foundation for their continued support to help end hunger in America," said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America. "We cannot fix all of the complex reasons that hunger exists in America overnight, but what we as leaders of this movement can do together is ensure that every man, woman and child has access to nutritious and healthy food."

"Nationwide is pleased to support Feeding America Foodbanks in the communities we call home and across the country," said Chad Jester, president of the Nationwide Insurance Foundation. "We're also proud of the thousands of Nationwide associates who selflessly give of their time and energy in support of our corporate hunger-relief initiatives."

In addition to Nationwide's financial support, thousands of Nationwide associates host food drives and volunteer at food banks across the country each year. In 2010, Feeding America awarded Nationwide Insurance the Group Volunteer Service of the Year award for the company's work with the Mid-Ohio Foodbank.

Feeding America’s network of more than 200 food banks serves all 50 states, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, securing and distributing more than 3 billion pounds of food and grocery products annually. The member food banks support approximately 61,000 local charitable agencies and 70,000 programs, which provide food directly to individuals and families in need.

Feeding America food banks receiving funds from the donation include: Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank; Atlanta Community Food Bank; Blue Ridge Area Food Bank Network, Verona, Va.; Bread of the Mighty Food Bank, Gainesville, Fla.; Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, Harrisburg, Penn.; Central Virginia Foodbank, Richmond; Cleveland Food Bank; Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, Raleigh; Food Bank of Iowa, Des Moines; Food Bank of Lincoln, Neb.; Food Bank of the Rockies, Denver, Colo.; Maryland Food Bank, Baltimore; Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Columbus; Mid-South Food Bank, Memphis; New Hampshire Food Bank, Manchester; Oregon Food Bank, Portland; Philabundance, Philadelphia; San Antonio Food Bank; Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina, Charlotte, N.C.; Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee, Nashville; and St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, Phoenix.

Across the board, food banks are witnessing an increased need for food as 1 in 6 Americans experience hunger as a reality in their daily lives. Some food banks are even reporting that they are now providing emergency food to people who were once donors. There are more than 50 million Americans at risk of hunger and the number is growing every day.
Prescott Firefighter's Charities will be hosting the Third Annual Horseshoe Tournament at 10 a.m. Saturday, June 11, at Watson Lake Park.

All proceeds will benefit Prescott Firefighter's Charities which donates to the following community groups and citizens: Burn Camp, MDA, Community Pregnancy Center, Yavapai Food Bank, Salvation Army's Christmas Angel Tree and any local Prescott citizen in need of our firefighters' assistance, said Kristi Gagnon, chairwoman of Prescott Firefighters' Charities.

The cost for each two person team is $65 per team, which includes two tournament shirts, two meal tickets and a double elimination bracket.

The first place team will win a cash prize and second- and third-place teams will receive a prize and a trophy.

The sign-up deadline is June 6, and registration is limited so sign-up early. Information and registration is available on the website at www.prescottffcharities.org.

Food, beverages, and beer will be available for purchase at the event and there will be music and inflatable bounce houses for the kids.

If you are interested in being a corporate or pit, please contact Kristi Gagnon at kgagnon@prescottffcharities.org.

Valley View Community Food Bank in Youngtown will be even busier this summer and needs more food for the next few months once school is out.

Jesse Ramirez, executive director of the food bank, said many families ask for food from the organization in the summer because their children are at home more often.

Just in time, Valley View received extra help in the form of a $1,000 check.

“You have no idea how much impact this will have for us,” Ramirez said.

The Daily New-Sun awarded the organization $1,000 Thursday after the food bank won the newspaper’s local charity contest. The money was raised through the newspaper’s annual book sale last month.

All of the proceeds were given to the winner of the contest, which included online voting and paper ballots delivered to the newspaper.

Valley View received the most total votes with 984, while America’s Mightiest Warriors had 664, followed by Eve’s Place with 159.
America’s Mightiest Warriors is a nonprofit organization that helps soldiers deployed overseas while Eve’s Place is a shelter for battered women.

Ramirez said he’s grateful so many people voted for the food bank.

“This really shows the outpour of love from folks,” said Ramirez. “It’s unbelievable that we have so much support and care from the community.”

The money from the book sale, Ramirez said, will be used to buy 80,000 pounds of fresh produce, which will last at least three weeks.

“Many people really depend on food from us and all of this goes into our emergency food boxes for the families that need it,” Ramirez said.

The food bank feeds more than 310 people a day, Ramirez said.

Valley View Community Food Bank depends on food and monetary donations to help individuals, along with money from its Youngtown thrift shop.

Mary Jo Kerr, a Sun City West resident and food bank volunteer, said she’s happy the food bank won the contest.

“It’s a wonderful thing because we need the money to replenish the supplies,” said Kerr. “Everyone I know that works there and my church, we’re all cheering for this food bank.”

5/7: Fiesta Grande this weekend
Posted: May 7, 2011 10:28 PM - Updated: May 8, 2011 11:45 AM

TUCSON - For the past nine years, Barrio Hollywood, one of the oldest communities in Tucson, is putting on a two day street fair, where the proceeds benefit a wide variety of community programs.

People filled the streets of Barrio Hollywood celebrating the true meaning of community at this year’s Fiesta Grande.

Organizers of the event said organizations throughout Tucson look forward to participating in this event every year.

"I have people that don't even live in Hollywood that meet once a week throughout the year, to put this event together. They all believe in what we are doing," Barrio Hollywood President, Margaret McKenna said.

Some of those organizations like the Urban League and Tucson Community Food Bank said events like this allow them to raise awareness and reach out to people from all walks of life.

"People are very gracious and we're really glad we came out this year, and we hope to come back next year," Debra Johnson said.

The street fair is held on Grande Avenue, between Speedway and Saint Mary's. The fair goes from noon until dusk on Sunday.
PHOENIX - Comic fans got a chance to enjoy some free books Saturday for the 10th annual Free Comic Book Day.

Bookstore Samurai Comics in downtown Phoenix participated in the international event Saturday by giving away two free comic books to each person who walked into the store on Camelback Road near 12th Street.

People who brought in donations for St. Mary’s Food Bank received a third free comic book and entered a drawing for prizes.

The event was started in 2001 and is the first Saturday of May each year.

Admission is FREE. The hours are Friday and Saturday 9:00am – 5:00pm, and Sunday 10:00am – 3:00pm. We ask that you bring non perishable food items to support our community partner the Yavapai County Food Bank. See You There!

PHOENIX - Any Arizonan qualified for federal food assistance can get it - for now - but advocates say that would change under the budget proposed by U.S. House Republicans.

The GOP budget would convert SNAP, the food stamp program, to a state block grant and cut its total funding by 20 percent. Arizona Community Action Association director Cynthia Zwick says the result would be increased hunger for the state's poor and working poor.

"Families who are struggling and working to become successful participating members of the community should still be able to eat, and should still be able to feed their families. The cut to this program will ensure that many families are not able to do that."

The state’s jobless rate remains near the highs of the recession, Zwick says, and demand for food assistance is the highest ever. She says SNAP is doing what it is supposed to do: helping low-income families put food on the table and keeping them from going hungry.

"Without this benefit program, many families in Arizona simply would not be able to buy enough food to serve their families three meals a day. Some of them still can’t, but it's helping. More importantly, they wouldn't be able to serve nutritious meals."

It can be argued that the SNAP program reduces health care costs, Zwick says, and in some cases prevents homelessness.
"If they're able to get some nutrition assistance, they can go out and purchase food, which frees up some of their other income to support other household requirements such as medication, rent, utility payments."

The average time a person is on the SNAP program is nine months, Zwick says.

Arizona has the second-highest poverty rate in the nation, with more than 1 million families receiving food assistance. Details on the SNAP program are online at azdes.gov.

5/6: County Ranks High In ‘Food Insecurity'
http://www.azjournal.com/2011/05/06/county-ranks-high-in-%E2%80%98food-insecurity%E2%80%99/
May 06 2011. By Tammy Gray-Searles –

Navajo County has the third highest rate of food insecurity among Arizona counties, according to a recent report by the Arizona Association of Food Banks.

Navajo County’s food insecurity rate is 24.5 percent. That ranks below only Apache County at 28.5 percent and Yuma County at 27.9 percent. Percentages for other counties across the state include Coconino, 17.3, Greenlee, 23.4, Maricopa, 16.2, Mohave, 19.1, Pima, 17, Pinal, 18.9, and Yavapai, 17.5. The average for all of Arizona is 17.4 percent.

In Navajo County, a total of 27,110 people are considered “food insecure.” The report defines food insecurity as “lack of access, at times, to enough food for an active, healthy life for all household members, or a limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate foods.” Food insecurity is also described as “reflecting a household’s need to make trade-offs between important basic needs, such as housing or medical bills, and purchasing nutritionally adequate foods.”

Of those considered food insecure in Navajo County, the report estimates that 74 percent fall below the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) threshold of 185 percent of the poverty rate. This means that approximately 26 percent of food insecure individuals in Navajo County have an income above the SNAP limit of 185 percent of the federal poverty rate, making them ineligible for food stamps.

For a household of one person, the federal poverty rate is $10,830 and the 185 percent SNAP rate is $20,036. For a household of four, the federal poverty rate is $22,050 and the federal poverty rate is $40,793.

According to the report, an additional $11,090,330 would have been necessary in 2009 to prevent food insecurity needs in Navajo County. The estimate is based on a cost of $2.45 per meal. Across the state, an additional $447 million would have been necessary to meet all food needs.

The report notes that statewide, the largest percentage of meals for the working poor were purchased by the individuals themselves. It notes that 43 percent of meals were provided by the individuals, 35 percent were provided through public assistance programs, five percent through private programs and 17 percent were considered “missing meals.” The missed meals were calculated based on an average of three meals per day.

According to the Arizona Association of Food Banks, food insecurity has a major impact on an area’s economy, especially when children are food insecure. The organization notes that children who experience food insecurity are sick more often, have growth and developmental delays, do not perform as well in school, and tend to have more social and behavioral problems that can last into adulthood.

The study mapping the areas of food insecurity across the state will help food banks and other organizations focus their efforts in areas where they are most needed.
“These landmark studies provide transformational information that allows Arizona food banks to direct food resources to the neediest areas of the state while being good stewards of public donations," said St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance CEO Terry Shannon.

For more information, visit www.azfoodbanks.org.

5/6: Amid disaster, there's food to eat at Salvation Army
LARRY HENDRICKS News Team Leader azdailysun.com | Posted: Friday, May 6, 2011 5:11 am

The need was apparent. In 2010, the Flagstaff area experienced catastrophic fire, floods and even tornadoes.

So when officials with the Salvation Army in Arizona decided where a newly refurbished mobile kitchen should be assigned, northern Arizona came to mind.

The mobile kitchen has since been delivered and is now ready to respond to any disaster that might hit northern Arizona, or even the nation, said Lt. Michael O’Brien of the Salvation Army in Flagstaff.

"(The kitchen) will be able to feed 800 people three times a day," O’Brien said.

The kitchen, housed in a vehicle that looks much like a moving van, includes a six-burner stove, griddle, refrigerator, a warming unit, sink, microwave and even a coffee maker. Food from the Salvation Army pantry in Flagstaff and from area food banks will help give the kitchen what it takes to feed people in need.

According to the Salvation Army website, its mission "is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in His name without discrimination."

The cost of the refurbishing work came to about $40,000 O’Brien said. The former mobile kitchen for Flagstaff has been reassigned to the Yuma area once it has been refurbished.

Even though the need for a "premier" mobile unit in Flagstaff is evident, O’Brien said the unit won't just be responding to disasters here.

"We’re probably one of the first that would get called out," for any national disaster as well, O’Brien said.

In addition to responding to disasters and other emergencies, the mobile kitchen will also be made available to feed the homeless, he added.

The first order of business for the new mobile kitchen will be to feed people for free when the Salvation Army Thrift Store opens its expanded space on Monday, O’Brien said. (See related story.)

Volunteers for the Salvation Army staff the mobile kitchen when it is put to use out in the field, O’Brien said. He added that anybody interested in doing the training to be a part of the volunteer effort with the mobile kitchen can call the Flagstaff office at (928) 774-1403.

5/6: Mother’s Day Giveaway makeovers (w/VIDEO)
Posted: May 6, 2011 9:15 PM - Updated: May 9, 2011 10:09 AM
TUCSON - For the past few months, we have been asking for your submissions to find some of the best moms around town. Friday, a handful of wonderful mothers were given a day of pampering for all the hard work they do day in and day out.

"I think every mom has a story," Cazlin Robbins said.

Her story is a little different. Robbins raised her own children, then became a mom to her parents for several years, and now is the mother-figure for her two grandkids. They submitted her story for our contest.

"We wouldn't be able to offer them everything that all their friends had, but we would give them community," Robbins said about how she has raised her grandkids.

Her grandson, she says, started a graffiti abatement program when he was 11-years-old. Her granddaughter, who is now that age, has raised more than 1,500 pounds of food for the food bank.

"We really just want to thank you for being wonderful mothers this Mother’s day. We have five awesome, generous sponsors that were willing to donate some gifts to make sure it's a great Mother's Day," KVOA Account Executive Jeff Dauenhauer.

Each of the five mothers received gifts from Nambe, Sancshoeary Shoes, Seasons of Tucson, Casas Adobes Flowers, McClintock's Restaurant, and a makeover from The Source Salon and Spa.

Lorraine Mangan also has a unique household. She takes care of her father, disabled daughter, and chronically-ill daughter. She says to hear she is an inspiration by her daughter is a surprise.

"She wrote such a sweet letter. It made me cry when I read it, and it made her cry too when she read it to me, but it was wonderful," Mangan said.

The women left looking relaxed and refreshed, if even just for a day.

5/6: An absolutely delightful time of year (excerpt)
By Carol Reed - May 6, 2011

Calling all tractor lovers

The old tractor guys of Pine/Strawberry, are having a show in Pine. The third annual Pine Tractor & Engine Show will be held Saturday, May 14 at the Payson Concrete Material Yard.

There will be a large assortment of old farm tractors and equipment on display. There will raffles with prizes.

Admission for spectators is free, however, donations of non-perishable food will be appreciated. This is to support the Pine-Strawberry Food Bank.

If you want more information, call Dave at 476-3623 or Randy at 476-4151.

Now this is an event that has a double benefit. The food bank benefits and the old tractors are just a hoot to look at and listen to. Have a grand time, guys and gals. I am sorry I have a prior commitment that day. I love old tractors!
5/6: W. P. Carey School to graduate record number of students again (excerpt)
http://asunews.asu.edu/20110502_business_graduation
May 06, 2011

The spring 2011 Turken Family Outstanding Graduating Senior Award goes to accounting major Isaiah McCoy. He was named a McCord Scholar, has a 4.0 grade point average, and interned at Deloitte, where he will have a full-time job after he attends and completes the Master of Taxation program at the W. P. Carey School of Business. McCoy helped facilitate Camp Carey and WPC 101 (introductory programs) for other students at the school. He also helped to reestablish ASU's chapter of Beta Alpha Psi, a business fraternity that connects students to professional accounting firms. He also helped organize a career awareness program for minority high school students that is sponsored by the School of Accountancy, in conjunction with the National Association of Black Accountants. More than 70 percent of the participants wind up attending college and majoring in a business field. McCoy also volunteers at a local church and recreation center and helped design an inventory management database for a local food bank.

5/6: Help St. Mary's During National Free Comic Book Day: Bring Non-perishable Food Donations for St. Mary’s To Get an Additional Free Book and Qualify for a Drawing to Win Cool Samurai Comics Prizes
May 6, 2011 · Published By Associate Editor

Phoenix – The Valley’s coolest comic book store, Samurai Comics in downtown Phoenix (1051 E. Camelback Road) is celebrating the 10th Annual “National Free Comic Book Day” and offering an extra special deal if you donate some non-perishable items to St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance.

All day long on Saturday May 7th (the store opens at 7 a.m. and closes at 5 p.m.); Samurai Comics will give away TWO free comic books to everyone in the store. But with a donation to St. Mary’s, customers will receive a THIRD free comic book and will also be eligible for a drawing to win cool Samurai Comics prizes.

The Arizona Ghostbusters team http://www.arizonaghostbusters.com/ will be on hand to collect your food donations. They will have their Ghostbusters ambulance and giant 28-foot-tall inflatable of the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man with them, so bring your camera. Remember that one in four children in Arizona deal with food insecurity and one in seven seniors have to choose between purchasing food and medicine at some point in the year. So grab a few cans of beans and bags of pasta and enjoy some great comic books while helping to feed the hungry of Arizona.

Thanks to Mike Banks, the gang at Samurai Comics and the Arizona Ghostbusters. When it comes to helping in the fight against hunger … Who ya gonna call?

Here’s a look at the 2010 National Free Comic Book Day festivities in New York.
http://www.freecomicbookday.com/

5/6: Valley Benefits for week of May 6 (excerpt)
Phoenix Business Journal - Date: Friday, May 6, 2011, 9:15am MST

• St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance sent 660 emergency food boxes and more than 500 cans of baby formula to tornado-torn areas of Alabama this week, where thousands of people were left homeless. For more: firstfoodbank.org.
The National Association of Letter Carriers, Branch 704 and the Postal Service will be conducting their 19th annual National Food Drive on May 14. Place nonperishable food donations on top of the mailbox on May 14 and the letter carrier on that route will collect the food and deliver it to the food bank. For details, talk to a letter carrier or call the Sierra Vista Post Office at 458-0554.

Saturday, May 7, is the date for the 3rd Annual F.O.R. Maricopa Food Bank Golf Tournament. Held at the Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Course (48456 W. Highway 238, Maricopa), the proceeds benefit the Maricopa Food Bank and prizes include a new car, a trip to Hawaii, and a large flat screen television. You can register online at http://FORmaricopa.org.

On Friday May 13, there’s a fun event – a Casa Grande Cooler Concert! – in front of a great hangar (3152 Lear Avenue) with all the proceeds going to benefit the CAC Nursing Program and the Casa Grande Food Bank. Suits and ties are forbidden so bring your cooler full of snacks and beverages (don't forget a lawn chair or two), and come ready to tap your toes to the tropical music of Mark Mulligan and Kelly McGuire. Gates open at 6:30 p.m. Tickets are $25 a head: for more information email casagrandecoolerconcert@gmail.com.

The 1st annual Ian McNessie Highland Gathering occurs tonight from 5 to 9 in the Prescott Valley Entertainment District. Celtic music, dancers and entertainment will be featured. The Games are a fundraising event for the Yavapai Food Bank, the Circle L Ranch and the Celtic Scholarship Fund. Tickets are 15 dollars for adults and 12 dollars for seniors, students and those in the military. Wee ones under 5 are free.

El pasado 25 de abril la Ciudad de Phoenix reconoció a dos jóvenes de Phoenix durante la vigésimo quinta edición del "Outstanding Young Man and Young Woman of the Year" que fue realizado en el Hilton Garden Inn en el centro de Phoenix.

Quince estudiantes de distintas preparatorias del Valle fueron seleccionados en el evento, al igual que los maestros que les inspiraron.
De los seleccionados, los dos más destacados recibieron un galardón de 2 mil dólares destinados a becas estudiantiles. Emily Dart, estudiante del doceavo grado y educada en casa fue reconocida como "Young Woman of the Year".

Por su parte el "Outstanding Young Man of the Year" fue para Chris Kaplan, quien cursa el onceavo grado en Moon Valley High School y vive en el distrito 1.

Dart mientras era alumna del onceavo grado abrió su propio negocio de teñido de corbatas llamado "DartsArts" y desde su apertura ha crecido vendiendo sus productos en el Phoenix Farmer's Market, en Internet e impartiendo clases de teñido y fiestas de cumpleaños.

Por su parte Kaplan tiene una lista extensa de proyectos de servicio comunitarios los cuales incluyen trabajo de voluntario en Neighborhood Watch, St. Mary's Food Bank, el Hugh O'Brian Youth Leadership Foundation. Al graduarse de la preparatoria quiere estudiar para ser contador y políticas publicas para eventualmente tener su propia firma y luego ser un servidor publico.

Dart dice que su negocio le ha ayudado a plasmar una idea en algo concreto y alcanzar un sueño. Dart planea estudiar para ser doctora.

Estudiantes de todo el Valle aplicaron para este reconocimiento al someter ensayos, calificaciones y cartas de recomendación y la selección fue basada en el compromiso y excelencia en varias áreas de sus vidas.

Asimismo, al resto de los estudiantes reconocidos se les otorgó becas por 250 dólares.

5/5: Blog: USDA Hosts Webinar Watch Events Across the Country to Feed Hungry Kids this Summer

Posted by Max Finberg, Director, USDA Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, on May 5, 2011 at 4:09 PM

With one out of every four Latino families struggling to put food on the table, congregations and community-based organizations need all the help they can get in meeting this challenge. That is why USDA hosted Hispanic pastors in cities across the country for webinar watch events on the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP).

The National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference (NHCLC) partnered with USDA’s Center for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships and the Food and Nutrition Service to hold viewings in California, Florida, Arizona, Texas, and Washington, DC. The webinars are one of many ways USDA is engaging faith-based, Hispanic-serving organizations to participate in USDA’s nutrition assistance programs. Feeding kids through the Summer Food Service Program is particularly important: 21 million children receive free or reduced school lunches during the year, but only 3.4 million kids are fed meals over the summer through USDA summer feeding programs.

At USDA Headquarters in Washington, local pastors from the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia gathered together to watch the Summer Food Service Program webinar, and program administrators joined the event to answer questions afterward. The audience was comprised of NHCLC members and colleagues, and each participant went home with information and contacts for starting the Summer Food Service Program at their local churches. Several pastors committed to participating in the program, which helps reach the First Lady’s goal to launch new summer feeding sites as part of the Let’s Move! Faith and Communities initiative. As a Let’s Move! partner, NHCLC has committed to hosting 120 new summer feeding sites this summer.
In Arizona, Reverend Eve Nunez and Help4Kidz hosted a viewing for folks in Phoenix looking to help local children get meals for the summer when school lets out. Pastor Jose Elias hosted Floridians outside of Orlando at the Family Christian Center. In Los Angeles, CA, Reverend Jaime Tolle brought pastors and community leaders to La Iglesia en El Camino (The Church on the Way). And in Texas, the San Antonio Food Bank hosted NHCLC Board Secretary, Pastor Eliezer Bonilla, and almost 50 guests to watch the webinar and ask questions afterward. At each webinar viewing, state agency representatives, USDA regional administrators, and/or SFSP program sponsors answered questions, brought information specific to each locale, and helped folks in the room sign up to participate in the SFSP program.

More than 160 participants registered for the webinar, and live feeds came in to USDA Headquarters from all over the country during the Watch Party: “People here are interested and engaged. We had fun!” In Washington, pastors mingled afterward to exchange ideas and brainstorm ways to implement the program. One pastor enthusiastically said, “This is a great opportunity. Imagine how many more kids we can help feed, now that we know about SFSP and other programs mentioned.”

5/5: What’s happening (excerpt)
Posted: Thursday, May 5, 2011 12:00 am

Saturday

International Festival of Tucson - Sewell Elementary School, 425 N. Sahuara Ave. Cuisine and sweets from around the world. Shop at the Artisans Villa and Church Market for authentic items. Musical groups, Arabic line dancing and a children’s mariachi group. Games and activities for kids. Sponsored by Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church. 11 a.m.-8 p.m. May 7. $1 or bring one can of food to benefit the Community Food Bank for free admission; free for military with ID and kids under 12. 622-2265.

5/4: Nearly one in seven in the U.S. receive food stamps
http://ktar.com/?sid=1411864&nid=509
by KTAR.com (May 4th, 2011 @ 11:26am)

Many Americans are struggling, and a new study shows about one in seven are receiving food stamps.

According to the Wall Street Journal, the number of food stamp recipients was flat in February, with 44.2 million Americans using them.

The food stamp program ballooned during the recession as workers lost their jobs or saw their hours and income reduced. The rise in recipients has begun to flatten in recent months, which may mean that as the economy is improving fewer Americans are seeking to join the program. Enrollment in the program is still high though, with 11.6% more people tapping benefits in February than the same month a year earlier.

Arizona, for example, has 16.1 percent of its population on stamps, with 1,006,005 being used in February.

5/4: How to Recycle a Bicycle
By Tony Paniagua - May 4, 2011
When thousands of university students leave for the summer because of graduation or vacation, many will want to get rid of items like microwaves, lamps and bicycles. Now, with the help of local groups, fewer of those discarded items will end up in landfills.

BICAS is working with the University of Arizona on a pilot project to accept bicycles from students who don't want to take them or can't pack them with their other belongings. BICAS stands for Bicycle Inter-Community Art and Salvage, and right now one of its main projects is to gather these popular forms of transportation.

Kylie Walzak is the BICAS education and outreach co-coordinator. She says the non-profit organization, which is located in a downtown Tucson warehouse, can certainly benefit from the donations.

"We've talked to a lot of different people at the UA to ask them how can we sort of intervene in this process to prevent these bicycles from being abandoned in the first place and then get them here to BICAS, where we can turn them into working bikes or use them for parts or teach people about bikes on them," she says.

BICAS is working with Jill Ramirez, who coordinates sustainability education for about 6,000 students who live on campus. She says the recycling tradition is already in place with other items, so now she's spreading the word about bicycles.

“They are encouraged to bring down what they no longer want and it’s donated to Salvation Army and the Community Food Bank,” she says. "Last year we had about 29 tons of material that was donated and it’s everything from storage bins to microwaves."

BICAS will be accepting donations on the north side of the Student Memorial Center on Thursday, May 5th, and again from the 9th until the 13th of May from 10 am to 5 pm. The group also welcomes bicycles all year in its warehouse at 44 West 6th Street.

5/4: Getaway around Rim Country (excerpt)
May 4, 2011

Benefit dance

There will be a benefit dance for the St. Vincent de Paul Society Food Bank of Payson from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Saturday, May 7.

The dance will feature the music of the Elliotts. They’ll be playing ’60s, ’70s, ’80s, swing, oldies and country at Uptown Espresso, 612 N. Beeline Highway (in the Swiss Village).

Desserts by Gerardo’s Firewood Café and coffee or tea from Uptown Espresso will be provided for free with each $10 per person donation or try the many items available for purchase on the Uptown Espresso menu.

For ticket or donation information, visit Uptown Espresso or call Bill at (951) 634-4208.

5/3: 600 Emergency Food Boxes Sent To Victims Of Recent Tornadoes In Alabama: St. Mary’s food bank alliance sends more than 600 emergency food boxes and more than 500 emergency baby boxes to victims of recent tornadoes in Alabama
May 3, 2011 · Published By Associate Editor
Phoenix – Responding to the needs of the victims of the tornadoes that have stuck Alabama and many other southeastern states, St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance sent a truckload of more than 660 emergency food boxes and 500 large cans of baby formula to Alabama early Monday afternoon.

The food boxes will be distributed to those who have been left homeless by last week’s devastating events.

More than 200 tornadoes touched down in seven southern states from April 25-28, killing more than 300 and leaving thousands homeless. St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance and other food banks in the Feeding America network have already responded or stand ready to help Food Banks in the affected areas distributed food to those who need it in the quickest and most effective manner possible.

"As the largest food bank in the country, St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance stands ready to aid in all emergency situations and help ease the suffering of those affected by these horrific storms," St. Mary’s President and CEO Terry Shannon said. "This truckload of emergency food boxes is needed in areas where basic services and access to food will be disrupted for quite some time."

5/3: ASU 'Undie Run' helps give back to community
Posted: 05/03/2011 - By: Katie Fisher

TEMPE, AZ - Nearly 10,000 Arizona State University students stripped down for a good cause Tuesday night in the school's annual "Undie Run".

The students who participated in the nighttime event donated the clothes off their backs to charity and ran a course around the Tempe campus in their underwear as part of ASU's most popular philanthropic event.

In addition to charities serving the underprivileged and homeless, the Undie Run also partnered with Move for Hunger, asking participants to collect food to be donated to St. Mary’s Food Bank.

"I am thrilled to be a part of such an amazing campus tradition," said ASU alum Adam Lowy, Move For Hunger's 25 year-old Executive Director. "It means so much to me to be able to give back to the community that had such a major impact on who I am today."

Event organizers tell ABC15 students donated 5,300 pounds of clothing for Arizona charities at last year's Undie Run. They say the unique event not only promotes charity, but also positive body image.

"By undressing down to their underwear, the ASU Undie Run challenges students to accept themselves for who they are, and to do it alongside 10,000+ other people," said Ginger Whitesell, the organization's vice president.

ASU police and school administrators were on hand to monitor the school-sanctioned event and ensure student safety.

5/3: Community food bank available May 9
http://www.wmicentral.com/community_beat/briefs/community-food-bank-available-may/article_d32abcf0-75b6-11e0-9b3a-001cc4c03286.html
Posted: Tuesday, May 3, 2011 11:53 am
White Mountain Community Food Bank will be available Monday, May 9 from 8-10 a.m. for emergency food boxes only.

Federal Food Plus boxes and emergency boxes is scheduled Friday, May 20, from 8-10 a.m..

Federal Senior Boxes are for people 60 plus years old on a fixed income. You must show proof of income (Social Security paper or bank statement) and a valid picture ID.

If you qualify you may sign up on May 20.

The Food Bank is located at 820 Moonridge Dr. and Hwy 260 right next to the Blue Ridge School soccer field, at the Living Waters Church in Lakeside.

For questions or more information, call (928) 537-9087.