



News and views from your Kansas Food Bank



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TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2011

When the Kansas Food Bank began operations in 1984, its main objective was to gather as much free and affordable food available and get it to as many people in urgent need of emergency hunger relief as possible.

After about 25 years of service, that goal remains the same. Only the working plans that support it continue to change. And necessarily so. While we remain responsive to the daily needs of our existing programs, we are also proactive in finding ways to improve them as well as to develop new ways to support under-served areas.

Our current plans are based on providing greater flexibility in our present distribution system in a variety of ways. Our Mobile Pantry Service will provide assistance for those residents in need in the far reaches of our state. We envision the program as an ongoing positive step in meeting the needs of food-insecure Kansans.

While this new program progresses, another series of changes will further enhance the vital role of our statewide headquarters facility in Wichita by making it the single source for processing all food orders throughout the system, including those filled and shipped to the Independence Service Center for their door-to-door delivery.

There are 29 drop-off sites from end to end of our Rural Delivery Program Route. The average distance from drop-off to recipients has been radically shortened and door-to-door delivery greatly increased. These structural changes in the way we get food into the hands of agencies who then make it available to hungry men, women and children are working well. Some agencies along our direct delivery system are now able to provide 50% more HungerCare. The new system seems to be on track.

Thanks to all for making these good changes possible. We will keep you posted.

—Brian Walker, President/CEO



Volunteers in Marion bag and box food, getting it ready to distribute.

**GOING MOBILE, II** - This is Chapter Two in the story of KFB's new Mobile Pantry, first reported in the June issue of this newsletter. Here is what happened on June 17: For one thing, it proved that change can be a good, very good thing, especially if it turns out to be an answer to a really tough problem we might well have of getting our HungerCare into underserved places.

Your Food Bank made its maiden voyage into Marion where it was greeted by two partners: the community's only food pantry and members of the local Kiwanis Club. Our Mobile Pantry arrived fully loaded with enough HungerCare food supplies to fill food boxes for distribution to 224 families, representing 765 individuals.

Volunteers who met us quickly went to work bagging fresh produce and other grocery items. People started lining up 45 minutes before we were scheduled to open and our first client went through the line 15 minutes early. This prompted us to open up the line. This form of distribution is simply a pantry on wheels. We loaded up everything in it from canned goods, frozen pizza, potatoes, squash, peanut butter, bread and cereals.

Although our crew had originally made plans to serve 150 families, at the last minute we decided to increase that number, which was a very good thing, considering that the demand far exceeded our original expectations.

The next Mobile Pantry stop is Chanute in Neosho County. Stay tuned.

—Debi Kreutzman, Community Relations Director

**PLANT-A-ROW REPORT**

Garden-fresh produce received at the Food Bank from the Wichita area Plant A Row participants reached 1,394 pounds by July 4. They included lettuce, cucumbers, zucchini, yellow squash, corn and spinach. KFB Operations Director Kevin Enz who assists in the annual Plant A Row program is confident that this year's harvest will be a generous and very welcome addition to the Food Bank's fresh fruit and vegetable treats from homegrown sources.

# Packin' it in...

## Food & Hope for Hungry Kids

When the first of August rolls around, the busy sounds of volunteers filling packets of weekend food for Kansas elementary and middle school kids will signal the big push to load and deliver at least 50,000 of these food pack inserts to participating schools during the first two months of the fall term.

**F**rom this point on through next April, volunteer groups will keep the food assembly line going and the finished packets coming throughout the average 30-week period in which backpacks are picked up and carried home by kids at the greatest risk of going hungry on weekends after school meal programs end on Friday.

During the 2011/2012 school year, we expect the Backpack program to distribute a million pounds of food to serve the critical needs of hungry kids. And we will again count on our volunteer team to help us make that happen. Volunteers of all ages (including

young children with parental permission) are invited to schedule work times between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The tasks represent light work in a safe and comfortable environment. Volunteers arrange their own best schedules. Those interested are encouraged to bring along a group of their friends, family and other associates.

**Arrangements to volunteer can be made with a call to Larry Gunkel at 265-4421.** It's a call that can bring food and give hope to many hungry Kansas kids. It's the right thing to do.

