



WORKING TOGETHER TO END HUNGER

**4050 Washington Road, Suite F
McMurray, Pennsylvania 15317
Telephone: 724.941.1472**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Food Drive Marks ‘Hunger Action Month in Pennsylvania’

***State’s Hunger Caucus sponsors Sept. 20 event in state Capitol Building;
administration marks occasions with tribute, correspondence***

HARRISBURG: The Pennsylvania Association of Regional Food Banks (PARF) has partnered with the Legislative Hunger Caucus to sponsor a daylong food drive Sept. 20 in the East Ring Rotunda of the state Capitol Building. The food drive is one of many events, including tributes by the Corbett administration, taking place throughout the commonwealth in September to mark “Hunger Action Month in Pennsylvania.”

To mark the occasion, Senator Mike Brubaker, R-Lancaster, and Representative John Myers, D-Philadelphia, both announced that they have drafted resolutions in their respective chambers designating September as “Hunger Action Month in Pennsylvania,” an occurrence that is recognized nationally by Feeding America. Brubaker and Myers are co-chairmen of the General Assembly’s joint Legislative Hunger Caucus. Their resolutions are scheduled for adoption in this week’s legislative session.

“No community in the state is immune from the dangers of hunger and food insecurity, and I am hopeful that state residents and businesses will join us in our ongoing efforts to help those in need,” said Senator Mike Brubaker, R-Lancaster, co-chairman of the Hunger Caucus.

“Hunger is pervasive. Access to poor food choices has a devastating effect on our communities. It affects the way students learn in school and can weaken the health of those already suffering from other maladies. It is our responsibility to promote healthy and substantive choices especially in a time of stressed resources and a tough economy,” said Rep. John Myers, D-Philadelphia, Hunger Caucus co-chairman.

Members of PARF, a network of 21 food banks and charitable organizations that serve food pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, charities and other hunger relief organizations in all 67 counties, were at the Capitol from 10:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. to collect donations of non-perishable items. Non-perishable items include but are not limited to: cereal (high fiber, low sugar); tuna and canned Salmon (packed in water); fruit and vegetable Juice (100%, any size); canned beans (kidney, black, navy); canned vegetables (low sodium); canned fruit (light syrup); and peanut butter (15 or 18 oz.).

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Gov. Tom Corbett recently sent correspondence to PARF extending his support for the effort, noting: "Providing food to meet emergency needs is not enough. For people who have few resources, achieving health and dignity requires consistent access to nutritious food through the normal routines of daily life. This goal can be reached if we all pay attention to the causes of hunger and food insecurity." To read the governor's correspondence in its entirety, visit: www.pafoodbanks.org.

In addition, orange spotlights were displayed Sept. 1-16 on the balcony of the Office of Lieutenant Governor in the Main Rotunda to mark "Hunger Action Month."

Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary George Greig said: "Pennsylvania is home to an abundant food supply thanks to our farmers and food processors, yet one in 10 families do not know from where their next meal will come. I encourage each Pennsylvanian to act not only during 'Hunger Action Month,' but throughout the year. Together, we can help end hunger in Pennsylvania --- one meal at a time."

In July, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Mid-Atlantic Regional Office recognized the extraordinary efforts of PARF in partnership with the state Department of Agriculture to increase so dramatically the number of enrollees in a program, the federal Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP), which provides life-sustaining meal deliveries and nutrition services to needy residents, mostly low-income and homebound seniors. CSFR enrollment is up nearly sevenfold, from 5,000 caseloads in 2002 when PARF assumed responsibility at the request of Agriculture to 34,588 today.

Pennsylvania has reported a 43.9 percent increase in the need for food assistance since 2008, with more than 1.36 million residents now eligible for the State Food Purchase Program, the state's most important tool in the fight against hunger. More than 2 million residents do not have enough money to buy enough food for themselves or their families.

The legislative food drive comes just days after a new federal government report that shows more Americans were in poverty in 2010 than at any other time since poverty levels were first published 52 years ago. The poverty rate last year was 15.1 percent, the highest rate in 17 years, according to U.S. Census.

"All of us remain committed to providing the food and nutrition services that our most vulnerable residents need to keep themselves and their families health and strong," PARF Executive Director Sheila Christopher said.

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