



# NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACTS:

Brian Leshak  
(717) 234-8886 ext. 126  
[bleshak@pavone.net](mailto:bleshak@pavone.net)

Christine Stoltzfus  
(717) 627-0036  
[cstoltzfus@pasen.gov](mailto:cstoltzfus@pasen.gov)

**CAPITOL HUNGER GARDEN GROUNDBREAKING KICKS OFF  
SECOND SEASON OF HUNGER AWARENESS IN PENNSYLVANIA  
One in 10 Pennsylvania households - nearly 500,000 households  
statewide - experienced food insecurity during the year**

HARRISBURG, Pa. (April 25, 2011) - It may not be one of Pennsylvania's biggest gardens, but its objective is monumental.

Pennsylvania's Capitol Hunger Garden, a roughly 1,000 square-foot patch of land adjacent to the state Capitol in Harrisburg, will break ground for its second season in a ceremony on Tuesday, May 3 at 11:00 a.m. between the Governor's entrance of the Capitol and the Ryan Office Building at North Third and State Streets. (A rain date is scheduled for Wednesday, May 4 at 10:30 a.m.) The garden relies on volunteers to grow fresh vegetables to be donated to local food banks and is supported by donations from private companies, community organizations and individuals. The Capitol Hunger Garden was created by the Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus, a group of state legislators who work to raise awareness about the issue of hunger in Pennsylvania.

Last year's Capitol Hunger Garden yielded a bumper crop of tomatoes, onions and green peppers, some of which were used to create more than 1,400 jars of Capitol Hunger Garden Salsa. The salsa is being offered at [pahungergarden.org](http://pahungergarden.org) for a minimum donation of \$25 per jar. All proceeds go directly to the 21 Pennsylvania food banks.

"The issue of hunger in Pennsylvania is about families not having access to food, but it's also about not having access to *healthy* food," said state Senator Mike Brubaker (R-Chester/Lancaster), Chairman of the Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus. "Many low-cost food options are unhealthy, and one of the

secondary goals of the Capitol Hunger Garden is to raise awareness of the importance of fresh, healthy meal options."

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## ***p.2 - Capitol Hunger Garden Groundbreaking***

According to a 2005-2007 USDA survey, one in 10 Pennsylvania households - nearly 500,000 households statewide - experienced food insecurity at some point during the year. Food insecurity refers to the availability of food and one's access to it. A household is considered food-secure when its occupants do not live in fear of hunger.

According to [pahunger.org](http://pahunger.org), food insecurity in Pennsylvania is driven by economic trends, especially the decline in the buying power of wages, which translates into more families relying on food banks and child nutrition programs.

"Perhaps even more startling than how many Pennsylvania families are at risk of hunger is *who* is at risk of hunger," said Kendall Hanna, executive director of the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. "Food insecurity can affect almost anyone, from rural and urban families to seniors and children. It can be people you know, including your friends, your neighbors and your co-workers. That's what makes hunger in Pennsylvania such an important issue, not just for those at risk, but for everyone."

In addition to receiving assistance from food banks, hungry Pennsylvania families may also qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as the food stamp program. SNAP benefits help eligible low-income households in Pennsylvania obtain more nutritious diets by increasing their food purchasing power at grocery stores and supermarkets.

The Pennsylvania Legislative Hunger Caucus, chaired by state Sen. Mike Brubaker and state Rep. John Myers (D-Philadelphia), worked collaboratively on the Capitol Hunger Garden with the Governor's Office, the Pennsylvania Department of General Services and state Rep. Dwight Evans (D-Philadelphia) to help bring this project to fruition. For more information about the Capitol Hunger Garden or to purchase a jar of the Hunger Garden Salsa, visit [www.pahungergarden.org](http://www.pahungergarden.org).

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## **HUNGER IN PENNSYLVANIA: THE NUMBERS**

- More than 470,000 children in Pennsylvania lived with food insecurities from 2006-2008. (Source: USDA food security data 2006-2008)
- 10 percent of Pennsylvania households reported food insecurity. (Source: 2005-2007 USDA survey)
- 3.4 percent of Pennsylvania households reported hunger. (Source: 2005-2007 USDA survey)

## **THE EFFECTS OF HUNGER**

(Source: Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare)

- Hunger makes it harder for children to learn in school and slows physical development.
- Hunger worsens health issues for senior citizens.
- Hunger saps the strength of the working poor.
- Hunger costs Pennsylvania nearly \$3.25 billion per year.