



Immediate Release

For more information contact:

Rhonda Sanders 501.399.9999

rsanders@arhungeralliance.org

Working to End Childhood Hunger in Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, AR (August 25, 2011) – According to a report released today by Feeding America, the nation’s largest hunger-relief organization, childhood food insecurity has continued to rise in Arkansas. Based on 2009 numbers, this latest report shows 28.8% of Arkansas children going hungry, up from 24.4% the year before.

Feeding America has annually released the Childhood Food Insecurity report based on the data collected from the Current Population Survey. This year [“Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity 2011”](#) has county level data that shows there are children in every county in America struggling with hunger. Data for this report is from the 2009 Current Population Survey and is reflective of where families were as the recession was ending.

Last year in a proactive move to help reduce childhood hunger Governor Mike Beebe rolled out the Arkansas No Kid Hungry Campaign. The campaign is a partnership between the Governor’s Office, The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and Share Our Strength. No Kid Hungry brings together multiple stakeholders to pool and network resources to help end childhood hunger. “This campaign has gained so much synergy between the partners it is truly amazing,” said Rhonda Sanders, Executive Director of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. “It is based on the premise that there are many resources out there that aren’t being fully utilized and by building strong partnerships we can give children access to them. We are seeing that is true.” Through the efforts of the Arkansas No Kid Hungry Campaign there were more summer feeding sites for children during the summer and more students receiving school breakfast in the classroom at the beginning of school this year.

The data from this report are a reflection of a family’s ability to afford the food they need to feed their family and not a reflection of the charitable food system’s effectiveness. The report also shows that 32% of the food insecure children in Arkansas may not qualify for special nutrition programs and are dependent on the charitable food system for assistance. “The charitable food system in our state is strong and provides over 28 million pounds of food each

year to families and individuals in need. Reducing childhood hunger will take everyone working together to help families find financial stability,” said Rhonda Sanders, Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance.

Being the lead non-profit agency for a campaign to end childhood hunger is part of the everyday mission of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. The six Feeding America Food Bank members that are part of the Alliance include: *Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, the Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, the Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and the River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith.* “The six Feeding America Food Banks are partners in the Arkansas No Kid Hungry Campaign as well as several other large businesses, state agencies and non-profits that want to see these high numbers reduced. We are making headway and are confident that future Map the Meal Gap: Childhood Food Insecurity reports will reflect this,” said Sanders. “We will use the county level data in this report to help us target efforts and partner even closer with leaders in those areas.”

This research is supported by ConAgra Foods Foundation. The Foundation funded this research with the goal of advancing the collective understanding of child hunger in America, so that resources at the local and national level could be better leveraged to help children and families in need.

The research is based on “Map the Meal Gap 2011: Food Insecurity Estimates at the County Level,” supported by the Howard G. Buffett Foundation and Nielsen.

###

About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, Feeding America and Share Our Strength

The mission of **the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance** is to reduce hunger through a unified effort to provide hunger relief, education and advocacy. For more information on the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, the No Kid Hungry Campaign and hunger relief efforts in Arkansas, please visit www.arhungeralliance.org.

Feeding America provides low-income individuals and families with the fuel to survive and even thrive. As the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, our network members supply food to more than 37 million Americans each year, including 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks support 61,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit <http://www.feedingamerica.org>. Find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/FeedingAmerica](https://www.facebook.com/FeedingAmerica) or follow our news on Twitter at twitter.com/FeedingAmerica.

Share Our Strength is a national organization working to make sure no kid in America grows up hungry. We weave together a net of community groups, activists and food programs to catch children at risk of hunger, and ensure they have nutritious food where they live, learn and play. We work with the culinary industry to create engaging, pioneering programs like Share Our Strength's Taste of the Nation®, Share Our Strength's Great American Bake Sale®, Share Our Strength's A Tasteful Pursuit®, Share Our Strength's Great American Dine Out®, and Share Our Strength's Operation Frontline®. For more information, please visit www.strength.org.

#