



TUESDAY, MAY 10, 2011

We are approaching the middle of May and the end of school cannot be far away. For most of us, this is a signal to do something special to celebrate summertime. No one is immune to the magic of this best loved season. The most eager group to get out and greet it are school kids who have been impatiently waiting for their release from the familiar chalky smell of their classrooms for at least a week or two; a period in which time moves slowly, teasing them with thoughts of what to do on their summer vacation.

Summer vacation has become the thing that everyone takes like medicine for relief from their winter blahs. Parents love it, too, because of the freedom that lets them depart from their regular routine and to get outside to do summertime things. Vacations of one kind or another will keep going on this year in spite of the nation's difficult economy. But no matter how tight the family budget or how high the cost of gasoline, vacation time will continue to be respected. While the most affluent may take a long, expensive and glamorous vacation, even those struggling with rising household budgets can take off a few days or even one to enjoy a city park, arrange a picnic, have a swim party in a public pool, do a backyard barbecue, take a trip over country roads close to home or to visit a special attraction close by.

Whatever you decide to do with your own vacation this year, keep in mind those most desperately in need who can only celebrate with a vacation from hunger—a vacation made possible through your generosity and that of other generous Food Bank friends. And please take with you our best wishes for a safe and happy summer vacation. Enjoy!

Sincerely, —Brian Walker, President/CEO

U.S. HOUSE MEMBER VISITS OUR HOUSE. Over the years the Food Bank has been visited by a long line of Kansas governors, U.S. Senators and members of the U.S. House of Representatives, and we continue to be pleased at their interest in what we do and how they can help.



The latest such visit came on Monday morning, April 18, when our newest 4th District member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Mike Pompeo, along with his wife Susan, and staff members Lea Stueve and Josh Wells came calling.

The Congressman and his companions showed a sincere interest in our facility and how it all works for the benefit of those Kansans suffering deeply from food insecurity and chronic hunger. We found Rep. Pompeo to be a quick study concerning the Food Bank and its operations. In addition to the business side of the visit, our time spent with Mike Pompeo and friends was a pleasant interlude. They are always welcome.

FILLING THE GAP - Summer is always a time for kids to enjoy the sunshine, play with friends and love being out of school. But summer is also a time when some of the most vulnerable children go hungry. To help combat childhood hunger this summer, your Kansas Food Bank and Partners for Wichita will help by "Filling the Gap."

The USDA Summer Food Program is scheduled to run through July 29. School will not start until the week of August 15. That leaves a two-week gap when children who depend on the Summer Feeding Program will be at risk of not getting enough to eat.

Five sites have been identified as high-need areas where lunchtime meals will be available during the two-week gap. Those locations are Atwater Neighborhood City Hall, Colvin Neighborhood City Hall, Evergreen Neighborhood City Hall, Stanley-Aley Neighborhood City Hall and St. Mark Church of God in Christ.

This is the third year that the Kansas Food Bank has been involved in helping to provide meals to children in our community when there has been a gap in meal service. With the help of Partners for Wichita, we have expanded the number of sites from two to five, essentially more than doubling the number of children who will benefit from this summer's program.

AGENCY SPOTLIGHT - It's Summer time!

For the second year in a row Genesis of Thomas County in Colby has decided to create summer food bags for kids. With help from the Kansas Food Bank's kid-friendly individual serving size items, Wynn Duffey and her crew will assemble bags full of "kid food" to be distributed to families this summer when their parents ask for assistance. Using the premise behind our Food 4 Kids program, Genesis hopes that by giving children food that is easy for them to open and eat, they will have enough to eat every day. —Debi Kreutzman, Community Relations Manager

The 2011 NALC Food Drive

STARTUP OF A SECOND BILLION

The 300,000-member National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), which represents city delivery letter carriers in all 50 states, conducts the world's largest one-day food drive each year on the second Saturday in May. Since its startup in 1993, the total amount of food collected by all participants in all 50 states has added up to more than a billion pounds.

Now, the 19th NALC Food Drive is poised to begin working on the Second Billion on Saturday, May 14. And NALC Branch #201 in the Greater Wichita Area will be engaged in the effort, along with more than 200 other branches in more than 1,000 other cities all across America.

Our Wichita Area NALC branch will be out to break its last year's record and to establish a good running start on its share of a second billion pound achievement for the national event. Here in the Wichita area a 20,000 pounds addition would boost its best annual record to 200,000 pounds plus, and its new grand total to more than two million pounds!

While new records are nice to have, the big winners will be all the food-insecure and hungry Kansans who receive all of this additional help. All friends of the Food Bank are encouraged to help.

Plan now to place your bag of nonperishable food by your mailbox early on Saturday morning May 14. And encourage your friends, neighbors and fellow workers to do the same.

The chairperson for the drive Cathy Lamb, and the other folks who will work long and hard to make this year's drive a success, deserve a brand new record to celebrate. Please help make it come true again this year.

