

AAFB MEDIA WATCH: JANUARY 24, 2011 – JANUARY 30, 2012
submissions: brian@azfoodbanks.org

1/30: Arcadia residents launch citrus collection

<http://www.azcentral.com/community/phoenix/articles/2012/01/25/20120125arcadia-residents-launch-citrus-collection.html>

by Philip Haldiman - Jan. 30, 2012 08:57 AM - The Republic | azcentral.com

In the last 10 years, the Arcadia Citrus Program has collected more than 2 million pounds of citrus while helping to keep some unwelcome visitors in check.

This year's goal is to collect at least 150 tons of citrus, says organizer Barry Pacey.

Starting last week and continuing on Saturdays over the next two months, Valley residents can drop their quality citrus off at BPOE Scottsdale Lodge 2148, 6398 E. Oak St., Scottsdale.

The fruit will be delivered to food banks, senior centers, Native American tribes and Maricopa County jails.

And to think it all started because of roof rats in Arcadia.

About 10 years ago, the Arcadia neighborhood in east-central Phoenix had an infestation of roof rats, Pacey said.

The citrus-collection program helped to eliminate an important food source for the rodents in Arcadia. The program has become a model for taking care of the roof-rat issue, Pacey said.

"Now, the problem is more checkerboarded, and for the most part, folks in Arcadia have kept them on the run," he said. "But the citrus program maintains awareness and keeps people informed that the rat problem is ongoing."

Now, he said, people come from throughout the Valley to donate.

"We have a tremendous opportunity here," he said "One tree is enough to feed a family in a year, giving us an abundance of the fruit. And tons of it goes to waste."

Share the juice

Valley residents can pick their citrus and bring surplus citrus to the drop-off location by box, bucket or truck bed.

Drop-off: BPOE Scottsdale Lodge 2148, 6398 E. Oak St., Scottsdale.

Schedule: Saturdays through March 24. Resident drop-off, 8 a.m. to noon. Commercial drop-off, 8-10 a.m.

Volunteering: Volunteers may support the program by organizing collection groups or by providing time at the Saturday morning drop-off site.

Information: 602-273-0435 or 602-549-0401, www.roofrat.net.

1/30: Decision Maker for Jan. 30: Norm Gold

<http://www2.timesdispatch.com/business/2012/jan/30/tdmbiz17-decision-maker-for-jan-30-norm-gold-ar-1648809/>

By: Times-Dispatch Staff | Richmond Times Dispatch - Published: January 30, 2012 Updated: January 30, 2012 - 12:00 AM

New position: chief operations officer, FeedMore Inc., the umbrella organization of the Central Virginia Food Bank, Meals on Wheels and the Community Kitchen

Previous position: chief operations officer at St. Mary's Food Bank in Phoenix for 14 years

Birthplace: Long Beach, Calif.

Experience: management jobs in the for-profit, retail industry and the nonprofit world

Career: store director, Lucky Stores and ABCO Foods (in grocery industry for 24 years); director of operations and distribution, Association of Arizona Food Banks; chief operations officer, St. Mary's Food Bank, Phoenix

Best career move: "Accepting the quality-assurance manager's position with St. Mary's Food Bank (leaving grocery retail to work for a nonprofit). This move led me in the direction of a purposeful career, and still gives me the feeling of fulfillment every day after work, no matter the amount of hours worked per day or the stress."

The best advice he ever received: "Be careful to always listen to your staff. Do not assume anything."

Career tip for students: "Even if it is tempting, do not take time off from school, either right after high school or during your college years. Too many factors could cause you not to return and complete your education."

What motivates him? "I am motivated by helping people, whether it is helping out the individuals and agencies the food bank serves, or to help staff become successful in their position, or to help management staff to grow to their potential."

Role model: John Van Hengel, credited with establishing the first food bank in 1967

Family: wife, Sandy; daughters, Melissa and Aleksandra; son, Matthew

Pastimes: "Philately — stamp collecting — something I took up from my father. It is relaxing and interesting. Bike riding — my wife and I enjoy getting on our bicycles and just riding off in the country."

The most memorable movie: "'The Longest Day,' a movie of the D-Day invasion. While not the best movie ever made, I remember seeing it numerous times as a kid with my brother."

Favorite restaurant: "La Fontanella in Phoenix. Being new in Virginia, my wife and I have not had a chance to find one to take its place here."

Ideal vacation: "One that is not packed with scheduled stops, scheduled changes — a relaxing, restful time, either at the beach in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, or off in the country, anywhere."

1/30: Briefs: Class action certified in GVR lawsuit (excerpt)

http://www.gvnews.com/news/briefs-class-action-certified-in-gvr-lawsuit/article_92f9b464-4b77-11e1-b4d5-0019bb2963f4.html

Posted: Monday, January 30, 2012 12:15 pm | Updated: 12:31 pm, Mon Jan 30, 2012.

Food bank benefits from fund-raiser

"Everything is Red," a silent auction and lunch fund-raiser to benefit the Green Valley Sahuarita Community Food Bank, will be held at 11 a.m. Feb. 10.

The event is sponsored by Prestige Assisted Living and Carondelet Hospice and Palliative Care.

Come shop, place a bid, then enjoy a free lunch. Prestige is located at 1175 S. Abrego Drive, Green Valley.

Information: 648-5583, or email emorton@prestigecare.com.

1/29: Editorial: Let districts decide on school-lunch participation

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/opinions/articles/2012/01/29/20120129school-lunch-participation.html>

<http://azcapitoltimes.com/news/2012/01/27/the-truth-behind-sb1061-%e2%80%94-the-school-lunch-opt-out-bill/>

http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/arizona/article_fb424360-47ee-11e1-b17f-001871e3ce6c.html

by Rich Crandall - Jan. 29, 2012 07:30 PM

If ever I needed to channel Paul Harvey, now is the time. Since Senate Bill 1070, I don't think I have ever witnessed more false statements, misunderstandings and outright lies than I have with the school-lunch opt-out bill. So with great respect for a radio legend -- here is the rest of the story.

Approximately six years ago, a large nutrition bill worked its way through the Legislature. For some reason, at that time, someone decided to make school-lunch participation mandatory for K-8 district grades, instead of voluntary like it had been for the past 50 years. I say "for some reason" because all K-8 district grades with more than 100 kids were already participating in the program. High schools and charter schools were exempted from the new mandate.

Fast-forward to today. The U.S. Department of Agriculture updates its school-lunch rules about every 12-15 years. This year happens to be the year that the rules are undergoing a overhaul. The new rules cover everything from what has to be served, what portion sizes are allowed, how much schools have to charge kids, how often schools are audited, etc. As reported about Mesa's School Food Service Director Loretta Zullo in the East Valley Tribune:

"She is 'anxiously' awaiting the final approved changes to the program, which would increase the required number of fruits, vegetables and whole-grain products served, as well as change how districts can calculate how much they charge.

"Under the first proposals put out, Zullo said it could have resulted in a lot of increased cost for the district, but she anticipated Mesa could weather it. 'It's a complicated formula,' she said of the proposed way districts must charge for meals. 'Districts may have to supplement (meal prices) from the general fund. Districts are not going to want to do that. They do not have the money to do that.' "

In anticipation of all the new rules being rolled out in 2012, I felt it would be a good idea to go back to the law Arizona districts followed six years ago. Besides, 41 other states let districts choose whether or not to participate in the national school-lunch program. Only nine mandate it, including Arizona.

Contrary to what has been reported, I am not anti-fresh fruit, anti-nutritious meals or anti-low-income children. I simply want schools to have flexibility to tackle their challenges in the best way they see fit. This is why the Arizona School Boards Association supports the bill.

I firmly believe not a single child will go hungry as a result of this bill. Why else would 41 other states not feel compelled to force their districts to participate in the federal school-lunch program? And why were all schools participating before the law was changed six years ago? This mandate is unnecessary.

SB 1061 is a simple one-word change -- "shall" to "may." Nothing more, nothing less.

Supporters of SB 1061 and opponents of the bill basically disagree on one major point: Can local communities and constituents be trusted to take care of the children in their charge?

I firmly fall on the side of local control, freedom and self-governance. The loudest opponents to SB 1061 claim that only through mandates can people be trusted to do what is in the best interest of children. I sure hope this is not the direction we are headed as a country.

With regard to a conflict of interest, I do own a company that works in the school-nutrition area. State governments hire my company to audit menus and conduct on-site audits. I do not do any reviews or audits in Arizona.

I stand to gain absolutely nothing from this bill passing. And no, contrary to what a few blogs have reported, I do not provide food to Arizona schools. As Senate education chair, I am simply trying to eliminate a mandate in state statute that takes away a community's right to choose what is best for their children.

Rich Crandall, a Republican, is chairman of the Arizona Senate Education Committee.

1/29: McComish the only Republican to approve amendment to school lunch bill

http://www.eastvalleytribune.com/local/the_valley/ahwatukee/article_dd6dc30f-acd2-56a4-9ce7-6c4387f56958.html

Posted: Sunday, January 29, 2012 7:02 pm - By Allison Hurtado, Ahwatukee Foothills News East Valley Tribune

Sen. John McComish said he was responding to his constituent's concerns when he voted "yes" to approve an amendment on Senate Bill 1061, a bill on that would allow schools to opt-out of the National School Lunch Program.

The final vote for SB 1061 has not yet taken place, but on Thursday the State Senate debated the bill and a possible amendment to it.

The original bill allows schools to opt out of the free and reduced school lunch program. The amendment discussed on Thursday said if schools wanted to opt out of the program then the school district must provide free or reduced lunches for those in need. McComish was the only Republican to vote for the amendment.

"I was at a meeting with a number of Kyrene parents on Tuesday and it was pretty clear that my constituents were very much against that bill," McComish said. "I thought that if the amendment were to pass it would make the bill more acceptable."

The amendment did not pass. McComish says he does not plan to vote for the bill. He and Rep. Bob Robson have asked Sen. Rich Crandall to withdraw the bill. Crandall was not present for the debate on Thursday.

In a column Crandall said he submitted the bill because he did not feel the mandate was necessary. All schools were already choosing to be a part of the program before it became mandatory.

McComish said while Crandall makes a good point, he is standing with those he represents who he says have made it clear they do not approve of the bill.

"It was pretty clear that my constituents that I represent disagree with that and think that it should be mandated, and that the status quo should remain," McComish said. "I'm responding to what was a pretty clear signal from the constituents that I represent.

"We have asked that he withdraw the bill because there has been a lot of public concern about it. We have no idea how he's going to respond. I think at this point that would be the better course."

McComish expects the bill to come to a final vote some time next week.

1/29: Project Connect helps needy make ends meet

http://azdailysun.com/news/local/project-connect-helps-needy-make-ends-meet/article_a26d9bd3-f709-54e1-a851-651b4fc3be50.html

LARRY HENDRICKS News Team Leader azdailysun.com | Posted: Sunday, January 29, 2012 5:00 am

Tracy Cruise, 48, left Flagstaff after high school.

She had two daughters, who are now 30 and 17, and in the intervening years she lived across Arizona. In 2010, she lost her job in Yuma because of the downturn in the economy, she said.

"I tried for a year to find a job," she said, tears welling in her eyes. "And I lost everything."

She lost her vehicle, and had to make the agonizing decision to leave her youngest daughter with the girl's father.

She moved back "home" to Flagstaff in February last year to try to get back on her feet.

Although Cruise has a job and a home, she still struggles to make ends meet.

So, she and hundreds of others with similar stories spent Saturday morning at the 11th installment of Flagstaff Project Connect at Killip Elementary School in Sunnyside.

UNDER ONE ROOF

FPC, or "The Connect," puts all the services necessary to help the homeless and needy under one roof for a day.

Sara Herron, community organizer for Coconino County Community Services, said, "We're here to find an end to homelessness and poverty -- that's our slogan."

More than 40 agencies and businesses offered services to the poor at Saturday's event. Among those services were:

- Counseling
- Birth certificates/Identification
- Utility assistance
- Substance abuse help
- Job assistance
- Food
- Dental checkups
- Medical checkups
- Haircuts

Area residents served as volunteers to lead the attendees through the process and assist them in finding the services they need. Herron said that last year's event had about 100 volunteers. This year's event had 250, and Herron spent much of Saturday scrambling about finding other people who could serve as volunteers to meet the need.

In the past 10 events held at various locations in Flagstaff, an average of 500 to 800 people have shown up for help.

"It's a sign of the economy," Herron said. "It's a sign of the times."

CLOTHING AND A HAIRCUT

While Cruise was at The Connect, she inquired into utility assistance, food bank requirements, Goodwill clothing and received a haircut she hasn't had in a year because she couldn't afford it.

Her job as a purchasing technician doesn't pay "a lot," but it does have health benefits, Cruise said. She has been able to move out of her mother's home and into her own home, but she keeps everything unplugged because she can't afford a costly electricity bill.

"It's embarrassing, because I was raised to stand on my own two feet," Cruise said, adding that it was difficult for her to be able to ask for help.

Cruise was also at the event looking for a night job to supplement her income, so she could afford to be able to take a bus to the Yuma area to visit her daughter. She doesn't have the luxury of being able to save money for a car at the moment.

On Saturday, she saw people with similar circumstances and knows she is not alone in the world, she said. She also witnessed people who gave freely of their time and themselves to help her and others like her.

"I'm one of the lucky ones," Cruise said. "I don't want people to feel sorry for me. Yes, I've had a rough time. But I'm making it, and I'm happy."

The next Flagstaff Project Connect has yet to be scheduled.

Herron said the hope is to have two more connects this year, one in the summer and one in the fall.

1/27: Preschoolers win contest for donating 1,000 pounds of food to local food banks (w/PHOTO)

<http://www.dcourier.com/main.asp?SectionID=102&SubSectionID=163&ArticleID=102582>

1/27/2012 9:59:00 PM - Matt Campbell/Courtesy photo

Students at The Del E. Webb Family Enrichment Center received a donation of \$2,000 from Prescott dentist Dr. Bobby L. Raber and his practices Every Kid's Dentist and Prescott Modern Dentistry to their school's parent-teacher organization.

The preschoolers won a contest in which four schools aimed to donate the most cans of food per student to Open Door and Yavapai Food Bank.

The \$2,000 donation from the dental practices will be used for needed classroom supplies and to help families who are struggling financially.

1/27: Farmer's Market can help stretch food dollars (w/VIDEO)

<http://www.fox11az.com/news/local/Farmers-Market-can-help-stretch-food-dollars-138224169.html>

fox11az.com - Posted on January 27, 2012 at 2:38 PM - Updated Friday, Jan 27 at 2:42 PM

TUCSON, Ariz. -- The weekly Santa Cruz River farmers' market was held Thursday afternoon on the west side.

The market is held every Thursday from 3 to 6 P.M.

The market featured workshops on nutrition and homemade soap making. The market features produce from dozens of vendors and farmers in Southern Arizona.

"Right now we're running a special program for those who use SNAP benefits, or food stamps, so, anyone who comes with their EBT card out to the market can get a dollar for dollar match on their purchases," said Monica Garcia from the Community Food Bank.

If you missed out Thursday, you can still catch it next Thursday at the Mercado San Agustin.

1/27: News 4 Tucson and Fry's Food Stores present the 100-Ton Food Drive! (w/VIDEO)

<http://www.kvoa.com/news/news-4-tucson-and-fry-s-food-stores-present-the-100-ton-food-drive/>

Posted: Jan 27, 2012 4:07 PM - Updated: Jan 27, 2012 4:08 PM

It's the Feast of the Centennial! As part of the celebrations for Arizona's Centennial this February, News 4 Tucson is teaming up with Fry's Food Stores and the Tucson Fire Department to fill the shelves at the Southern Arizona Food Bank with the "100-Ton Food Drive"!

Every Tuesday in February will be "100 Ton Tuesday." News 4 Tucson will be broadcasting live from various Fry's Stores throughout the day, collecting food for the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona.

The holiday season has left the food bank's shelves in desperate need of re-stocking, so make sure to stop by in February to drop off non-perishable food items and help those in need in your community.

Here are the dates and locations for "100 Ton Tuesdays":

- Feb. 1: Fry's Store #138: 4036 N. 1st Ave. Tucson, AZ 85719 (1st & Roger)
- Feb. 7: Fry's Store #19: 3920 E. Grant Rd. Tucson, AZ 85712 (Grant & Alvernon)
- Feb. 14: Store #131: 2480 N. Swan Rd. Tucson, AZ 85712 (Grant & Swan)
- Feb. 21: Store #119: 902 W. Irvington Tucson, AZ 85714 (I-19 & Irvington)
- Feb. 28: Store #58: 2001 E. Irvington Rd. Tucson AZ 85714 (Irvington & Campbell)

1/27: Food for thought: Main Course ~ A bill before the Legislature allows local school districts to opt out of a new federal healthy lunch program

<http://trivalleycentral.com/articles/2012/01/27/front/doc4f22c2d978e51011433211.txt>

By Kellie Mejdrich - Arizona-Sonora News Service - Published: Friday, January 27, 2012 8:37 AM MST

Side 1 ~ Taking part in the federal program will increase the price of lunch for parents who live just above poverty

Side 2 ~ Opting out could mean that 50,000 Arizona schoolchildren eligible for free lunches will go hungry

Could 50,000 Arizona schoolchildren be going without lunch?

That's the fear some people are expressing if the Legislature passes and the governor signs a bill under consideration.

SB 1061, sponsored by Sen. Rich Crandall, R-Mesa, waives a mandate that kindergarten-through-eighth-grade public school districts participate in the National School Lunch Program, a federal program that provides free and reduced-price lunches to children through cash subsidies.

While many Republican legislators laud the bill, saying it promotes "local control," the bill baffles nutritionists and educators who say it attacks a federal program that provided Arizona more than \$340 million in cash for lunches last year.

The program, called the "Healthy Hunger Kids Act," was unveiled in detail Wednesday by First Lady Michelle Obama, detailing the increases of fruit and whole grain, and cut in sodium and trans fat — a \$3.2 billion program to be implemented over the next five years.

School officials like Nutrition Director Karen Johnson of Yuma Elementary School District are baffled as to why this bill is even necessary, calling the National School Lunch Program "a federal program that works."

"He's trying to plug a leak in a dam that's not leaking. There's no leak here," Johnson said. Johnson fears this bill could leave some kids, even a small number, with no way to pay for or receive a lunch.

"To me, if one school drops off the program, and if there's one child that's going to go hungry that day, we've done an injustice to that student," Johnson said. "I know people don't think that will happen, but it could happen. And to me, 'could' is something that I have to pay attention to."

Stacey Morley, director of policy development and government relations with the Arizona Department of Education, believes public outrage would likely keep food on the plates of Arizona's poorest.

"What school board is going to vote not to feed kids? Imagine that headline," Morley said.

She imagines the situation Crandall is envisioning is one where a school with a low percentage of children eligible for free and reduced lunch finds the program too expensive. But even then, they'd have to provide the meals themselves, she said.

But there's no guarantee in the bill that this happens.

Crandall refused to provide language in the bill guaranteeing children receive a free or reduced lunch absent the federal program, something Jennifer Loreda, a spokeswoman for the Arizona Education Association, requested.

"I won't replace one mandate with another," Crandall said.

Crandall doesn't believe his bill will leave kids hungry, and he doubts anyone will go off the program.

"No one will be going off of the National School Lunch Program unless the new federal rules cause them to lose their shirt financially and they opt for a different way to feed children," Crandall said.

But nothing in the bill says they have to "opt for a different way."

Crandall said he wants to provide these schools with the same level of "local control" that charter and high schools enjoy in the state. He is against new federal regulations that require more fruit be served because students who pay full price will now have to pay more.

However, many educators and operators of school lunch programs are baffled as to the relevance of the bill.

In 2010, Arizona received \$343 million in cash subsidies for the National School Lunch Program, cash that was used to feed, on average, more than half a million children in the state every day, according to statistics provided by the Arizona Department of Education.

Crandall thinks that new regulations within the congressional "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act" passed in 2010 could become a financial burden for schools.

However, these new regulations will take time to be implemented and likely won't cause drastic change, Johnson said.

One of the main provisions of the "Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act" that Crandall said he took issue with was the requirement lunchrooms raise their prices to match the subsidy for a free lunch child. That means over time, a lunchroom would have to raise its full-price lunch rates to around \$2.77 or \$2.79, depending on the income level of their schools. Right now, many schools in Arizona charge lunch prices as low as \$1.

"So those who get hurt the most is that middle income," Crandall said. "People who don't qualify for free lunch but are just above it."

But that increase in price only has to happen by 10 cents a year, the federal law states.

Johnson, whose district right now charges only \$1 for a full-price lunch, isn't worried about the requirements since the increase would be so gradual, she said.

Johnson just doesn't understand why Crandall thinks the bill is necessary, she said.

"It's a mystery to me," she said. "It's really a program that should be accessible for all children."

Crandall contends the bill involves a "one word change [shall to may]" that "allows district K-8 grades to have the exact same flexibility that Arizona high schools and charter schools enjoy."

1/27: Arizona bill requires ID to get food stamps

<http://www.bizjournals.com/phoenix/blog/business/2012/01/arizona-bill-requires-id-to-get-food.html>

Phoenix Business Journal by Mike Sunnucks, Senior Reporter - Date: Friday, January 27, 2012, 2:28pm MST - Last Modified: Friday, January 27, 2012, 2:54pm MST

Conservatives traditionally don't like the idea of national identification cards, citing Orwellian "big brother" fears. Those same concerns aren't always held when it comes to trying to keep illegal immigrants from getting jobs or welfare benefits.

Some Arizona Republican lawmakers have introduced new bill at the Legislature requiring those receiving food stamps in the state to have a state-issued identification card. They would then have to produce that card and another form of identification when buying groceries via the assistance program.

Arizona Reps. Carl Seel and Jack Harper are the main sponsors. Both are Republicans.

There are 1.1 million Arizonans on food stamps and \$46.2 million Americans, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Arizona House Bill 2582 is being considered by state lawmakers. It's aimed at cutting into fraud.

On the immigration and workforce front, Republican presidential combatants Mitt Romney and Newt Gingrich have talked up the idea of workplace identification cards for workers to help weed out illegal immigrant workers.

1/27: COUNCIL: Rosalin Sanhadja (excerpt)

http://www.trivalleycentral.com/articles/2012/01/27/maricopa_monitor/top_stories/doc4f22df10df8bb406113462.txt

Published: Friday, January 27, 2012 10:41 AM MST

WHAT IS YOUR PAST POLITICAL/PUBLIC SERVICE EXPERIENCE?

I have never held office before. However, I have spent over 15 years working in the legal field in cities such as Washington, D.C. and in Phoenix that involve working with many different areas of government. Currently, I work in the government relations, regulatory affairs and contracting department at a national law firm and that has provided me with a lot of experience and knowledge about how things really work behind the scenes in our great state of Arizona that do ultimately affect our city.

I have volunteered with various groups big, small and grass roots, such as United Way, YWCA, Boys and Girls Club, Give the gift of Life, Stuff a Box-for Troops overseas, domestic violence shelters, Red Cross, **St. Mary's food bank**, Just Say No-teen drug prevention program, Habitat for Humanity, Meals on Wheels and Save a Senior - visiting seniors during extreme hot and cold days and serving meals and providing needed supplies at the Ronald McDonald house.

1/27: Pine, Strawberry are the best kept secrets in Arizona (excerpt)

<http://www.paysonroundup.com/news/2012/jan/27/pine-strawberry-are-best-kept-secrets-arizona/>

By Joy Hafford - January 27, 2012

Quilt Angels Quilt-a Thon

I'm excited to tell you about a three-day quilting affair taking place in Pine that offers a fun and rewarding volunteer experience for a worthy cause. You don't have to know how to sew to participate! You only need to be an angel.

The Quilt Angels, formerly called DPS Quilt Angels, are known for providing quilts to the Department of Public Safety for victims of crime and families of fallen police officers, residents of nursing homes, and making Christmas stockings for children of local food bank families. Their only mission is to bring comfort to those in their time of need.

On March 14, 15 and 16 this small group of caring quilters are undertaking a gigantic project by hosting a Quilt-a-Thon at the First Baptist Church in Pine on Highway 87. They expect to complete 115 comfort quilts for the **Pine Strawberry Food Bank**, DPS and local charities with this ambitious project and with your help.

Tables will be set up in assembly line fashion and there is something for everyone to do, no matter your skill level.

Bring your sewing machines, if you have one, and again, you do not need to know how to sew to be helpful.

Lunch will be served to all. Prizes too. There will be laughter and love in abundance!

Thank you for finding room in your schedule and heart to be an angel.

For more information, contact Joanne Moss at 928-472-1183 or Donna Flansburg at 928-476-3968.

1/27: Enjoy the Wild West this weekend (excerpt)

http://www.havasunews.com/articles/2012/01/27/opinion/our_views/doc4f22c66e37f28320616877.txt

Today's News-Herald - Published Friday, January 27, 2012 8:51 AM MST

Proceeds from the newly formed nonprofit Cooking 4 Kids and Hunger, will benefit the Interagency Council Community Food Bank, St. Vincent de Paul Food Bank, H.A.V.E.N., Food 4 Kids backpack programs and Havasu for Youth.

1/26: School lunches to have more veggies, fruits

<http://www.azcentral.com/arizonarepublic/news/articles/2012/01/25/20120125school-lunch-standards-require-more-veggies-whole-grains.html>

by Anne Ryman - Jan. 26, 2012 12:25 AM - The Republic | azcentral.com

The school lunch is poised for a big makeover.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture on Wednesday unveiled new nutrition standards that will require schools to add more fruits and vegetables to lunch while gradually reducing the amount of sodium and trans fat. The rules also set calorie limits for the millions of meals served annually through the National School Lunch Program.

The changes, which will be phased in over three years beginning July 1, are the first major revisions the agency has made to the federal lunch program in more than 15 years.

The switch is part of a national focus on childhood obesity and the associated risk of high blood pressure, high cholesterol and type 2 diabetes. While the federal government has tried to make lunches more healthful over the years, an analysis by the USDA shows the meals are still generally high in sodium and saturated fat.

"These are final standards now that make the kind of changes that we attempt to do in our own homes and our own households," said Kevin Concannon, USDA undersecretary for food, nutrition and consumer services.

One controversial proposal is not in the final rules. The USDA originally wanted to limit starchy vegetables, such as potatoes, to no more than one cup a week. But the agency backed off after potato growers lobbied heavily against it.

The USDA also wanted to require schools to serve a higher minimum of fruits and vegetables. But food-service officials warned the requirement would lead to more wasted food, as many students would just dump it in the trash. In response, the agency lowered the minimum but still requires schools to "offer" a larger portion of fruits and vegetables.

Around the nation and in Arizona, school food-service directors are poring over the new rules.

"We'll be analyzing them and taking a look at the current menu and seeing what we need to change," said Linda Jeffries, a spokeswoman for the Alhambra Elementary School District in central Phoenix, where about 92 percent of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunches.

On Tuesday, second-graders at Westwood Primary School near 23rd Avenue and Camelback Road filed through the lunch line, picked up cartons of milk and grabbed lunch trays with a wheat roll, baked beans, a cookie, a chicken drumstick and a scoop of fruit cocktail.

Exactly how this menu would fare under the new rules isn't clear; Alhambra officials still need to evaluate them. But the fruit cocktail and baked beans may need a makeover. Students got only 1/3 cup of each side dish. Under the new rules, the school would likely need to offer 3/4 cup of the beans and 1/2 cup of fruit. If students wanted a smaller portion, they could take 1/2 cup of one or the other.

The school also would need to make sure it served a dark green and red or orange vegetables and beans or peas weekly. Other parts of the menu may be fine. For example, the school already serves the fat-free and 1 percent milk that will be required under the new rules.

Some parents say the new rules will restrict choice, and more children will just bring their own lunch to school as a result.

"The kids want variety," said Scott Kelly, who has two boys, ages 7 and 13, in Kyrene Elementary School District.

Food-services officials say that because the changes will be phased in over a couple of years, students may not notice many changes next year.

In addition, the state already has additional nutrition standards for public schools that, in some cases, are stricter than what the federal government requires. For example, the federal guidelines allow schools to serve whole milk; Arizona schools can serve milk with no more than 2 percent fat. The new federal rules will limit milk to fat free or 1 percent fat.

The National School Lunch Program has been around since 1946, but the nutrition requirements have changed over time based on the latest science about diet and health-related risks. Schools that take part get cash and free agricultural commodities, like meat and cheese. In return, lunches must meet federal nutrition requirements, and they must offer free or reduced-price lunches to lower-income families.

While there is no federal mandate that schools must be part of the National School Lunch Program, Arizona law requires district elementary and junior highs to participate. That could change if a bill recently introduced in the Arizona Legislature becomes law. Schools would be able to opt out of the federal program.

Sen. Rich Crandall, R-Mesa, said he sponsored the legislation because state law requires K-8 district schools to take part while excluding charter and high schools. He believes everyone should be treated the same. He also said the new standards could be too onerous, and schools will have no recourse.

Critics of the bill, such as the Arizona Education Association, worry the legislation would result in students not receiving lunch. The state's largest teachers union wants to add language to the bill that would require schools to serve lunch, even if they aren't part of the federal program.

Diane Pratt-Heavner, a spokeswoman for the School Nutrition Association, a Maryland-based group of food-service professionals, said: "These standards will make sure every student has access to healthy meals when they go into the cafeteria."

1/26: Proceeds will go to array of child-nutrition programs: Mardi Gras-style benefit to mix fun with a serious call for help

http://azstarnet.com/news/local/foothills/mardi-gras-style-benefit-to-mix-fun-with-a-serious/article_4ab31bc9-c0ee-5c6b-826a-34fa13614eb1.html

Loni Nannini Special To The Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Thursday, January 26, 2012 12:00 am

With the help of fellow Tucsonans, Stephanie Porter and a group of volunteers from the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona will let the good times roll at an upcoming fundraiser.

"I'm hoping Mardi Gras 2012 will connect local restaurants, local businesses and local artists all together in one room to celebrate and enjoy each other's company, have lots of fun and honor the accomplishments of the Community Food Bank while supporting the programs they offer," said Porter, committee chairwoman for the food bank's signature fundraiser.

Saturday's event at the Historic Manning House downtown will be a Bourbon Street-inspired celebration highlighted by the talent of local artists who have created masks to be raffled at the event.

Porter, a native Tucsonan, began working to alleviate hunger as a senior at Sahuaro High School in 2004. She served as youth board member for the Community Food Bank, then helped out with events such as Stuff the Trolley and UA4Food while attending the University of Arizona.

Now a business-account executive for Cox Communications, she is in the midst of a three-year commitment as a member of the food bank's board of directors.

Porter said her activism is inspired by the need she has discovered in the community, particularly among kids.

"One in five children in the United States have hunger-related issues, and in Pima County that figure is one in four," Porter said. "We are higher than the national average, and as the government cuts funding, that need is increasing even more. It is crucial to have support from the community."

Donations from the U.S. Department of Agriculture have declined by 2 million pounds since the same time last year, while requests for food continue to rise, said Jack Parris, the food bank's public-relations manager.

Four years ago the food bank served 98,000 people each month through all of its programs; it now serves more than 225,000 a month.

"We have a lot more people requesting help from us, and we are experiencing less food donations than we have in the past," Parris said. "Bill Carnegie (Community Food Bank president/CEO) calls it 'the perfect storm' at this point.

"We see more of the same for 2012. We see people who are underemployed and unemployed, and we don't believe the demand is going to come down until people start getting jobs."

The Community Food Bank provides emergency food boxes and other food-assistance programs. It also has a backyard community garden program with classes that teach Tucsonans to grow their own food and a program featuring four farmers markets weekly throughout the city.

The organic produce offered at the markets is intended to be healthy and cost-effective. It is grown on the Community Food Bank's 10-acre farm in Marana and taken on consignment from local farmers.

"I was surprised by the amount of work the food bank does that other food banks don't do," Porter said. "It kind of starts the process of teaching people how to help themselves instead of getting emergency food boxes. They can grow fruits and vegetables in their yards and then maybe help their neighbors as well."

Proceeds from Mardi Gras 2012 will benefit child-nutrition programs such as Summer Meals, Kid's Club-Adventures in Nutrition and Snak Paks for Kids, which provide packs filled with healthy food over the weekend to children who receive free and reduced-price breakfast and lunch at 13 schools in Pima County.

"You don't know what others have and how fortunate you are until you get involved," Porter said.

If you go

- What: The Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona's Mardi Gras 2012
- When: 7 p.m. Saturday
- Where: The Historic Manning House, 450 W. Paseo Redondo
- Cost: \$100 per person
- Etc.: Festivities include a "moving party" with New Orleans-style dinner and dessert, cocktails, tarot-card readings, a photo booth, dancing, live entertainment and a raffle of more than 30 masks created by local artists (currently on display at Tucson Originals restaurants). King and Queen of Carnivale Ron and Nancy Barber will be honored.
- Info and tickets: Tickets will be sold through Friday. Go to communityfoodbank.com or call 622-0525, Ext. 492.

1/26: Food Bank manages farm stand, which features lots of local produce: Find fresh food at northwest-side community center

http://azstarnet.com/news/local/northwest/find-fresh-food-at-northwest-side-community-center/article_733843c0-ab0c-5db6-9e5a-c687fb316c23.html

Andrea Rivera Arizona Daily Star Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Thursday, January 26, 2012 12:00 am

A little-known farm stand is providing the Flowing Wells community with locally grown produce twice a month.

The Farm Stand at the Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center is open from 9 a.m. to noon the first and third Fridays of each month under a small tent in the center's parking lot.

"We have a small but dedicated group of customers," said Monica Garcia, an education and community outreach coordinator for the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona.

The center is at 1660 W. Ruthrauff Road.

The Food Bank manages the Flowing Wells Farm Stand as well as five other farm stands and farmers markets in Pima County.

The Flowing Wells stand opened 14 months ago and mostly attracts people who use the community center. It also receives some traffic from a nearby library and WIC office.

Dianna Kelley runs the community center and said having the stand steps from the center is good for some of her older patrons, who can take advantage of what the center has to offer and buy produce all in one trip.

Kelley also is a customer of the stand.

"It makes a huge difference. I've been trying to eat healthy," she said.

Fruits and vegetables sold at the farm stand are grown at the Food Bank's Marana Heritage Farm and also at the Food Bank's demonstration garden.

Produce from small farmers and home gardeners also is sold at farm stands through a consignment program, Garcia said.

A variety of produce was available at the Flowing Wells farm stand Friday.

The offerings included bright red tomatoes, citrus, Pink Lady apples, beans, radishes, potatoes, sweet potatoes, kale, salad mix, spinach and other greens and roots.

"We're trying to bring a good cross-section of what we have at our larger markets," said Sara Rickard, a farmers market assistant with the Food Bank.

Produce sold at the food stand is grown without the use of chemicals, pesticides and fertilizer, Rickard said. Plus, it's super fresh: "Most of it has been picked in the last 48 hours."

Rickard said it's nice to offer the community another option when it comes to buying produce.

The market is an attractive option for low-income shoppers because it accepts food stamps, WIC checks and Farmers Market Nutrition Program vouchers.

To further entice low-income shoppers to patronize farm stands and farmers markets, the Food Bank is doubling the value of food stamps by up to \$20 at stands and markets.

Customers can take advantage of the Snappy Dollars program through Feb. 23.

Cash, debit cards and credit cards also are accepted.

Regular customer Judy Sams stopped by the stand Friday to buy tomatoes before heading over to the community center to participate in a low-impact exercise and stretching class.

"I'm very happy with it," Sams said of the stand. "It couldn't be more convenient. It's fresh and it's local. That's the important thing."

If you go

- What: Farm Stand at the Ellie Towne Flowing Wells Community Center
- Where: 1660 W. Ruthrauff Road
- When: 9 a.m. to noon the first and third Fridays of the month
- Info: Go to communityfoodbank.com

1/26: Press Release: First Lady Michelle Obama joins Goya Foods in announcing "Mi Plato" Resources for families

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2012/01/26/first-lady-michelle-obama-joins-goya-foods-announcing-mi-plato-resources>

For Immediate Release January 26, 2012

Tampa, Florida - In support of First Lady Michelle Obama's Let's Move! initiative, Goya Foods, the largest, Hispanic-owned U.S. food company, is committing resources to promote the USDA's MyPlate, or MiPlato, a new food group symbol to remind families about making healthy meal choices with easy "how-tos" about proper portions. Mrs. Obama joined Bob Unanue, President of Goya Foods, and leading Latino organizations to promote their nationwide effort to encourage health and wellness in communities across the country. Goya Foods is rolling out numerous steps to help communities enjoy healthy, tasty and affordable meals including creating brochures, posters, coupons and cookbooks for consumers; developing educational tools for 4th through 6th grade students across the country; and imprinting the MiPlato icon on some of their products.

"Today's announcement is what Let's Move! is really all about – folks from every sector of our society stepping up and coming together on behalf of our kids. One of the pillars of Let's Move! is empowering parents with the information they need to make healthy choices. MiPlato is a tool to help support families in that effort. Today, Goya is utilizing their incredible reach into communities across the country to get this helpful information to the hand of parents," said First Lady Michelle Obama. "Everything that Goya is doing – from the MiPlato posters and pamphlets to cookbooks and recipes – center around the idea that we parents can make simple changes to help their children lead healthier lives."

"For Goya, MiPlato is an ideal reflection of our product line; quality, flavor, healthy and nutritious; while offering guidance to the public to easily identify the basic food groups of vegetables, grains, fruits, proteins, and dairy," said Bob Unanue, president of Goya Food.

Community organizations from Florida to California have shown their support of Let's Move! with commitments to promote MiPlato and distribute the Goya-produced materials through local churches,

food pantries, promotores (community health workers) networks, registered dietitians, and schools. Some of the many organizations include the National Latino Evangelical Coalition, which will distribute materials at its Nuestro Futuro rallies across the country, and the New Mexico Collaboration to End Hunger, which is working with New Mexico's state social services and statewide food bank to ensure New Mexico's families receive materials. The booklets will also be distributed through food bank members of Feeding America in Texas, Florida, Arizona, New York, and California. In Tampa, the Girl Scouts of the USA has committed to promote MiPlato to Tampa-area Girl Scouts through the Girl Scouts of West Central Florida. Several organizations have also joined USDA's Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion's Nutrition Communicators Network as a Community Partner.

Goya Foods will collaborate with Let's Move! and USDA in the following ways:

- A Goya-produced brochure featuring a series of recipes that meet the Dietary Guidelines that support MiPlato and ten tips for healthy eating. The Goya sales force will offer these brochures to 32,000 supermarkets to distribute in their communities.
- Goya will print MiPlato posters for distribution in various supermarkets and grocery stores.
- Goya will produce brochures with a Goya savings coupon that will be distributed to a variety of national Hispanic associations and organizations at the various festivals and events that Goya sponsors throughout the year.
- In the spring, Goya will launch the official MiPlato cookbook and distribute copies to their consumers.
- Goya developed comprehensive lesson plans for 4th through 6th grade students using beans as education characters, and will distribute these to elementary schools in six major cities including New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, Miami and Tampa.
- The MiPlato icon will be printed on six different Goya products including black beans, pinto beans, white beans, chick peas, red kidney beans and the sazón Goya natural and complete.

The following Latino organizations have joined this effort: (*excerpts*)

St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance (Feeding America)

LULAC and their 850 councils

National Council of La Raza (NCLR) - 300 affiliates

National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference

National Latino Evangelical Coalition (NaLEC)

Seventh Day Adventist Church

1/26: Goodbye For Now: U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords steps down to focus on her recovery (excerpt)

<http://www.tucsonweekly.com/tucson/goodbye-for-now/Content?oid=3219256>

by Jim Nintzel @nintzel

Loud cheers greeted a smiling Gabrielle Giffords as she arrived at the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona on Monday, Jan. 23, to make her final public appearance as a representative of her Congressional District 8.

With aides Ron Barber and Pia Carusone by her side, Giffords slowly walked across the warehouse floor and hugged Food Bank CEO Bill Carnegie.

Her face lit up in delight as Carnegie showed her the new Gabrielle Giffords Family Assistance Center, a one-stop shop where people who are down on their luck can discover what help is out there for them.

The new office, built with roughly \$160,000 of the \$325,000 donated to the Food Bank in Giffords' name following the shootings on Jan. 8, 2011, is a fitting tribute.

"She has a long history of helping us, even before she became a member of Congress," says Carnegie. "After she became a member of Congress, she was always interested in what was going on with the people here in Southern Arizona, and how we could make things better for them."

It's that spirit that many people in Congressional District 8 are going to miss after Giffords steps down this week.

"I was dismayed by the news that she had decided to resign from Congress, but I understand that her focus needs to be on her therapy and getting better," Carnegie says. "But I don't believe we've seen the last of Gabrielle Giffords in our political arena in Southern Arizona."

1/26: Around the Town: Flagstaff Project Connect offers free social services Saturday

http://azdailysun.com/news/local/around-the-town-flagstaff-project-connect-offers-free-social-services/article_fceb36a3-4dd0-5e89-830d-11e1818f4d12.html

ABBIE GRIPMAN azdailysun.com | Posted: Thursday, January 26, 2012 5:00 am

Flagstaff Project Connect will be held Saturday to connect the homeless and the economically struggling with local services.

Free services that will be available Saturday include social services, blood pressure checks, dental screenings, legal aid, tax help, ID assistance, shelter services, job services, veteran and youth services, birth certificates, college information, housing assistance, food box referrals, utility assistance, clothing, haircuts, daycare, snacks and more. Some services require personal documents; call 679-7425 for more information.

Flagstaff Project Connect will be from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Killip Elementary School, 2300 E. Sixth Ave. Free bus service is available via Mountain Line route 7 to stop 18.

'Hood to Coast' documentary to be shown Wednesday in Sedona

The Sedona International Film Festival is partnering with the Sedona Marathon to present the Arizona premiere of the award-winning documentary "Hood to Coast." There will be two screenings of the film Wednesday, Feb. 1, at 4 and 7 p.m. at Harkins Sedona Six Theatres.

Admission is \$5 per person or free with a donation of nonperishable food items for the **Sedona Food Bank**.

1/26: Crime Beat: Sheriff's Activity Log, Jan. 23 and Jan. 24. (excerpt)

<http://www.svherald.com/content/news/2012/01/26/245587>

Thu, 01/26/2012 - 00:10 - The Sierra Vista Herald/Bisbee Daily Review

Jan. 23

1:20 p.m. The manager of the Food Bank in Sunsites reported a burglary of the facility on E. Treasure Rd.

1/25: Community Food Bank receives sizable donation

http://explorernews.com/news/article_9b7717ea-46d5-11e1-b1e0-0019bb2963f4.html

Posted: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 4:00 am | Updated: 3:07 pm, Tue Jan 24, 2012 - By Chris Flora, The Explorer Explorer News

At the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona on Jan. 17, the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW), Smithfield Packing, and Safeway teamed up to donate 30,000 pounds of protein to help with the growing needs of hungry families in Tucson.

The UFCW and Smithfield have been working alongside one another for the past three years in an organization called Feeding the Hungry, where they travel across the United States to offer food assistance to low-income families who are struggling to put food on their tables.

"The Feeding the Hungry program has provided food donations to more than 100 communities across the country, and it has fed hundreds of thousands of working families across the country," said Ester Lopez, Director of UFCW International Civil Rights and Community Action. "We are honored to now be here in Tucson."

Safeway, who is a retail partner of Smithfield, donates thousands of pounds of food each year to the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona, and holds several major food drives in an attempt to counteract the suffering economy and record number of requests for food assistance.

"Safeway welcomes the chance to help eradicate hunger," said Safeway's Director of Public Affairs Nancy Keane. "We are dedicated to assisting Arizona communities who are in need of food, and are proud to partner with the Community Food Bank in Tucson to support Arizona families."

The combination of these three organizations resulted in 120,000 servings of protein becoming available to Tucson families on Jan. 17.

Food Bank CEO Carnegie said this will help a community that is in great need of support.

"They could have chosen any food bank in Arizona, but they chose us because of what is going on here," he said. "This is a response to the Tucson tragedy that happened over a year ago. This is part of the healing process for the people of Southern Arizona."

Dennis Pittman, the Smithfield Director of Corporate Communication and Public Affairs, hopes the successful partnership with Safeway and the UFCW will serve as an example in prompting more companies to come together to help with suffering communities.

Pittman said Smithfield was asked to come to Tucson in response to the shooting last January, and as an effort to help raise the awareness of food insecure homes.

"Safeway told us we needed to come here, that Tucson needed us in more ways than one," he said. "The only thing warmer than the weather here was the reception of being here in Tucson. It's absolutely amazing to see what you all have done in this community, especially after dealing with the tragedy that you did."

Attending the special event was Ron Barber, District Director to Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, and one of those injured last Jan. 8.

Barber highlighted the necessity for programs like the UFCW and Smithfield, since the number of those struggling locally and across the nation is perhaps the highest it has ever been.

Together, Pittman and Lopez opened a truck trailer full of pallets of ham, which were passed down a line of UFCW employees and placed into shopping carts to be held for distribution from the Food Bank warehouse. The UFCW and Smithfield still have one year remaining in the Feeding the Hungry program, and hope to surpass their goal of 20 million servings nationwide.

"We have given a lot, but not nearly as much as we have been given," said Pittman. "This food will be gone in less than 30 days, but hopefully what we have done has left an impression, an impression that labor, manufacturing, non-government agencies, and retail partners can set aside everything they are dealing with to come together to help those in their time of need."

The donation is also helpful to the food bank that has struggled to keep enough food this year, especially during the holiday season.

1/25: Giffords chooses food bank for final appearance

http://explorernews.com/news/article_0c478124-46dd-11e1-888f-0019bb2963f4.html

Posted: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 4:00 am | Updated: 3:45 pm, Wed Jan 25, 2012 - By Chris Flora, The Explorer Explorer News

In her last public appearance in District 8, Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords toured the Southern Arizona Community Food Bank on Jan. 23, making her first stop at the newly- built Gabrielle Giffords Family Assistance Center.

Giffords' decision to step down from office came early on Sunday. In a video message to her constituents, Giffords said, "I have more work to do on my recovery, so to do what is best for Arizona, I will step down this week."

Prior to visiting the assistance center, Giffords finished the Congress on Your Corner event she began last Jan. 8 before the shooting occurred. In a private meeting on Monday morning, Giffords met with several people who attended the event, including some who aided the wounded, and subdued the gunman.

Following the shooting, members of the Tucson community came together to donate more than \$325,000 to create the family assistance center, which aims to create a seamless process for helping families in need of food and medical assistance.

Bill Carnegie, CEO of the Community Food Bank, took a moment to recognize Giffords for her continuous involvement with providing food assistance to the public.

"Gabby has a long relationship with the Community Food Bank," he said. "She has donated to us for years. She's been involved with us the entire time she has been in Congress. We deeply appreciate the relationship, and we are so honored to have the center named after her."

Giffords arrived to an eruptive applause from the crowd.

After speaking with several board members of the Food Bank, Giffords stepped foot into the new assistance center for the first time. With a smile on her face, Giffords browsed the 1,200 square-foot assistance center, made up of two offices, four cubicles, and a waiting area, which were all created in her name.

Since opening on Sept. 23, the center has worked closely with families to accept applications for food stamps, cash assistance, and medical assistance. In the last three months of 2011, the amount of assistance applications processed were up 73 percent in comparison to the same period the year before.

"It's a collaboration that makes us feel good that our values and hers are coinciding, and that we could be here today as the place that she comes and says goodbye to her community. We are pleased and honored that this is the outcome of a horrible event," said Fran McNeely, chair of the Community Food Bank Board of Directors.

In the past, Giffords has referred to the Community Food Bank as one of her favorite charities. Consequentially, Carnegie said he felt the need to do something special with the donations coming in on her behalf.

"If we were to spend it all on food, it would have been gone in a day," he said. "People may have had more to eat, but we wouldn't have anything left, so we came up with the idea of developing this center."

While touring the facility, Giffords had the opportunity to meet 19-year-old Aviry Christy, one of the people who has received assistance from the food bank.

"I got amazing support. I wasn't judged on any particular financial situation or my past, and I really was connected to a lot of different benefits that I didn't know were available," he said. "It's been a fabulous experience overall."

After completing her visit to the assistance center, Giffords toured the rest of the Food Bank with a private group before leaving the facility around 1 p.m.

Carnegie took a moment to speak about the future of the Food Bank in regards to Giffords' undetermined replacement.

"We are hopeful that whoever steps into those shoes, which are huge shoes, will continue the work that she has started here with the same compassion and consideration for the people in need in our community," he said. "It's a wonderful thing that she gets to come here and see this center that we built for her, but it's also her exit from Congress. It's a bittersweet day."

1/25: Editorial: Cutting off free lunches without a backup plan means kids go hungry

http://azdailysun.com/news/opinion/editorial/cutting-off-free-lunches-without-a-backup-plan-means-kids/article_1abdc37c-348e-5cad-b833-42a2d90ab942.html

Posted: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 5:05 am

As the primary basis for allocating public resources to education, parental choice leaves a lot to be desired. Educating our children, after all, is one of society's greatest responsibilities.

Parents deserve a voice in that process, but there are others also worth listening to. It's why we have school districts and governing boards -- a community and a state can leverage much greater resources

on behalf of a quality education than a family. The tradeoff is giving up some parental control in return to access to those community-wide assets.

But if school choice can be accomplished across a relatively level playing field, then we say let parents vote with their feet. It's when the field is tilted or there are no true options that we take exception to a choice-based philosophy.

One example is the proposal by a state lawmaker to make federally subsidized school lunches optional. As the Daily Sun reported last week, Sen. Rich Crandall of Mesa said the regulations are too costly in districts with only a few students who qualify for the program.

We're all for fewer unfunded mandates, but in this case, we have to ask what options do low-income parents have? They can pay the full price, which probably means cutting back on other basic household expenses -- including possibly food. Or they can send their children to school with food from home that might be less expensive -- and less nutritious -- than a full-priced school meal.

These were the options before the federal government stepped in, primarily because the landmark study, "Hunger in America," showed poor children were going to school hungry and not getting a nutritious meal during the school day. Parents were assigned part of the blame -- they were not insisting that their children eat breakfast and stay away from the junk-food vending machines at school. Schools also bore some responsibility for making the machines available and not providing healthier menus.

But the main culprit was poverty -- keeping a child well-fed with nutritious food, day in and day out, was beyond the household budgets of many poor families, and school districts either couldn't or wouldn't pay for those children who could not afford school meals.

So the free and subsidized school lunch program was created, and most follow-up studies show not only a drop in childhood hunger but an improvement in the diet and nutrition of many poor children.

Crandall doesn't deny a need still exists for the program. His complaint is with the overhead costs that come attached to it, far outweighing the benefits in districts with low participation. He suggested that poor parents in districts that drop free and subsidized meals could transfer their children to a neighboring district. He also pointed out that charter schools are exempt from the mandate to serve meals of any kind, much less subsidized ones, yet charter enrollment is growing.

Our concern, as noted above, is that for school choice to work, it has to be a real choice. Transferring a child to a neighboring district would mean paying for transportation that probably would offset any savings on meals. And many poor parents don't choose charters specifically because they offer neither free meals nor free transportation.

Crandall believes that if school districts want to offer free meals to poor children, they should be able to do so "on their own terms." Presumably that would mean a program without the federal strings -- but also without the federal subsidies. Significantly, Crandall is not proposing to replace the federal funds with state money, even though he knows the Legislature has squeezed school districts so tight that they have no extra money for free meals. So where's the choice in that?

It might be that, freed of federal mandates, schools could still serve nutritious, hot meals at a lower cost. Districts could also set the qualifying incomes at different levels that better reflect the local cost of living. Then the state could help subsidize lunches at a partial rate, once they know that districts are making a good-faith effort to cut costs. But until that happens, it is premature for the state to allow districts to cut off all free and subsidized meals. Poor children don't choose to go hungry. We owe them something better than false choices.

1/25: City disperses nonprofit grants; deadline for next round is Jan. 31 (excerpt)

<http://www.inmaricopa.com/Article/2012/01/25/non-profit-grants-maricopa-city-council>

By Tim Howsare - January 25, 2012 - 6:43 am

Three local nonprofits, including ECO, Inc., recently received \$25,000 as the second half of grant money awarded through the Maricopa Non Profit Funding Program. Each organization gave a status report to the Maricopa City Council last week as a requirement of their grant award.

The other two nonprofits presenting with ECO, Inc., were: F.O.R. (Food, Opportunity and Resources Maricopa) Maricopa, a community food bank located off Honeycutt Road; and CAASA (Ak-Chin Community Alliance Against Substance Abuse)/Maricopa Youth Recreation Center, which operates a youth recreation center at Maricopa Wells Middle School.

Wendy Webb, F.O.R. executive director, said the \$50,000 grant will be used to sustain the ongoing operation of the food bank.

"We tried to write in a way that was flexible," she said. "The grant is certainly an essential component of helping us meet our goals."

The food bank currently is housed in a rented mobile home on Gunsmoke Road. It needs a bigger place to operate, whether it rents or builds, Webb said.

1/25: Douglas ARC awards employees and supporters at annual dinner (excerpt)

<http://www.douglasdispatch.com/articles/2012/01/25/news/features/doc4f206cdf58f42768021353.txt>

By Francisco Barrios - Douglas Dispatch - Published/Last Modified on Wednesday, January 25, 2012 2:51 PM MST

Also, Clark and Pollack presented the President's Award to each person or organization that has helped DARC through year 2011. Some of the contributors are **Food Bank (Tucson)**, Chiricahua Community Health Center, Melanie Greene, Frank Hatcher, Mary Maza, Bisbee's Rotary Club and others.

1/25: Yuma Sun Open House Event offers a peek inside homes (excerpt)

<http://www.yumasun.com/news/yuma-76185-home-open.html>

January 25, 2012 4:42 PM - BY MARA KNAUB - SUN STAFF WRITER

The event, sponsored by Karen Spencer and Associates and Century 21 Action Group, will kick off at the Yuma Sun booth at the Yuma Community Food Bank's Farmers Market at the Yuma Palms Regional Center.

1/25: VFW weekly Friday fundraising dinner set (excerpt)

<http://benzonnews-sun.com/articles/2012/01/27/news/news09.txt>

Published: Wednesday, January 25, 2012 8:16 AM CST

Benson Area Food Bank open Mon.-Fri.

Benson Area Food Bank is open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. For further information stop by the food bank at 370 S. Huachuca St. or call 586-7916.

This an all-volunteer run organization solely dependent on donations.

1/24: It's time to glean those trees

http://www.gvnews.com/news/it-s-time-to-glean-those-trees/article_fe27250e-4709-11e1-b576-001871e3ce6c.html

Posted: Tuesday, January 24, 2012 9:03 pm | Updated: 12:08 pm, Mon Jan 30, 2012 - By Jeannie Applegate Special to the Green Valley News Green Valley News & Sun and The Sahuarita Sun

The Green Valley-Sahuarita Community Food Bank has conducted a successful program of gleaning citrus in the area for four years. However, this year the gleaning program is in trouble, and the food bank is reaching out to the community for help.

The freeze early last year came at just as trees were covered with blossoms. The timing was disastrous for the citrus crop because almost all the blossoms froze and dropped off the trees. As a result, trees that are normally heavily laden with fruit at this time of the year have produced none or just a few pieces. Plus, many citrus trees simply did not survive the freeze.

The food bank's gleaning program began in 2008, with about 3,000 pounds of fruit.

"All gleaning was done by a few volunteers and was casually coordinated by Frank Perry," says Mary Jane Goodrick, executive director of the food bank. "In 2009, we put more structure around the program and publicized it more. Bob Call became our first gleaning coordinator."

"There was a great crop in 2009," says volunteer John Hockemeier. "Then, almost 55,000 pounds of fruit were collected."

The following year, gleaning resulted in around 44,000 pounds of citrus for the food bank. Then came 2011 and the freeze.

"We recorded 26,227 pounds of citrus," Goodrick said. "Then, the gleaning program was suspended early due to the freeze."

Volunteer Katharine Baker said they can cover three residences in a day, filling milk crates with citrus. "Then, everyone goes home to take a nap!" she said.

Almost every year, there are around 40 gleaning volunteers, and they often work between 400 and 500 hours between the first week of January and the end of April. Gleaning comes to an end when it grows hot outside.

The majority of donors are folks throughout the community who have one or more fruit trees of their own. The fruit collected includes oranges, lemons, limes, pink and white grapefruit, tangerines, tangelos, and even kumquats.

Gleaning history

Gleaning, or gathering of food after the harvest, is a fundamental humanitarian concept that goes back hundreds of years to at least biblical times. In those times, farmers were required not to harvest the corners of their fields so gleaners could collect the remaining food. Some grapes were to be left in

vineyards; and olive trees were to be shaken only once for harvesting so the remaining olives could be gathered by gleaners.

Now gleaning is also referred to as "food recovery," meaning the collection of wholesome food for distribution to those in need. On U.S. farms, gleaning is making a comeback as national organizations established to combat hunger turn to the ancient practice to feed the poor and the hungry. Gleaning also gives farmers a way to use produce that otherwise would be left to rot or be plowed under.

"In 2011, we served 6,241 individuals," says Goodrick. "We always distribute fresh produce on a first-come, first-served basis. We do not want the citrus to go to waste, so we try to get it out the door as soon as possible."

They share the citrus with the Amado Food Bank, Genesis House and the Arivaca Food Bank.

The Green Valley-Sahuarita Community Food Bank is at 250 E. Continental Drive, #101 in Green Valley. Donations can be dropped off Monday through Friday from 7:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. For additional information about donating fruit that you have picked, having volunteers come to your home to pick fruit from your trees, or becoming a gleaning volunteer, call the food bank at 625-5252 or email Mary Jane Goodrick at mjgoodrick@communityfoodbank.org.

1/24: Giffords visits Community Food Bank before stepping down (w/VIDEO)

<http://www.fox11az.com/news/local/Giffords-visits-Community-Food-Bank-before-stepping-down-137974798.html>

fox11az.com - Posted on January 24, 2012 at 11:07 AM - Updated Tuesday, Jan 24 at 12:30 PM

TUCSON, Ariz. -- Congresswoman Giffords visited the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona Monday

She toured the Gabrielle Giffords Family Assistance Center, opened thanks to funds raised after the shooting.

The folks at the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona experienced the gamut of emotions Monday.

"We're very honored today to to have Congresswoman Giffords stopping by here, um I lost my train of thought its kind of an emotional day," said Community Food Bank of Southern AZ CEO Bill Carnegie addressing the audience.

In her final appearance of touring tucson congresswoman gabrielle giffords made a stop at the Southern Arizona Community Food Bank where she met with some old friends.

"It was wonderful to see her she's a remarkable human being it represents everything that's beautiful and caring and good about Tucson and Arizona," said Community Food Bank board member Barry Corey.

Representative Giffords toured the assistance center named in her honor.

Since the shooting on January 8 about \$325,000 has been donated to the center.

The money gives visitors to the food bank the opportunity to get cash assistance, food stamps, and medical assistance.

The tour allowed giffords to meet workers and say good bye for the time being but not farewell.

Most believe she will be back representing Arizona in some way.

"Based on what I have seen, so far, I have every reason to believe it with the progress she has made thus far we hope to see her back 100% in the near future," said Carnegie.

Before she steps down, Congresswoman Giffords will travel to Washington for President Obama's State of the Union address.

It's expected to be her final act as a member of Congress.

1/24: State sen. submits bill to make Federal School Lunch program optional (w/VIDEO)

<http://www.azfamily.com/news/State-Senator-submits-bill-to-make-Federal-School-Lunch-program-optional-for-AZ-elementaries-138008938.html>

by Marie Saavedra - azfamily.com - Posted on January 24, 2012 at 8:27 PM - Updated Tuesday, Jan 24 at 8:41 PM

TEMPE, Ariz. -- In Tempe's elementary schools, lunch is serious business, whether these kids realize it or not.

"For some students it may be the only meal of the day. For others it's not, but it isn't any less important," says Linda Rider, director of Nutritional Services for Tempe Public Elementary Schools.

Rider makes sure all of the student population is fed with the help of the federal school lunch program.

"We run about 74 percent free and reduced and it allows us to feed all our children in need and all of the children no matter what the income is in our district," Rider said.

Right now it's mandatory for all of Arizona's public elementaries to participate in the federal lunch program. But State Sen. Rich Crandall wants to scrub that law and make the program optional, all because of new guidelines coming this week that will make lunches healthier, but will cost districts more to provide.

"It's great that we're going toward higher nutrition requirements, but there's a cost with everything that's coming out, all the new regulations that are going to roll out through the entire year," Crandall said.

He feels his bill to make the federal program optional gives school districts a chance to find a cheaper way to feed students.

"The only type of district this would impact would be your incredibly low, free and reduced -- 3 percent, 4 percent, 5 percent," he said.

There are critics worried that some kids won't get the nutrition they rely on and places such as food banks may have to fill the gap.

"I'm very concerned that if that goes away at the schools, and I know they have an option, those kids are going to be turning elsewhere for food support," said Terry Shannon with St. Mary's Food Bank.

But Arizona's School Nutrition Association shows only a handful of smaller districts would have the numbers to consider opting out if the bill becomes law. The majority, including Tempe, would stick to using federal funds for lunch.

"Regardless of what your situation is, kids have been fed. Kids will continue to be fed in Arizona," Crandall said.

Crandall does have history with the school lunch field. His business makes sure menus in schools match federal guidelines. He says there's no angle for him here, other than feeling that public elementary schools should have the choice whether or not to participate, just like charter schools and high schools in the state of Arizona.

1/24: Verde Valley districts will not opt out of free lunch program

<http://verdenews.com/main.asp?SectionID=1&SubSectionID=1&ArticleID=45862>

1/24/2012 1:08:00 PM - Philip Wright - Staff Reporter

COTTONWOOD - "If it means that even a single kid goes hungry, count me out," said Mingus Union School Board President James Ledbetter. He was responding to a proposed bill now in the State Senate.

SB 1060 would allow schools in Arizona to opt out of a federal program that now provides free and reduced-cost lunches for needy students. A senate panel on Tuesday agreed to let the bill go to the full senate.

For many school kids in Arizona, the federal lunch program provides the only decent meal they will have during the day.

Sen. Rich Crandall, R-Mesa, said the state should not be imposing federal mandates on public schools. Crandall said some districts, especially those with a small percentage of eligible students, might decide to continue offering the free or reduced-cost meals and have local taxpayers pay for them.

Andrei Cherny, chair of the Arizona Democratic Party, said Crandall explained that he wants to block "burdensome" regulations like requiring that fresh fruit be available at meals.

"One out of every four children in our state is struggling with hunger," Cherny said. "And the Russell Pearce republicans are now threatening to take away their one good meal of the day."

Mingus Union Superintendent Tim Foist said his district has been ahead of federal changes. "No, we will not be opting out of the federal lunch guidelines. We are not experiencing any difficulties at this time with current and anticipated guidelines."

Ledbetter said he is amazed when political agendas and rhetoric blind politicians to common sense.

"Like federal healthcare reimbursement programs, Arizona is willing to reject funded mandates," he said. "This causes costs to go up, not down, for taxpayers."

MUHS Business Manager Kirk Waddle said that based on last school year, opting out of the federal lunch program would have meant that 72 percent of students would not have been able to eat breakfast or lunch.

Waddle said that \$150,000 of the \$210,000 the district needed for the breakfast and lunch program came from federal reimbursements.

"We're currently breaking even," he said. "The school district certainly could not operate a breakfast and lunch program without participating in the federal program."

Waddle said he doesn't know of any school district that runs a food service program that does not participate in the federal program.

Kathleen Fleenor, superintendent of Clarkdale-Jerome School, said her district will not opt out of the federal program.

"For our district to opt out we would be hurting many of our students and families," she said.

"Fifty one percent of our students are living at poverty level," Fleenor explained. "This qualifies the students by federal guidelines for free or reduced lunch and free or reduced breakfast. Opting out would create a hardship for those families."

Fleenor said that through the school lunch program the school also qualifies for federal commodities, which help the district keep the cost down of providing breakfast and lunch for the paying students, which also helps those families.

"Just like with any other federal program, there are requirements and paperwork that continues to increase, plus the new federal nutrition guidelines that have come out to fight obesity in children are becoming very stringent," Fleenor said. "As an example, all milk served must be 1 percent low-fat milk. That became a federal regulation last year."

Fleenor said each meal served must also meet federal guidelines regarding ounces of meat or cheese per age of child, the amounts of sugar, fat and other ingredients.

David Snyder, director of business services for Cottonwood-Oak Creek School District, said the opt out provision of Crandall's bill would be most beneficial to those schools with a very low free and reduced percentage, and cannot utilize the federal lunch program.

"COCS D would not opt out of the program as we service a high percentage of free and reduced students, and we view the program as very important to our students and families," Snyder said.

"The federal program does require adherence to strict guidelines, reporting and auditing, but we have not had any problems with the program," he said. "The Arizona Department of Education has a Health and Nutrition department that provides numerous supports that help districts administer the federal program," Snyder explained.

1/24: United Way gathering links homeless with services: Project Connect program put on by United Way

<http://www.azcentral.com/community/northvalley/articles/2012/01/24/20120124united-way-gathering-links-homeless-services.html>

by Betty Reid - Jan. 24, 2012 01:39 PM - The Republic | azcentral.com

Dayana Joseph borrowed \$1.75 from a friend for a one-way bus ride from Buckeye to north Phoenix on Thursday.

It was money well spent.

Joseph, 23, attended Project Connect, a gathering put on by the Valley of the Sun United Way that seeks to help homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

At Project Connect, Joseph and others had access to agencies that helped them obtain driver's licenses, employment opportunities, wellness checks, counseling, food, clothing, haircuts and affordable housing.

Joseph lives in a southwest Phoenix shelter with her two children. Before landing there, she stayed afloat for two months by borrowing money from friends for food and gas.

"I have debt I need to pay back to friends who helped me with loans," Joseph said. "I'm hoping that I will find a stable job, a home and begin to repay my friends. I also need a few things for the kids."

Joseph found out about Project Connect, which was held at North Hills Church, 15025 N. 19th Ave., during her stay at the shelter.

Project Connect is a one-day outreach effort that brings together about 30 human-service providers. Among the providers were the Arizona Department of Economic Security, the Department of Veteran Affairs, Motor Vehicle Department, Arizona Workforce Connections, the Area Agency on Aging and Native American Connections.

Thousands experience homelessness in Maricopa County on any given day, according to the Valley of the Sun United Way. Many who came to the gathering reported experiencing homelessness for the first time because of a job loss, home foreclosure or unexpected medical bills, according to the United Way.

Project Connect breaks down challenges facing the homeless by giving them access to services, said Amy Schwabenlender, Valley of the Sun United Way vice president for community impact.

"Getting the guests time to have conversations with all the agencies, and make all kinds of connections in one place, in one day," she said. "In the normal flow of social services, it can be very challenging to get connected to things quickly. When we ask providers to come, we ask them to offer services differently."

Schwabenlender cited the Department of Economic Security as an example.

"In a normal day, you might have to wait a long time to complete your application," she said. "Today, DES is online. They do the whole application while they are here. So a person knows right away, 'yes, I'm eligible for food stamps.' "

Joseph said she once had a place to call home but ended up in a shelter for two reasons.

She said her husband abandoned the family for a girlfriend in October, leaving her with a toddler and a 4-year-old. An aging car, which the family owned, stopped working in July.

A lack of transportation cost her a job at Walmart, which was far from her apartment, she said.

In hindsight, Joseph, whose divorce is pending, said she never lasted three months on a job because of child-care costs and car issues.

"Whatever I earned at Walmart paid for child care and car repairs," she said.

When Joseph attended Project Connect, she received leads about affordable housing and information about pursuing a culinary trade at St. Mary's Community Kitchen.

Joseph did not need a loan for a bus ride back to the shelter.

Project Connect gave her a one-day bus pass.

1/24: Car Nuts showing off in Tubac this Saturday (excerpt)

http://www.gvnews.com/sahuarita_sun/car-nuts-showing-off-in-tubac-this-saturday/article_2c873a82-470b-11e1-a98b-001871e3ce6c.html

Posted: Tuesday, January 24, 2012 9:10 pm | Updated: 9:02 pm, Sat Jan 28, 2012 - By Regina Ford
Green Valley News Green Valley News & Sun and The Sahuarita Sun

Proceeds from the show will be used for college scholarships and other school related activities. Last year the Car Nuts awarded more than \$14,000 in scholarships to SHS students and other schools and hope to award more this year, Car Nuts president Dale Hukari said. They also make donations to the Amado Community Food Bank.

1/24: Hood to Coast Premiers in Sedona Arizona (excerpt)

<http://www.gatewaytosedona.com/article/id/2684/page/1>

“Hood to Coast” will be shown at Harkins Sedona Six Theatres on Wednesday, Feb. 1, at 4 and 7 p.m. Admission is only \$5 per person or free with a donation of non-perishable food items for the Sedona Food Bank. Seats are limited. Tickets can be reserved in advance at the Sedona International Film Festival office, 2030 W. Hwy. 89A, Suite A3, or by calling (928) 282-1177.