FOOD BANKS CHALLENGED BY PERFECT STORM CONDITIONS

Nonperishable food supply shrinking

Barbara, one of our neighbors using the Food Bank’s Mobile Food Pantry in Southbury, is well into her 80s. Barbara never needed food assistance — that is until her retirement savings ran out. She lives alone and is collecting Social Security, and finding it increasingly difficult to keep up with her expenses. “I’m not too proud to come here for food because I’m running behind on things,” she told us during her second month in a row visiting the Mobile Pantry. “After I pay for utilities, medicine and my other monthly expenses, there’s not much left for food.”

While many Connecticut residents face the challenge of paying for housing, utilities, healthcare or food, food banks across the country are facing a challenge of their own. The supply of shelf-stable or nonperishable food is shrinking. The items being made available to soup kitchens and food pantries are changing to more fresh produce, frozen or refrigerated items.

Just-in-time production and the secondary market means far fewer nonperishable items are being donated by food manufacturers. In addition, delivery of U.S.D.A. commodities is down 45 percent over the previous year. We can no longer rely on delivery of donated shelf-stable products on an ongoing basis as its availability decreases.

Connecticut Food Bank is buying more food than at any other time in our history. We are exploring ways to maximize effectiveness, while meeting the most critical needs. Increased demand created by rising prices, high unemployment and underemployment, cuts in social services and two recent natural disasters are adding up to stress and strain for recipients and those helping them. It is especially difficult during the winter when heating costs are rising. It’s a “perfect storm” that’s affecting our ability to fulfill the need.

We encourage you to visit the How to Help tab on www.ctfoodbank.org to learn how you can help our mission to alleviate hunger in Connecticut.

REGISTER NOW FOR THE 2012 WALK AGAINST HUNGER!
You can raise funds for anti-hunger efforts in Connecticut!

Participate in Connecticut Food Bank’s 2012 Walk Against Hunger, presented by Webster Bank.

2012 WALK AGAINST HUNGER

Please see page 2
FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Responding to the “Perfect Storms”

The unprecedented challenge of two major storms that struck Connecticut last year wreaked havoc on our member programs and the families who rely on them. Connecticut Food Bank responded to Tropical Storm Irene and October’s snowstorm by putting our emergency response plan into action, all while continuing with our daily food deliveries and obligations.

After Irene, we delivered nearly 1,000 gallons of drinking water donated by Guida’s Dairy in New Britain, to help with local disaster response in Brooklyn, Canterbury, Danielson, East Haven, Milford, Windham and Thompson. We also delivered nonperishable food items to the Cosey Beach area of East Haven.

Connecticut Food Bank rapidly provided water and food to people in need after October’s snowstorm. The National Guard picked up FEMA water and more than 20,000 MRE’s (meals ready to eat) from our East Haven warehouse for towns requesting assistance.

We contacted Feeding America’s Disaster Response team and received a truck load of pre-staged disaster products from the Community Food Bank in Hillside, NJ, including peanut butter, Hormel chicken and pasta meals, cereal, Gatorade and other food products. In total, more than 94,600 meals were received from Feeding America and local food donors, with most of it going to our Waterbury warehouse for distribution to the member programs most affected.

Connecticut Food Bank is challenged every day in our mission to alleviate hunger. We are facing a reduction of the supply of shelf-stable food. We know that what worked in the past to supply food to those who are in need doesn’t necessarily work today. The social service agency response of 25 years ago is no longer sufficient. The houses of worship or town centers, which used to collect enough food to feed members of the community, are now having trouble keeping up with demand. They turn to Connecticut Food Bank for help, and we find even our supply is not enough.

A new response, new thinking and new solutions are necessary. No one group or individual can solve the problem of hunger, but working together, we can get much closer. We are working on new initiatives including increased gleaning from farms, and we are exploring additional community partnerships wherein fresh produce might be processed into complete meals.

Please offer suggestions on how we can all work toward Connecticut Food Bank’s mission: to alleviate hunger in Connecticut. E-mail cfb@ctfoodbank.org, or contact us at 203-469-5000.

Nancy L. Carrington
President & Chief Executive Officer

REGISTER NOW FOR 2012! Continued from page 1

In 2011, the Walk Against Hunger raised more than $240,000 to help alleviate hunger in our communities. The funds enabled Connecticut Food Bank to distribute enough food for more than 696,000 meals. Register as a team, individual or virtual walker online at www.ctfoodbank.org/walk.

And there’s still time to become a business or organizational sponsor. Contact Jennifer Thomas, Connecticut Food Bank’s Events & Promotions Coordinator at jthomas@ctfoodbank.org, or call her at 203-469-5000, ext. 302, to find out more.

Webster Bank®

CONNECTICUT FOOD NEWS WINTER/SPRING 2012
DONOR SPOTLIGHT:
Christoforo’s Northford Growers, Inc.

Charles Christoforo, Sr. began donating to Connecticut Food Bank 10 years ago.

Since 2002, more than 334,000 pounds of fresh vegetables has been donated to Connecticut Food Bank by Christoforo’s Northford Growers. The relationship began when owner Charles Christoforo, Sr. had a conversation with Connecticut Food Bank’s President & CEO Nancy Carrington about the possibility of the farm donating fresh produce for distribution to the Food Bank’s network of food pantries and soup kitchens.

Today his son, Charles Christoforo, Jr., carries on the tradition. More than 14,000 pounds of produce was donated in the 2011 growing season to help feed those who struggle with hunger and who do not always have access to fresh vegetables. “We may have an abundance of squash or tomatoes that are good to eat but have a few minor markings,” said Christoforo Jr. “We’re happy knowing we can donate items that may be refused by a grocery store to those who can benefit from them.”

He points out that the amount of produce donated depends on how weather conditions affect crops. “It really is up to Mother Nature,” he explains. “If good weather produces an excess amount of tomatoes and we can’t possibly sell them all to grocery stores or produce distributors, we can donate them to the Food Bank.” One year, the farm had 26 pallets of excess squash that were donated to hunger-relief programs.

Christoforo’s also grows cucumbers, eggplant, peppers, lettuce and cabbage on a total of 400 acres that’s spread out in Northford, East Haven, North Haven and Wallingford. Christoforo said donating to Connecticut Food Bank is easy, and he recommends other local growers do the same. “There’s really no downside to it,” he said. “It gives us satisfaction knowing our product is going to a good cause.”

PARTNERING WITH LOCAL GROWERS TO FEED THE HUNGRY

A major Connecticut Food Bank initiative is to increase the distribution of fresh, healthy food items to people in need. Fresh produce is extremely nutritious but not easily accessible by people struggling with hunger, and it’s no surprise that it’s one of the most frequently requested items by our member programs.

To respond to this need, Connecticut Food Bank actively seeks partnerships with local farmers to feed those in need. During the 2011 growing season, a number of local farms of all sizes donated fruit and vegetables that appeared blemished, misshapen, nearly overripe, unsalable or cosmically flawed. Volunteers also gleaned fields and orchards, with the fresh produce distributed to soup kitchens, senior centers, shelters and pantries, as well as on our Mobile Food Pantries, where clients spoke of its high quality and their appreciation.

For local farmers, donating surplus food can create community good will, and lead to favorable publicity and financial benefits. Connecticut Food Bank provides free product pickup in refrigerated trucks and staff is certified in safe food handling, adhering to local, state and federal regulations. Donors also are given liability protections through the Bill Emerson Good Samaritan Food Donation Act.

To learn more about this initiative, or if you have suggestions on how Connecticut Food Bank can work better with local farmers, please e-mail Kate Ballantine, Procurement Coordinator, at kballantine@ctfoodbank.org, or call 203-469-5000 x336.
CONNECTICUT FOOD BANK HONORS
HUNGER ACTION HEROES

Connecticut Food Bank’s Hunger Action Heroes were honored this fall at a ceremony attended by more than 100 at the Food Bank’s East Haven warehouse. The heroes are individuals, businesses and organizations that go above and beyond to support Connecticut Food Bank in its mission to alleviate hunger in Connecticut.

“You are our heroes in many ways, but more importantly, you are our inspiration, making a difference in the lives of the men, women and children who depend on us for food,” Connecticut Food Bank President & CEO Nancy L. Carrington told the honorees. “We thank you for your extraordinary service on behalf of our mission to alleviate hunger in Connecticut.”

Congresswoman Rosa L. DeLauro was presented with The Bill Liddell Award – the highest tribute paid by Connecticut Food Bank to an individual, organization or corporation in recognition of exemplary service, ongoing dedication and significant support of the Food Bank and its mission. The award was named after Bill Liddell, who supported the Food Bank by donating a total of 104 tons of fresh produce, as well as time and funds. He spent six years on Connecticut Food Bank’s Board of Directors.

“Since her election to Congress in 1990, Rosa DeLauro is one of the strongest voices for local, national and global hunger-relief efforts,” said Carrington. “We are grateful for her tireless work to help those who face the struggles of food insecurity.”

Other 2011 Connecticut Food Bank Hunger Action Heroes are:

- Carl Asikainen: Advocacy Hero
- A-1 Toyota: Business Hero
- Junior League of Greater New Haven: Civic Hero
- Walmart: Corporate Hero
- Anthony DiBenedetto, Hallock Orchard (Washington Depot): Farm Hero
- ShopRites of Hamden, Milford, Stratford and West Haven: Fundraising Hero
- Ocean State Job Lot: Food Industry Hero
- Michael Maze of Radio 104.1: Media Hero
- Waterbury’s Evangelical Christian Church: Member Program Hero
- Sam Greco of Cheshire: Student Hero
- Jeremy Titus of Durham: Volunteer Hero

In addition, Connecticut Food Bank recognized top individual and team fundraisers who participated in the annual Walk Against Hunger, held in New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury. Those events raised more than $240,000 to support hunger-relief efforts in Connecticut.
APPRECIATION FOR 2011 THANKSGIVING FOR ALL CAMPAIGN

The overwhelming support of individuals, families, civic groups, schools, religious organizations and companies helped make Connecticut Food Bank’s 2011 “Thanksgiving for All” campaign a success. A total of 25,052 turkeys and more than 392,000 pounds of trimmings were collected. With everyone’s help, these donations enabled Connecticut Food Bank to provide nearly 600,000 meals for people in need of food assistance this holiday season.

It was proved this Thanksgiving that we have the ability and fortitude to feed thousands of individuals who were in danger of going without a holiday meal. Connecticut Food Bank and the 600 food-assistance programs it serves thank everyone for their support, not only at Thanksgiving, but all year long.
A multi-year gift from Fairfield County Community Foundation is doubling the number of children in Bridgeport who participate in the vitally important Kids’ BackPack Program. Through the Foundation’s initial gift of $124,000, more than 900 Bridgeport school children will receive nutritious food during weekends when other resources, including free/reduced price school meals, are not available to them.

“The Foundation and our donors support many programs to address the achievement gap in our schools, including training future principals and funding effective after-school and summer programs,” said Juanita T. James, President and CEO of the Fairfield County Community Foundation. “But if students can’t focus in the classroom because they are hungry, these programs cannot succeed. The Kids’ BackPack program is a solution that gets to the heart of a critical issue in our community.”

Nearly one in five children in Connecticut is food insecure, meaning they do not always know where their next meal is coming from. Connecticut Food Bank’s Kids’ BackPack Program plans to serve 109 schools in 18 Connecticut towns in the 2011-2012 school year. A typical bag of food includes two each of packages of milk, 100 percent fruit juice, whole grain cereals, high-nutrition entrees and low-fat, low-sugar snacks.
DINERS GIVE BACK DURING NEW HAVEN RESTAURANT WEEK

Thanks to 25,000 diners and Citizens Bank, more than $13,000 was raised for Connecticut Food Bank during New Haven Restaurant Week November 6 - 11. The event was given a boost from sponsor Citizens Bank, which kicked off the week with a $5,000 donation to Connecticut Food Bank, right before the holiday season.

“The dollars raised and the donation from Citizens Bank enables us to distribute $65,000 worth of food at wholesale value, which will go a long way to help feed our neighbors in need,” said Nancy L. Carrington, Connecticut Food Bank’s President & CEO.

New Haven Restaurant Week encouraged diners at 34 popular restaurants to add a one-dollar donation to their meal tab, which is the amount Connecticut Food Bank uses to feed one person for an entire day.

MOBILE FOOD PANTRY PROGRAM CONTINUES GROWTH

Connecticut Food Bank recently added Hamden and Southbury to its monthly Mobile Food Pantry distributions in Bridgeport, Danbury, Meriden, Middletown, New Haven, Plainfield, Putnam, Torrington, Waterbury and Winsted. Each site serves approximately 120 to 200 households, with the goal of getting healthy, fresh food to those that need it most.

During a Mobile Pantry Program delivery, perishable food such as fresh produce, whole grain products and dairy items are given directly to people in need with assistance from partner food-assistance programs and volunteers from the community. Food is brought directly to neighborhoods where low-income people lack access to programs or there is a need to supplement the efforts of existing food-assistance programs that cannot provide enough fresh food to meet the growing need.

If your organization is interested in hosting a Mobile Food Pantry site, please contact Programs Director Luray Shepard at 203-469-5000.

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Taste of the Nation, Stamp Out Hunger and Walks Against Hunger

New Haven’s *Taste of the Nation* is Wednesday, March 14, 5 to 9 p.m. at Yale Commons at Woolsey Hall. Sponsored by Share Our Strength, the food and wine tasting event raises funds for Connecticut Food Bank and other hunger-relief efforts. Visit www.strength.org/newhaven/ for details.

*Stamp Out Hunger*, the nation’s largest annual one-day food drive, is Saturday, May 12. Nonperishable food items are collected by mail carriers and delivered to local food banks.

Register for Connecticut Food Bank’s 2012 *Walk Against Hunger* in Bridgeport, New Haven and Waterbury to help us alleviate hunger in Connecticut. Visit www.ctfoodbank/walk to register your team today!

Don’t forget to check out our *Events Calendar* on www.ctfoodbank.org for the latest information.

Visit the new, colorful www.ctfoodbank.org

Check out the new www.ctfoodbank.org and you’ll see vibrant photos, colorful graphics and more information about Connecticut Food Bank and its member agencies than ever before.

For the first time, click on the “Need Food” icon, enter a zip code, click “submit” and a list of local soup kitchens and pantries appears with addresses, phone numbers and driving directions. More than 230 member agencies that serve the general public are listed. “We frequently receive calls from individuals and families seeking information about local food pantries or soup kitchens in their area,” said Nancy L. Carrington, Connecticut Food Bank’s President & CEO. “Now that information is available any time of the day or night.”

Other new features are online ordering for member agencies; a listing of upcoming events and promotions; and a news and events area. Suggestions? E-mail us at cfb@ctfoodbank.org.

**UPCOMING EVENTS:**

**Taste of the Nation, Stamp Out Hunger and Walks Against Hunger**

**Taste of the Nation**

*Yale Commons at Woolsey Hall*  
*Wednesday, March 14, 2012*

**Stamp Out Hunger**

*Greater Bridgeport*  
*Saturday, May 12, 2012*

**Walk Against Hunger**

*Seaside Park, Bridgeport*  
*Sunday, April 29, 2012*

**Greater New Haven**

*Walk Against Hunger*  
*College Woods Pavilion, East Rock Park, New Haven*  
*Sunday, May 6, 2012*

**Greater Waterbury**

*Walk Against Hunger*  
*Library Park, Waterbury*  
*Sunday, May 20, 2012*