



MEDIA RELEASE

Pouring rain didn't dampen spirits of those working to end hunger in central Arkansas food deserts



LITTLE ROCK, AR (Aug. 16, 2016) - Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance Executive Director Kathy Webb, Little Rock Mayor Mark Stodola, Arkansas Surgeon General Greg Bledsoe, Mosaic Church of Central Arkansas Pastor Mark DeYmaz, Raising Arkansas President Johnny Pettis and Blue & You Foundation Executive Director Patrick O'Sullivan gathered with local growers and other hunger relief advocates at Parris Towers in Little Rock to launch Fresh2You, central Arkansas's newest mobile farmers market.



Arkansas consistently ranks among the highest in the nation in food insecurity (especially in regard to seniors where Arkansas ranks #1). Lack of transportation and poverty as well as physical disability make it difficult for Arkansans to travel miles to find a grocery store. The Fresh2You

mobile farmers market will bring fresh local produce to areas of Pulaski County with the greatest need. Two regular stops will be:

Fred W Parris Towers
Tuesdays; 10am-Noon
1800 South Broadway, Little Rock, Arkansas

Hillary Rodham Clinton Children's
Library & Learning Center
Saturdays; 9-11 am
4800 West Tenth Street, Little Rock

Additional stops will be added to the schedule as the programs rolls out. Mosaic Church of Little Rock maintains the routes and conducts the market.



The mobile farmers market concept has been piloted in various parts of the nation with good results in increasing access to fresh produce for those low income people who live in food deserts. The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance conceived of putting the Fresh2You Mobile Farmers Market into action and gathered the partners needed to make it a reality. As part of the larger Arkansas Hunger and Nutrition Initiative funded by a grant from the Blue & You Foundation, the mobile market targets those people in food deserts and other places where there are significant barriers to accessing fresh produce. The mobile market stops are in relatively impoverished areas, however there are no formal restriction on who can buy from the market.

The Fresh2You Mobile Farmers Market is an example of how a unique partnership is creating

access to fresh produce and nutrition education in Arkansas's food deserts. The mobile farmers market bus was donated by Rock Region, central Arkansas's transit system, and retrofitted with assistance from the Blue & You Foundation and Union Pacific. Produce for the market is being provided by Raising Arkansas, a non-profit fellowship of small, minority growers in central Arkansas. The Fresh2You farmers market participates in the USDA Double Up Bucks program which allows those on food assistance to buy twice the amount of produce per benefit dollar.

Because nutrition education is a critical part of helping people stretch their food budgets, the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance's Cooking Matters team will be giving cooking demonstrations and showing customers how to make smart food choices that will maximize their SNAP dollars.



The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance hopes this pilot program will inspire other communities around the state to develop similar mobile markets to meet the needs of the food insecure in their areas.

A [food desert](#) is any area devoid of adequate fresh fruits, vegetables or other whole foods. This is largely due to a lack of grocery stores, food distributors or farmers markets in high poverty areas.

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About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in

Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.