

Connecticut Food News

February 2010 Volume 19, Number 1

Recession Forces Difficult Choices for Survival

Sara used to be able to feed her four children three nutritious meals and two snacks a day. But now, the children have to go without breakfast so they can eat at night.

“What I try to do is hide that they are not getting breakfast. I try to wake them up as late as possible, right before they have to go to school, so they don’t feel bad about not having breakfast,” Sara said. “I don’t give them breakfast so they can have dinner.”

During the weekends, Sara “drags out breakfast” until 11:30 and then feeds the children dinner at 4 in the afternoon.

Sara, who was laid off from her job last year, is among a growing population in Connecticut who are unemployed and struggling to make ends meet. They are being forced to make difficult choices to survive.

Should I pay my utility bill or buy groceries? Should I skip a meal so I can buy my medicine? Should I pay my rent or buy more food for my children?

“My children want to eat breakfast. They want to eat lunch and dinner, but I just don’t have it,” Sara said. At least when the children, between the ages of 7 and 15, are in school, they get free school lunches.

Sara and her fiancé, Eric, were doing fine about a year ago. They were living in a single-family ranch house that she owned, tucked at the end of a cul-de-sac in a shoreline town. Sara would spend about \$150 a week to feed her children. She was like any middle-class homeowner living in the suburbs.

But it all changed in February 2009, when she lost her job in the purchasing department for a local manufacturing company that was downsized because of the economy. She was among the 125 people laid off by the company.

Sara has been looking for a job since, but she hasn’t found anything. Instead,

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CONNECTICUT
food bank

A PARTNERSHIP TO ALLEVIATE HUNGER

FUNDRAISING NUGGETS

Thank you to the following individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations that made donations of \$2,500 and more from June 1, 2009, through Nov. 15, 2009.

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Federal Report: More Connecticut Residents Struggling with Hunger

Barbara Ann Dublin was busy directing and helping her staff and volunteers serve the men, women and children during the first wave of the lunch rush. In the next two hours, more than 250 people were expected to walk through the doors of the St. John’s Parish in Waterbury and Dublin wanted to make sure each guest received special treatment.

But in the midst of the frenzy, three young children caught Dublin’s gaze. She went to them, kneeled down and spoke to them for a few minutes. The children and their mom had become regular patrons of the soup kitchen at the Greater Waterbury Interfaith Ministries (GWIM) after their home burned down three months earlier.

“You are special angels,” said Dublin, the Executive Director of GWIM, as she hugged each youngster before they joined their mother for lunch.

A week before Thanksgiving 2009, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released a report on food security in the U.S. that found one out of nine households in Connecticut struggled with hunger in 2008.

That’s about 390,000 Connecticut residents.

“That’s incomprehensible. In a state as small as ours or as ‘rich’ as ours, we can’t justify that many people living with hunger,” said Nancy L. Carrington, Executive Director of Connecticut Food Bank. “This USDA report confirms that we need to do more to feed more people. But Connecticut Food Bank can’t do it alone. We need the help of everyone in our communities throughout the year.”

The USDA report found that 49 million Americans, including nearly 17 million children, were food insecure in 2008—the first full year of the current recession. These figures represent the highest level of food insecurity since the federal surveys were initiated in 1995.

Food insecurity means an individual or member of a household could not afford balanced meals and had to cut meals or go without food.

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FOOD NEWS & FUNDRAISERS

The annual **State Police Food Drive** at Shaw's Supermarket stores in Southbury and Wallingford raised nearly 6,960 pounds of food and more than \$1,100 for Connecticut Food Bank. State troopers staffed the food drive with Food Bank employees and 56 volunteers from Aug. 28 through Aug. 30, 2009.



Weight Watchers' Lose for Good campaign donated \$1,000 worth of food to Connecticut Food Bank's **Kids' Backpack Program**. Employees and members of Weight Watchers then volunteered on Sept. 1, 2009, to pack the food into bags. Weight Watchers also collected additional 2,200 pounds of food for the Food Bank.



Employees from **MBIA**, an international financial company based in Armonk, New York, spent Sept. 11, 2009, the National Day of Service and Remembrance, packing hundreds of bags with kid-friendly food for the **Kids' Backpack Program** at Connecticut Food Bank's Fairfield warehouse. In support of the employees, the **MBIA Foundation, Inc.** also presented a \$20,000 check to the Food Bank.

In recognition of Yom Kippur, the Jewish "Day of Atonement," three local congregations collected food to benefit Connecticut Food Bank. **Congregation B'Nai Israel** in Bridgeport, 5,694 pounds; **Congregation Or Shalom** in Orange, 2,494 pounds; and **Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel** in New Haven, 1,385 pounds of food.

The month-long **Raising Bread** fundraiser at **Atticus Bookstore Café** raised a grand total of \$2,718 to benefit Connecticut Food Bank. The bookstore on Chapel Street in New Haven held the fundraiser, including a silent art auction, in September as part of the second annual Hunger Action Month.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Two troubling reports from the federal government were released in the past six months. Both help explain the stress felt by Connecticut Food Bank member programs, and thus Connecticut Food Bank. In September, the U.S. Census Bureau released data revealing Connecticut saw the largest estimated increase in poverty of any state in the country for all people and children. In 2008, 9.3 percent of residents had incomes under the Federal Poverty Level, up from 7.9 percent in 2007. The poverty level was \$21,200 for a family of four in 2008. Can you imagine raising a family of four in Connecticut with only \$21,200 a year?



In November, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released a survey showing one out of nine households in Connecticut struggled with hunger in 2008. That's about 390,000 residents. Nationally, the numbers represent the highest level of food insecurity since the federal surveys were initiated in 1995.

These reports substantiate the demand for food that is being felt throughout Connecticut Food Bank's food-assistance network. In this recession, there are more people needing help for the first time in their lives. They are seeking assistance for a number of reasons. They have lost their jobs or have seen their hours cut back. They are feeling the pinch of rising health care costs. And they can no longer stretch their limited income to cover the burgeoning cost of living in Connecticut.

Connecticut Food Bank is now distributing about 35 tons of food and grocery items each business day, yet we have not ended hunger. Still, with your assistance, we are making significant strides in improving the lives of hundreds of thousands of individuals who are being served by our network of food-assistance programs. That's what keeps all of us at Connecticut Food Bank passionate about our work. We couldn't do what we do without you and your generous gifts of food, funds and time. As ever, you have my deepest appreciation and thanks.

As we begin a new decade, it is my fervent hope that today's statistics will be dramatically reduced before the next one begins. We all must do what we can to make that happen because those statistics represent our families, friends and neighbors.

Nancy L. Carrington

Nancy L. Carrington, Executive Director

Snapshots of Our Anti-Hunger Advocates in Government



Congressman Joe Courtney (left) spent the morning of Dec. 7, 2009, listening to parents, educators and anti-hunger advocates about their concerns with the upcoming Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act.

Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro helped Connecticut Food Bank highlight the historic distribution of its 200 millionth pound of food. (Please see story on Page 8.)



U.S. Senator Christopher J. Dodd (left) stopped by Hamden on Nov. 20, 2009, to donate bags of groceries and funds to KC101's 19th annual *Stuff-a-Bus* food drive benefitting Connecticut Food Bank.

U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman donated \$1,000 to Connecticut Food Bank in support of the 2009 *Thanksgiving for All* campaign.

Congressman Chris Murphy (right) visited Connecticut Food Bank's Waterbury warehouse on Nov. 21, 2009, to unload frozen turkeys from a local food drive.



Gov. M. Jodi Rell (left) became the first sitting governor to visit Connecticut Food Bank when she came to the East Haven warehouse on Aug. 4, 2009, to highlight the state's use of federal stimulus money to help people in need. Rell also sponsored a one-day food drive with fire departments to collect more than 28 tons of food



as part of *Connecticut's Day of Caring & Compassion* on Nov. 7, 2009.

Cheers to 25 Years! Honoring Nancy L. Carrington

Connecticut Food Bank's mission has been at the core of Nancy L. Carrington's own personal mission for the past 25 years.

"It's the mission to alleviate hunger and to educate the public about the problem of hunger in this state of so much wealth," Carrington, the Food Bank's Executive Director, said of the driving force behind her 25 years of service to Connecticut Food Bank.

About 125 family, friends and supporters of Connecticut Food Bank attended the Sept. 26, 2009, "Cheers to 25 Years!" event honoring Carrington. The fundraiser raised more than \$30,000 for the Food Bank, the equivalent of more than 100,000 meals for people in need.

"It has been her leadership that has made this organization such a success and, more importantly, it has been because of her compassion and advocacy that the Food Bank has been able to make such a difference in so many lives," U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-Connecticut, said in a speech in the U.S. House of Representatives on Sept. 24.

"Nancy is not only responsible for the day-to-day operations at the Food Bank, but is also one of Connecticut's strongest voices on behalf of the hungry in our state," DeLauro said. "Nancy has made it her personal mission to overcome the challenge of feeding the hungry—her work touching the lives of thousands over the years. There is no stronger or more dedicated advocate. While she hopes for the day when organizations like the Food Bank are no longer needed, we are certainly fortunate to have her at the helm and can find comfort in the knowledge that someone with her passion and commitment continues to serve our community."

Mark Patton, founder of Connecticut Food Bank, hired Carrington in 1984 as a food solicitor to prod food companies to donate their excess and unsaleable products. Five years later, Carrington became executive director.

"When I hired her, she was the third leg of a very small, three-legged stool ... She brought the accounting and business background to match up with my good intentions and overreaching dreams to feed the hungry in the state," Patton said in a statement read during the Sept. 26 event. Patton now lives in Iowa.

"Congratulations to Nancy for persevering and to the Connecticut Food Bank Board of Directors for having the good sense to keep her around. Think of it, she has been around for the administrations of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush and now Barack Obama! Wow! Congratulations to Nancy for a job well done and for sticking with the mission to feed the hungry for the past 25 years," Patton said in his message.



Julie Moore, a friend, hugged Nancy, right, during the event called "Cheers to 25 Years!" as Pastor Rochelle Stackhouse of The Church of the Redeemer in New Haven looked on.

THE HARVEST CLUB GIVING PROGRAM

What is the Harvest Club? The Harvest Club is Connecticut Food Bank's most committed group of supporters. They give regularly so we can secure and distribute food to our hungry neighbors day in and day out, all year long. You can sign up to give monthly, quarterly or yearly.

Why should I join? Many people want to support the Food Bank on a regular basis and like the convenience of having their gift automatically charged to their credit card at regular intervals. There is less hassle and it is easy to track your charitable giving. At the end of the year, you will receive a receipt for tax purposes totaling your yearly donation.

Is it safe? Absolutely! You determine the amount of money and frequency to be charged to your credit card. There is no risk of losing a check in the mail. Furthermore, you can end your Harvest Club membership any time by simply contacting us.

How do I sign up? Call Janet Kniffin, Development Director, at (203) 469-5000 ext. 303 or e-mail jkniffin@ctfoodbank.org.

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for Your Support!
"Cheers to 25 Years!" Sponsors

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more **FOOD NEWS & FUNDRAISERS**

The **BJ's Wholesale Club** stores in Connecticut Food Bank's service area collected more than a ton of food during the company's *Help Fight Hunger by the Ton* campaign from Oct. 23 through Nov. 8, 2009.

On Nov. 19, 2009, **Stop & Shop Supermarket Co.** delivered its annual shipment of 1,000 turkeys to Connecticut Food Bank to support the *Thanksgiving for All* campaign.



THANKS FOR GIVING

The community—including individuals, organizations, businesses and religious institutions—donates thousands of pounds of much-needed food to Connecticut Food Bank through food drives and events. Thank you to everyone, especially to those who donated between June 1, 2009, and Nov. 11, 2009.

40,000+ POUNDS

Governor M. Jodi Rell's Connecticut Day of Caring & Compassion

6,001 – 7,000 POUNDS

Connecticut State Police

5,001 – 6,000 POUNDS

Congregation B'nai Israel

2,001 – 5,000 POUNDS

Bic Corp.
BJ's Wholesale Club of Connecticut,
Help Fight Hunger by the Ton
Congregation Or Shalom
People's United Bank

1,501 – 2,000 POUNDS

DS Marketing

1,001 – 1,500 POUNDS

Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield
Bridgeport Rotary Club
Congregation Beth El-Keser Israel
Diageo
Chris Garamella
Pratt & Whitney
White Tail Solutions LLC

501 – 1,000 POUNDS

AT&T
Carrano Tran
Steven Colosi
Congregation for Humanistic Judaism
The Greater Bridgeport Symphony
New England Synod ELCA
Schick-Wilkinson Sword
Sikorsky, Quality Department
University of Connecticut,
Gear Up Program
Weight Watchers, Lose for Good
Wepawaug Valley, Boy Scouts
of America
Yale University, ITS

200 – 500 POUNDS

Alliant Services
Sandra Berger
Church of the Redeemer, UCC
CityFest, Waterbury
Connecticut State Marshal's
Organization, Inc.
Kara Dunigan
Daniel & Elizabeth Esty
Fitness Edge, Fairfield
The Greater Bridgeport Section of the
National Council of Negro Women
Greg Pollack Interiors
Help Gaza Now
Phi Theta Kappa/Alpha Theta Epsilon
Quota Club
Royal Bank of Scotland
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Sikorsky, Finance Department
Southern Connecticut State University,
Athletic Department
Town Walk at Hamden Hills
Unitarian Church of Westport
United Methodist Women
Bill Welles
Zion Lutheran Church

“Thanksgiving for All”

Standing in front of Gate C at Yale Bowl in New Haven, five days before Thanksgiving, Patty Tavalozzi greeted fans heading into “The Game” with a passionate plea: “Let’s help feed our children. One small donation to Connecticut Food Bank will help so many. Let’s help those who cannot eat this Thanksgiving.”

Tavalozzi was among the thousands of individuals, families, civic groups, schools, religious organizations and companies that helped make Connecticut Food Bank’s annual *Thanksgiving for All* campaign a success in November.

In total, Connecticut Food Bank collected 26,503 turkeys and more than 491,000 pounds of trimmings during the 2009 Thanksgiving campaign in November. That was enough food to provide nearly 591,000 meals for people in need of food assistance this holiday season.

“Thousands of men, women and children who are struggling to survive in today’s economy were able to share in the spirit of the holiday thanks to the generosity of their neighbors,” said Nancy L. Carrington, Executive Director of Connecticut Food Bank. “That kindness was not only awe-inspiring, but also a testament to what we can do when we work together as a community.”

The campaign’s success can be attributed to the generous efforts of individuals, families and corporate partners, far too many to name in these pages. Thousands came to our warehouses in East Haven, Fairfield and Waterbury; and to food drives sponsored by local radio stations KC101, STAR 99.9, WATR, WPLR, and i95; television station WTNH; and corporate partners like Bank of America.

Tavalozzi saw the generosity firsthand as she volunteered at the “Fill the Bowl at Yale Bowl” food and fund drive with other members of the Zeta Delta Epsilon Honor Service Society of Southern Connecticut State University. As part of the Nov. 21 football game, pitting Yale University against its rival Harvard University, WPLR/99.1 FM, WTNH/News Channel 8 and Yale University Department of Athletics sponsored the benefit for Connecticut Food Bank.



Two-year-old Evan Wells helped seek donations at the “Fill the Bowl at Yale Bowl” food drive with his grandparents Patty and Glenn Tavalozzi (not pictured).



A youngster put \$20 into the donation box outside of the Stop & Shop Supermarket in Shelton as part of Star 99.9 “Food for Friends” Thanksgiving food drive.



All” Fed Thousands

In 2009, volunteers donated approximately 13,500 hours of time to Connecticut Food Bank.

“It was amazing, even as difficult and hard as the times are, people dug down and gave,” said Tavalozzi, who also volunteered with her husband, Glenn, and Evan, their two-year-old grandson. Evan also helped his grandparents collect donations by carrying the donation bucket.

“We try to teach our children, and now our grandson, the importance of giving back,” said Tavalozzi, who was losing her voice after nearly three hours of her impassioned pleas on behalf of Connecticut Food Bank and people struggling with hunger.

“Fill the Bowl at Yale Bowl” raised \$10,417 and collected 2,399 pounds of food and 277 turkeys.



Tom Schlachtenhaufen of Diageo was among the 50 volunteers from the company who donated more than 200 hours of their time to help with Connecticut Food Bank's food distribution at its three warehouses.

Tavalozzi was among the 300 volunteers who donated more than 950 hours of their time during the holiday season to help staff food drives and donation desks at Connecticut Food Bank's warehouses, sort food and distribute food to food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters served by the Food Bank.

“As we learned this Thanksgiving, we have the ability and fortitude to feed thousands of individuals who were in danger of going without a holiday meal. Let's carry that resolve beyond Thanksgiving and into the days and months that follow,” Carrington said.

Call (203) 469-5000 or visit www.ctfoodbank.org for more information on how you can help all year long.

At left: Alice Slate of the U.S. Coast Guard Long Island Sector helped with food distribution at the East Haven warehouse. At right: Art Kuever, Sandy Piccirollo (center), and Kristie McGarry volunteered during the WPLR/99.1 FM "Fill the Bowl" food drive at the ShopRite Supermarket store on Cherry Street in Milford.

Program Spotlight: Christian Community Action

Even before the calendar turns to November, Juan Marquez has to start thinking about Thanksgiving.

Thousands of people in New Haven rely on his organization, Christian Community Action (CCA), for their holiday meal. So a couple of months before the holiday, Marquez, the Neighborhood Services/Food Pantry Coordinator, starts to set aside food that can be given to them to complete their Thanksgiving meals.

CCA, which serves on average 650 people a month through its food pantry, is a social service organization that provides emergency food, housing and support to those who are poor in New Haven. The food pantry, established in the early 1970s, has served more than 35,000 people over the years.

The weekend before Thanksgiving 2009, CCA staff, along with volunteers, assembled more than 2,000 heaping bags of food to be distributed to families and seniors in the Hill neighborhood of New Haven.

That's considerably more than the 250 Thanksgiving bags that CCA assembled in 1988, the first year the Rev. Bonita Grubbs joined the organization as its executive director.

Each bag contained food to feed a family of four for three days, according to Marquez. Each family also got a turkey and a bag of produce. Marquez estimated that about 70 percent of the food came from Connecticut Food Bank.



Daniel Marquis, 6, has been coming since he was 3 years old to volunteer with his grandparents, Bert and Carol Sacco, to pack and organize the bags of food for CCA's Thanksgiving distribution.



Juan Marquez, of Christian Community Action, stood in the middle of a room packed with 2,000 bags of food for Thanksgiving distribution in New Haven.



ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

Connecticut Food Bank's 2008-09 Annual Report is now available. Visit www.ctfoodbank.org to view the publication, or request a hard copy by contacting Janet Kniffin, Development Director, at (203) 469-5000 ext. 303 or jkniffin@ctfoodbank.org.

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WELCOME!

Connecticut Food Bank welcomes the newest members of our staff:

Brian Cocchiaro as East Haven Warehouse Assistant; **Sade Heard** as Procurement & Programs Assistant; and **Sonia Milano** as Operations Assistant. Also congratulations to **Brian Pelsis** for his promotion to the position of Assistant Building Superintendent.

United States®
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IT'S IN OUR HANDS

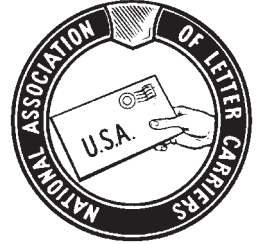
Paint a new portrait of America. Complete and return your Census form. Jobs, roads, hospitals, schools, food assistance—help your community get what it needs for the next 10 years.

Upcoming Events

WALK AGAINST HUNGER, presented by Webster Bank. Help raise money and awareness for the fight against hunger. The 5th annual Greater Waterbury *Walk Against Hunger* will be held Sunday, April 25, at Library Park in downtown Waterbury. The 34th annual Greater New Haven *Walk Against Hunger* will be held Sunday, May 2, at East Rock Park in New Haven. Both walks will kick off at 2 p.m. For more information, visit www.ctfoodbank.org/walkagainsthunger. New this year, Connecticut Food Bank will launch a Greater Fairfield *Walk Against Hunger* in the town of Fairfield. More information will be released as details are finalized. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Contact Stefanie Stevens at (203) 469-5000 ext. 302 or sstevens@ctfoodbank.org.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS (NALC) FOOD DRIVE. On Saturday, May 8, the NALC will host *Stamp Out Hunger*, the nation's largest annual one-day food drive. Residents leave non-perishable food items at their mailboxes for mail carriers to collect and deliver to local food banks. Connecticut Food Bank will need volunteers to help unload the food, so contact Kim Damien at (203) 469-5000 ext. 311 or kdamien@ctfoodbank.org if you are interested in donating your time.



SHARE OUR STRENGTH'S
TASTE OF THE
NATION
NO KID HUNGRY

TASTE OF THE NATION. Each year, *Taste of the Nation* culinary benefits are planned around the country to raise money for state and worldwide hunger-relief efforts. The New Haven event will be held on Wednesday, May 19, at the Commons located in Woolsey Hall at Yale University. This event, to be held from 5 to 9 p.m., will include food and wine tasting from local restaurants and wine and spirit distributors. For more information, contact (203) 469-5000 or tastenewhaven@gmail.com. Stay tuned to www.ctfoodbank.org for future updates.

HUNGER ACTION MONTH. For a third consecutive year, *Hunger Action Month* will be held in September. Feeding America and its network of food banks, including Connecticut Food Bank, will host events across the country to benefit hunger-relief efforts and engage more people to take action against hunger. As part of *Hunger Action Month*, the Food Bank will also hold its annual reception recognizing significant donors of food, funds and time. Please check www.ctfoodbank.org for updates.

More Connecticut Residents Struggle *continued from page 1*

“Through no fault of their own, many people are one paycheck away from needing our help,” Dublin said. GWIM receives about 80 to 90 percent of the food for its soup kitchen and food pantry from Connecticut Food Bank.

The food pantry at GWIM also serves an average of 225 people every Monday, except on the last Monday of the month, when the numbers could swell to more than 300 people.

The number of people living in food-insecure households nationwide jumped by 36 percent from 2007, when 36.2 million people lived in food-insecure households, according to the USDA.

“We knew the numbers would be higher than the previous year because of the recession, but we didn’t expect them to be this high,” Carrington said. “What’s even more disturbing is these numbers don’t include data from 2009, when we have seen a greater increase in people seeking food-assistance because of the prolonged weakened economy.”

In 2008, Connecticut Food Bank served about 250,000 people. In 2009, Connecticut Food Bank served more than 300,000 people.

Throughout 2009, soup kitchens and food pantries served by Connecticut Food Bank have reported an average 30 percent increase in demand for their services.

The USDA report found that Connecticut had one of the largest increases in food-insecure households in the country. Eleven percent of Connecticut households struggled with hunger in 2008, a 2.8 percent increase from the previous survey.

“We can change this trend and we must change this trend,” Carrington said. “It’s going to take political will and a unified approach from everyone. We produce enough food to feed everyone in this country and we can all be part of the anti-hunger solution.”

Donor Spotlight: Hallock Orchard

Five years ago, Anthony DiBenedetto had a bumper crop at his 20-acre apple orchard in Washington Depot.

DiBenedetto didn't want the food to go to waste so at the suggestion of a neighbor, he contacted Connecticut Food Bank. Since then, Hallock Orchard has been giving its excess, fresh Grade A apples to the Food Bank.

"The issue of hunger should be our number one priority, especially hunger with young kids," DiBenedetto said. "We shouldn't have children going hungry in Connecticut or in the United States of America. I'd like to drive that home to other folks."

Hallock Orchard, with its 500 trees, sits within the picturesque 88-acre Hallock Farm in Litchfield County.

On Oct. 4, 2009, DiBenedetto invited Connecticut Food Bank and about 100 volunteers to pick apples directly from the trees. The volunteers included families, longtime Food Bank volunteers and students from The Gunnery and Rumsey Hall.

Janet Kniffin, Connecticut Food Bank's Development Director, called the apple-picking event a quintessential New England experience that presented great opportunities for the Food Bank.

"We are extremely appreciative of Anthony and the crew at Hallock Orchard. The apple-picking day gave us the chance to do something fun for our volunteers, and at the same time, harvest fresh apples that our 650 food-assistance programs in Connecticut want," Kniffin said. "It was a beautiful Sunday afternoon and it represented the great generosity Anthony has shown in supporting Connecticut Food Bank over the years."

All told, DiBenedetto's orchard has given nearly 110,000 pounds of apples since 2004. In 2009 alone, he gave 18,313 pounds of apples.



Thank you to the Hallock Orchard crew: (from left to right) Bill C. Davis and Anthony, Courtney, Skyler and A.J. DiBenedetto.

more FOOD NEWS & FUNDRAISERS

The Jannotta Family held its 11th annual "Jannotta Family Feed" at Bravo Restaurant in Fairfield and raised about \$18,000. Since the inception of the event, the Jannotta Family has collected nearly \$111,000 on behalf of Connecticut Food Bank.



Diageo North America in Norwalk sent employees to volunteer at all three Connecticut Food Bank warehouses to help during the Food Bank's annual Thanksgiving food distribution. Overall, Diageo volunteers logged 208 hours of work. Diageo also presented a \$15,000 check to support the *Thanksgiving for All* campaign.



The Governor's 26th Annual Care & Share Holiday Drive collected 3,390 pounds of food and more than \$13,100 from state employees to benefit Connecticut Food Bank. This year's food drive also featured the first ever Care & Share charity volleyball tournament at the William O'Neill Armory. Twenty-one state agencies fielded 32 teams for the tournament.



On Dec. 8, 2009, the Stop & Shop/Giant Family Foundation announced it will award \$135,000 over three years to Connecticut Food Bank to help fund the *Kids' Backpack Program*.

Students in grades 7 through 12 at Hopkins School in New Haven presented a \$54,768 check to Connecticut Food Bank on Dec. 22, 2009. Hopkins students have been conducting an annual fall drive to benefit the Food Bank since 1991.



Difficult Choices *continued from page 1*

she is finding that she is competing with too many people or she is being turned away because she's overqualified. She has opted not to take a job at a fast-food restaurant because she would be making less than her \$428-a-week unemployment benefit and she couldn't afford to lose any more income.

After Sara got laid off, she fell behind in her mortgage payments. She owed about \$15,000 and was facing foreclosure. She is working with the lender and cutting back on expenses so she can make the payments needed to keep the house for her family.

That means Sara has to make tough choices of how much she can spend for food. She now only spends \$150 a month in groceries, a quarter of what she used to spend when she was working. She only receives \$64 a month in food stamps because she's considered to be making too much money, even on unemployment.

To stretch the dollar, she uses coupons and buys reduced-price produce and meat that is one day past the expiration or just expired. Her mom is helping her where she can. "I hate asking for things," Sara said.

Sara also goes to the Community Dining Room, a soup kitchen in Branford and one of 650 food-assistance programs served by Connecticut Food Bank, to eat lunch so she can have more food at home for her children. She also takes her children to the Community Dining Room on family nights.

When she cooks at home, Sara decides to package her portion so that Eric can take it to work. Eric works two jobs.

"He's the only one physically working. I don't need him to get sick. I can survive," said Sara, who usually eats one meal a day. "I'm getting so used to it. I don't care anymore as long as the kids eat. I just want them happy and healthy."

But after a year of struggling, Sara worries about her 12-year-old son, whose grades at school are dropping. "He's starting to realize it because they all see when I cook dinner that I'll serve everybody, but I don't eat," Sara said.

As the recession forces more people to make the tough decisions of whether to eat or go hungry, Connecticut Food Bank and its network of food-assistance programs must increase their efforts. That can only be possible with the community's ongoing support. Call (203) 469-5000 or visit www.ctfoodbank.org for information on how you can help.

Editor's Note: The names of the food-assistance recipients in this story were changed to protect their identities and confidentiality.

CONNECTICUT food bank

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*The mission of
Connecticut Food Bank
is to alleviate hunger. We strive
to do this by supplying food products
and resources to eligible programs
throughout our service areas and
by promoting public awareness
about the problem of hunger.*

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Milestone in Fight Against Hunger Reached: Distribution of 200 Millionth Pound of Food

When Mark Patton worked from a borrowed desk and telephone at the offices of Christian Community Action in 1982, the concept of creating a regional food bank was thought to be a temporary solution in the effort to feed people in need.

Twenty-seven years later, the fight to end hunger in Connecticut was still ongoing and Connecticut Food Bank marked a bittersweet occasion: the distribution of the 200 millionth pound of food in its history.

“It’s a milestone in the critical struggle to end hunger in our state of Connecticut. To put that in perspective, that comes out to about 154 million meals since 1982 and it would take a 90-mile-long truck convoy to lug all of that food around ... By any measure, this is an impressive achievement,” said U.S. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro, D-Connecticut, who joined the Food Bank in marking the historic distribution on Sept. 21, 2009.

The milestone came in the midst of national Hunger Action Month and at a time of unprecedented need in Connecticut. Throughout 2009, soup kitchens, food pantries and shelters have reported an average 30 percent increase in demand for their services.

“We have traveled far over the past 27 years, but we still have a way to go to end hunger,” DeLauro said. “We need to keep the pressure on to continue to do whatever we can to alleviate the suffering of those in need. The Food Bank was able to increase their food distribution from 30 tons every business day to 35 tons. They have stepped up the fight.”

Connecticut Food Bank Executive Director Nancy L. Carrington said no one in the early years of the Food Bank’s history could have ever imagined the historic distribution.

“We thought that once we got through some tough economic times and established systems to move food to people who needed it, the Food Bank’s purpose would be fulfilled. Today that goal seems even further from the horizon,” Carrington said. “I’m proud that we are able to provide all this food and help so many people, but it’s sobering that there are still so many people who are in need.”

Today, Connecticut Food Bank—the largest centralized source of donated, emergency food in Connecticut—serves 650 food-assistance programs in six of Connecticut’s eight counties: Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London and Windham.

Christian Community Action (CCA) received the 200 millionth pound of food. The food included corn flakes, canned pork, vegetarian beans, apricots, peanut butter, rice and pasta. CCA, which serves on average 650 people a month through its food pantry, is a social service organization that provides emergency food, housing and support to those who are poor in New Haven.

“Connecticut Food Bank has grown to offer so much more. Countless individuals have received food and hope through the many soup kitchens and food pantries throughout Connecticut. Its impact has been huge in the services provided and the advocacy undertaken. I am grateful for the small role that CCA has played in launching a mission to alleviate hunger,” said the Rev. Bonita Grubbs, Executive Director of Christian Community Action. “We couldn’t do what we do and we couldn’t do what we have done over the years without the work of the Food Bank.”

In the past year, Connecticut Food Bank received a large influx of commodities from the federal government through The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP). This program received a huge funding boost in 2008 when Congress approved the Farm Bill, a historic legislation championed by DeLauro. Nationally, the Farm Bill increased the TEFAP allocation from \$140 million to \$250 million for 2009-2010.

In 2009, the federal commodities program brought about 77 tractor trailer loads of product to the Food Bank, as compared to the 59 tractor trailer loads the previous year. Additionally, Connecticut Food Bank was awarded \$593,000 of federal stimulus funds in early 2009 to purchase more federal food commodities that resulted in 14 extra tractor trailer loads.

“We have the ability, but we need to have the will to stamp out hunger in our society,” DeLauro said.



Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro acknowledged Connecticut Food Bank Executive Director Nancy L. Carrington during the Sept. 21, 2009, press conference that highlighted the Food Bank’s distribution of the 200 millionth pound of food in its history.