2018 Third Quarter Edition

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Mark Your Calendar:
SNAP Outreach Meeting
August 20; 9-11am
Alliance Conference Room
1400 W. Markham, Suite 304
Little Rock

SNAP Outreach volunteers and advocates will be gathering to discuss upcoming issues relating to food assistance benefits and sharing best practices from the field. Those who are interested in finding out more about the important work SNAP Outreach volunteers do or who want to become volunteers, this will be a good orientation. Breakfast snacks and coffee will be provided. Contact Tommi Townley to reserve your place.

Hunger Action Breakfast
September 20th  7:45-9am
Junior League of Little Rock Bldg.
401 S Scott Street, Little Rock

Make plans to join us for the Hunger Action Breakfast where we recognize those individuals, businesses, nonprofits and governmental officials who have gone above and beyond in their efforts to alleviate hunger in Arkansas. Seats on sale now, and sponsorships are available.

As the centerpiece of Hunger Action Month, our Acting Out Against Hunger Award winners are nominated by the CEOs of our six Feeding America member food banks from across the state and Alliance program directors.

Alliance Member Meeting & Conference
September 20th  10am-1:00pm
Junior League of Little Rock Bldg.
401 S Scott Street, Little Rock

Alliance members in good standing should make plans to join us for the annual Membership Meeting & Conference. We will be voting on a new slate of Board Members and Kathy Webb will be delivering the State of the Alliance report. Speakers at this year’s conference will be focusing on food policy, education and advocacy. Round Table Learning and Discussion sessions will address: the Racial Wealth Gap, Senior Hunger, Out-of-School Meals, SNAP Outreach and Gleaning/Gardens and Beef. Computers and other great prizes will be given away and lunch will be provided. Register to day!

The annual meeting is a great way to stay connected to others in the hunger relief community. Share what's working, get insights into upcoming issues and recharge your batteries. Hope to see you there. For more information contact Marisha Collins, membership and events manager, at mcollins@arhungeralliance.org.
Bridging the Need: A Family Fish Fry
September 29th; 5:30-8:30
Doubletree Hotel's Drawbridge party venue
424 W Markham St, Little Rock, AR

Jeff McClure and presenting sponsor, Hocott's Garden Center, are having this family fish fry to benefit the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. Tickets are $20 for adults, children 12 and under free

This fun evening will include:
- Fried catfish & chicken tenders with all the fixins
- Iced tea, lemonade, water, beer, wine
- Bouncy house
- Music by Alex Summerlin
- Silent auction featuring art, outings, gift certificates and games

Tickets are available online or from the Doubletree Hotel. We hope you'll join us for this delicious evening of food, fun, music and more, all overlooking a stunning view of the Arkansas River.

Serving Up Solutions: A New High-Water Mark

More than 250 donors, hunger advocates, business leaders and guests joined the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and 45 members of the Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus on Thursday evening, June 14th, to raise money for the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and awareness of the food insecurity problem in Arkansas.

For the tenth consecutive year members of the Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus served dinner to sponsors and guests on this evening of bipartisan support for the work of the Alliance and its programs. Event co-chair, Becky Barnes Campbell and Alliance Executive Director Kathy Webb, were pleased to report that this year’s event, which included silent and live auctions, in addition to dinner, raised $130,500. This represents a new high-water mark for the event.

"Our donors are doing so much more than giving money," said Webb. "They are giving kids a chance to thrive and parents the skills to make healthy homes. That's huge, and on behalf of the children, seniors and families we serve, we say thank you."

Serving Up Solutions is a bipartisan effort to bring increased awareness of hunger in our state and encourage participation by legislators in helping bring about policy solutions. The event has raised more than $755,000 to help support the programs of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance and provide capacity building grants to member food banks, food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters across Arkansas.

Approximately $45,000 in the form of capacity building grants will go to hunger relief agencies nominated by members of the Legislative Hunger Caucus.
Guests were served a 4-course dinner by Senators and Representatives of the Arkansas Legislative Hunger Caucus. This year's meal was prepared by noted area chefs: Chef Mary Beth Ringgold of Capers and Copper Grill; Chef Rosalia Monroe, Café Bossa Nova and Rosalia's Family Bakery; Chef Capi Peck owner of Trio's; and Chef Sally Mengel of Loblolly Creamery. The event was held at the Albert Pike Masonic Center in downtown Little Rock.

You can see all the photos from that evening on the Alliance Facebook page.

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**Alliance Receives 2018 Emerging Advocacy Fund Grant**

The Alliance has been named as one of 16 organizations nationwide to receive a 2018 Emerging Advocacy Fund Grant from MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. MAZON's Emerging Advocacy Fund provides partner organizations with financial backing to hire or retain staff who are dedicated to anti-hunger advocacy. The Alliance has received $60,000 in grant dollars to fund a new advocacy position.

"We’re looking forward to having a full-time advocacy person to build on the success we are having in raising awareness of the importance of protecting SNAP (formerly known as food stamps) and the role individuals can play in communicating with their members of Congress on food policy issues," said Kathy Webb. "We are happy that Tomiko Townley will be taking this important advocacy position." Serving as the Alliance's Older Adult & SNAP Outreach Director for several years, Tomiko has a deep knowledge of SNAP, hunger, poverty and the policy issues surrounding them. "This will make her an ideal person to hit the ground running and help policy makers understand the impact SNAP and other social programs have on low-income Arkansans," said Webb.

MAZON's leadership in advocacy around hunger issues has been invaluable, and we're grateful to continue our relationship with them through this Emerging Advocacy Fund grant. Arkansas consistently ranks in the top five for household food insecurity, with one in eight Arkansans receiving food assistance benefits and one in four children considered food insecure. With SNAP, SNAP-education and other anti-poverty programs under attack in the 2018 Farm Bill legislative process, keeping hunger advocates and community leaders advised of what's going on and how it will affect their work is critically important.

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**Alliance Named Best Charity by Arkansas Times Readers**
The Arkansas Times annual Best of Arkansas 2018 readers' survey named the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance Best Charity by readers. Every year this popular weekly newspaper asks its readers to nominate and vote for their bests in categories ranging from dry cleaners, to restaurants, to elected officials, to charities and many more.

"We’re very humbled and grateful to be recognized in this way," said Kathy Webb, Alliance executive director. "Hunger is part of many of Arkansas's most serious problems, from education, to health and employment," said Webb. "We're happy that our message and our work is resonating with people around the state whose involvement, advocacy and influence can make a difference in our efforts to alleviate hunger in Arkansas."

Cooking Matters: Baptist Health Partnership

Cooking Matters partnered with Baptist Health to bring a six-week class to Heaven's Loft, one of Baptist's Community Wellness Centers. Heaven's Loft is a program that provides health screenings, prenatal care, well-baby care, education and other services for low-income mothers during their pregnancy and in the post-partum period. It is just one of the many efforts of Baptist's Community Outreach, which provides an array of services to underserved Arkansans to elevate the health and well-being of the state.

The class held at Heaven’s Loft followed the Cooking Matters for Parents curriculum, which incorporates strategies for parents to include children in food preparation and instill healthy habits in their kids. The nurses at Heaven’s Loft, as well as Lindsey Green of Community Outreach, contributed greatly to the lessons and conversations and played an integral role in ensuring that the class ran smoothly. One of the nurses, Mary Hoey, interpreted for the Spanish-speaking participants and allowed us to have fruitful conversations among everyone in the class.

We want to extend a big thank you to Baptist Health Community Outreach and the nurses at Heaven’s Loft for not only being awesome Cooking Matters partners, but also for being necessary advocates for under-served communities in Arkansas.
Cooking Matters and the Farmers Market is a match made in heaven. Add the Double up Food Bucks program and it’s even better. USDA’s Double up Food Bucks is being offered at many farmers markets and Harp’s Grocery Stores across the state again this summer. That means SNAP recipients will get double the value of their market purchases when they use their EBT cards.

The Alliance Cooking Matters team is partnering with the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas for a special day at the market in Forrest City.

Worley’s Vegetable Market
100 Dillard Ave.
Forrest City, AR
8:00 am to noon
Tuesday, September 11, 2018

Market shoppers will find out how to get the most from their fresh produce and get an opportunity to take the $10 Challenge: a free $10 token (while supplies last) to plan a healthy meal with fresh produce.

Report Shows Arkansas Among the Worst for Food Hardship

The annual Gallup-Sharecare Well-Being Index surveyed 337,690 American households asking them, among other questions, “Have there been times in the past 12 months when you did not have enough money to buy food that you or your family needed?” The Food Research and Action Center analyzed the data pertaining to hunger and issued the report, Food Hardship in America: A Look at National, Regional, State and Metropolitan Statistical Area Data on Household Struggles with Hunger.

Arkansas, with 19.5 percent, was ranked #5 among the worst 15 states in terms of food hardship in 2016/2017. Households with children fared badly as well. More than 23 percent of Arkansas households with children struggled with food hardship making Arkansas, again, part of the 15 worst states with the highest food hardship rates.

Two metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in Arkansas -the Memphis TN/MS/AR area and the Little Rock/North Little Rock/Conway area-were among the areas with the 20 worst food hardship rankings (six and 18, respectively.)

The prevalence of food hardship can no longer be blamed on the Great Recession or the sluggish pace of the recovery. To meaningfully address poverty and hunger in America, the report makes six specific recommendations:

1. Higher employment rates;
2. More full-time jobs and jobs with hours and schedules that fit the needs of working parents;
3. More child care and other supports to make work more feasible and family-supporting;
4. Better wages and job benefits
5. Stronger income supports for those out of work, unable to work, or working for low wages, through improved unemployment insurance, TANF, refundable tax credits, and other means; and
6. Strengthen nutrition programs by broadening eligibility, improving access for those who are eligible, and upgrading benefit amounts.
House Farm Bill Would Increase Food Insecurity and Hardship

By Ed Bolen, Lexin Cai, Stacy Dean, Brynne Keith-Jennings, Catlin Nchako, Dorothy Rosenbaum, and Elizabeth Wolkomir

On June 21, the House passed the Agriculture Committee's (the Committee) farm bill, which includes nutrition provisions that would increase food insecurity and hardship. By adopting harmful amendments during floor debate in May, the House made the bill that ultimately passed even worse than the version the Committee originally introduced (see Appendix I). The proposed changes to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as food stamps) would end or cut benefits for a substantial number of low-income people. SNAP is the country's most effective anti-hunger program, helping 1 in 8 Americans afford a basic diet, with most SNAP participants being children, seniors, or people with disabilities. Despite providing modest benefits - averaging about $1.40 per person per meal - the program combats food insecurity, alleviates poverty, and has long-term positive impacts on health as well as on children's educational attainment. The bill would reduce SNAP's effectiveness and put large numbers of families and individuals at increased risk of hardship. [MORE]

Watermelon Crawl 2018: Volunteers Save the Day

For the second year in a row, the annual Watermelon Crawl was cut short by incoming storms, however, our awesome volunteers still managed to make a big dent in the five acres of melons planted for us by the Chapman Family of Scott, Arkansas. More than 150 people from as far away as McKinney, Texas, picked 30,000 pounds of melons in just under two hours. Inmates from the Arkansas Department of Correction finished gleaning the crop a few days later.

"We were really pleased by the number of volunteers who showed up," said Alliance Food Sourcing & Logistics Director Michelle Shope. "This event is always an inspiration to me. People give up their Saturday morning to go into the field-often in 100+ degree weather-to march through the high grass and pick watermelons that can weigh more than 20 pounds each...all to help their fellow Arkansans in need."

The watermelon will go to the Arkansas Foodbank for distribution to pantries and other hunger relief agencies. Special thanks to First Baptist Church of McKinney, Texas, and Central Baptist Church of North Little Rock that participated as part of their mission trips. We also had volunteers from Christ the King, Mount Saint Mary's and Catholic High lending a hand. Thanks to all who attended.

Cooking Matters: Changing Lives

Are you, your church, or organization looking for ways to
Single Parent Scholarships

Cooking Matters classes empower people with new skills.

"Taking time to bond with my son has been one of the greatest unexpected benefits of participating in Cooking Matters. I think we've learned to appreciate each other more."

Cooking Matters for Families
Single Parent Scholarship Fund
Pulaski County, Arkansas

New Partner Training

The Alliance Cooking Matters team will provide training, materials and other assistance to churches, individuals, civic organizations and others who wish to bring the value of Cooking Matters or Cooking Matters at the Store to their communities.

Upcoming training:
- Easterseals Arkansas
- Sharon Moone-Jochum Center for Training & Wellness
  14901 Cantrel Road
  Little Rock, AR 72223

There will also be trainings coming up in West Memphis and Searcy, although the dates are not firm. Contact Alex Handfinger for details if you're in these areas.

Want to know more? Take a look at our video, Cooking Matters in Arkansas. For information, contact Alex Handfinger at alex@arhungeralliance.org.

Cooking Matters is sponsored nationally by Walmart

Become An After School Meals Sponsor

School will be back in session very soon, and so the need for after school meals will once again be a priority. Sixty percent of Arkansas students depend on free and reduced priced school lunch and breakfast. When school is out for the day, many of these children will not have another meal until they reach school the next morning.

That’s where Afterschool Meals Sponsors come in. Groups that meet USDA eligibility standards can be reimbursed for the nutritious meals they feed to children 18 and under at approved sites with programs that contain an educational enrichment component. Churches, housing authorities, libraries, Boys & Girls Clubs, schools, and other non-profit organizations can become afterschool sponsors.

Thinking about the need in your community? The Arkansas No Kid Hungry campaign's Out of School Team can help. They provide technical assistance and grant dollars to help build successful, sustainable programs that will serve kids in communities like yours well into the future. For more information, contact SiKia
As students enter college this fall, many will hunger for more than knowledge. Up to half of college students in recent published studies say they either are not getting enough to eat or are worried about it. This food insecurity is most prevalent at community colleges, but it’s common at public and private four-year schools as well.

THE SALT

More Colleges Open Food Pantries To Address Campus Hunger

Student activists and advocates in the education community have drawn attention to the problem in recent years, and the food pantries that have sprung up at hundreds of schools are perhaps the most visible sign. Some schools nationally also have instituted the Swipe Out Hunger program, which allows students to donate their unused meal plan vouchers, or “swipes,” to other students to use at campus dining halls or food pantries. That's a start, say analysts studying the problem of campus hunger, but more systemwide solutions are needed. (MORE)

Kroger Community Rewards Program

When you sign up for the Kroger Community Rewards Program, a portion of what you spend on groceries is donated by Kroger to the Alliance. Thank you to those families who make their shopping dollars do good for those who are less fortunate, and thank you to Kroger for offering such a community minded program.

You can be part of the program. Go to Kroger Community Rewards for details on how to make your grocery dollars do more to fight hunger in Arkansas.

Amazon Smile

When you participate in Amazon Smile, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance Inc. Bookmark this link and help us every time you shop.

https://smile.amazon.com/ch/30-0254995

Cumulative donations received to date: $92.70
Most recent donation received in May 2018: $36.49
The next donation will be sent in August 2018.

Monthly Donors Key to Long Term Planning
Knowing that funds will be available month-to-month helps the Alliance maintain sustainable programs that meet the needs of Arkansas’s low-income families, seniors and others. If you plan on making a donation to the Alliance this year, why not make it a monthly contribution?

Being a sustaining donor is convenient for you and helpful to the Alliance. If you’re ready to become a monthly donor, contact Mary Bea Gross, Alliance development director, at mbgross@arhungeralliance.org or call 501.399.9999.