

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2010

"Hunger in America 2010," a comprehensive study compiled by Feeding America from data acquired with the help of members of the Nation's Network of Food Banks (including us), has been released to the news media.

Our contribution included random face-to-face survey interviews with 383 food-insecure and/or homeless Kansans as they sought help at food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters across the state. The completed study has proved to be an authentic snapshot of the changes going on among food-insecure populations in Kansas.

Overall, we view this newest Hunger in America study as another valuable reference in our continuing efforts to make the most of our greatly expanded facilities and our exceptional team skills and experience to put down hunger in Kansas by always asking ourselves, "What else can we do?" Calendar year 2009 was a very good example of how hard we try to answer that question. For the first time ever, we were able to distribute more than eight million pounds of emergency food supplies in a single year. And we were able to do it with an eight-member operations team. By way of simple arithmetic each of the eight can be credited with a million-pound year.

According to our Operations Manager Kevin Enz, who has been with the Food Bank for a dozen years, everyone on the Operations team (with the exception of two designated truck drivers) are expected to be ready to do anything they are given to do in the huge warehouse area of our Cargill Cares Complex.

Kevin, who multitasks right along with everyone else on the team, is also responsible for developing food sources to continuously supply and re-supply the KFB inventory. It's a job that never really ends. All this, in addition to supervising daily warehouse operations, make him a very busy and uniquely valuable member of the KFB first team. Kevin and the million-pound members of his team all deserve a Second Helpings "Salute of the Month."

—Brian Walker, President/CEO

**HOPE BRINGS HELP** - Nadine Hope, teacher/sponsor of the Cunningham (KS) High School Chapter of the National Honor Society, is quite understandably proud of the dozen members of the NHS who volunteered to fill Food 4 Kids packets at the Food Bank.

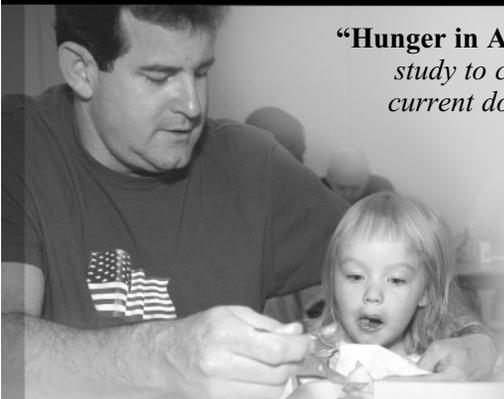
After observing them doing so well at our Food Bank, we can only say that we are also pleased and proud to have had them as our bright and energetic willing workers. We could not have wished for more helpful volunteers than these NHS honorees with their 3.5 (or higher) grade point average and their eagerness to practice good citizenship wherever they can, however they can.

As NHS members they are required to perform 12 hours of community service. Kids from Cunningham High have been to the Food Bank before. And we are grateful that Ms. Hope has brought that kind of wonderful help to us again. Thanks to all.

**LEARJET FINANCE FOLKS FLY HIGH** - The Finance Department of Learjet has demonstrated that money people can be creative, too. Their plan to sell Learjet car tags to fellow employees as a fundraiser for the KFB Backpack program was neat, clean and quite successful. It raised \$1,100 to pay for weekend food for children who otherwise would not have had enough to eat after their school-furnished meals ended on Friday until those meals began again on Monday.

In an article in the Learjet publication *Winglet*, Finance Folks thanked fellow employees for their participation in an event that turned out to be a win-win for all concerned—especially for our Backpack kids.

**SOME HUNGER STUDY SNIPPETS**



*“Hunger in America 2010” is the first research study to capture the connection between the current downturn and the increased demand for emergency hunger care.*

- Respondents report 17% of children "often" or "sometimes" go without food because of lack of money.
- Among those interviewed, one in three households included at least one full-time employed adult, two of three adults had at least a high school diploma and 80% report an annual income of about \$18,000, an amount below the federal poverty line for a family of three.
- 54% have had to choose between paying utilities and purchasing food.

- In the 85 counties we serve 40% of respondents report going whole days without eating due to a lack of money to buy food.
- Forty-five percent of respondents have had to choose between paying the mortgage or rent, and buying food; 20% were late on the previous month's mortgage and 13% said they currently had no place to live.



FEBRUARY 9, 2010, EDITION #55

If you're new, we welcome you!

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*Pantry volunteers load a food order at the Kansas Food Bank.*

## **Our pantry partners**

*By Debi Kreutzman*

Paint this picture in your mind. Think back to a time when you have been hungry, really hungry. Have you ever considered yourself to be food insecure like the hundreds of people the pantries of the Kansas Food Bank serve each and every week. Do you have the financial means to purchase food for yourself and your family? It's easy to go to the grocery store, open your wallet, swipe your debit card and off you go. You may have waited in line to purchase concert or movie tickets and you may have waited in line at the tag office. But have you ever stood in the spitting rain with the cold Kansas wind blowing to get a sack of food? Maybe you brought your own box, laundry basket or kids along to help hold and carry your food products. The wait seems to be forever, but it's the only way some families eat during these tough economic times. **Think about it. The pantries the Kansas Food Bank serves are the arms to get the food out into the hands of Kansans who are in need.**

Let's add another brush stroke in this painting. When Street Light Ministries first opened their food pantry in July they served 400 people, now they serve 1,600 people a month. This pantry is unique as they are open in the evening, one night a week. Some of the people they serve may be under-employed and can't leave their day job to get food. This group provides an alternative and has a special niche in the community.

IN SOUTHEAST KANSAS the Fredonia Food Bank, one of the newest pantries we serve, is seeing the real value of partnering with us. They have been able to offer more items on their already

stretched budget and they are learning how to create a more successful pantry to serve their community.

CORNERSTONE CHURCH IN GARDEN CITY started serving vegetables out of their garden this summer. Today they are serving more than 100 people every Saturday in their community with food items from the Kansas Food Bank.

THE PICTURE FOR ME is always clear as I step foot into our many partner agencies. They are the artists who are putting the finishing touches on the masterpiece. They unload trucks, they stock shelves, they bag and box food, day in, day out, week after

week so that our friends in our communities are able to put food on their table. No Kansan should go hungry.

THIS THANKSGIVING I had the opportunity to walk through the line at Bread of Life with a gentleman who had been in line for three hours waiting on his food box. He arrived two hours before the doors opened. He did not complain about the wait; he did not ask for substitute items; he graciously accepted his box and told me how much this gesture meant to him. He spoke of the true gift that this was for him and how he would treasure the meals he could prepare with the items he received.

RECENTLY I DROPPED BY the Westside Good Neighbor Center and visited with a young lady in line who was carrying her box. She explained to me that she brings her box to place the items of her choice in. This particular pantry offers a client-choice model. She told me she is able to select items that her family likes. That day she chose sausage to add to an egg casserole she wanted to make for dinner.

I HAVE SEEN TRUE POVERTY on the pantry level and can assure anyone that the pantries of the Kansas Food Bank are making a difference. They are thinking outside the box. They truly are our partners in hunger relief. They wrap their arms around those who need it the most.

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*Debi Kreutzman is the Kansas Food Bank manager of agency relations. She joined the Food Bank in 2009 after many years of professional social work experience. She has already demonstrated both her skills and sensitivity in handling Food Bank relations with pantry partners.*