



Hunger: Help Us Fill the Need Honorary co-chairs; Indiana Senator Richard Lugar and Parkview Health CEO, Mike Packnett join CHFB executive director, Jane Avery.

HUNGER

HELP US FILL THE NEED.

A Capital Campaign for Community Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Indiana

On September 1, 2010 Community Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Indiana announced a five million dollar capital campaign at an event which included capital campaign honorary co-chairs Senator Richard Lugar and Parkview Health President and CEO, Mike Packnett along with Mayor Tom Henry and other local dignitaries and supporters. The "Help Fill The Need" campaign will serve to upgrade the aging CHFB building and equipment, and expand and enhance operations and programs at the Tillman Road facility and complete renovation on the former Azar's business office and commissary on Coliseum Blvd, donated to CHFB by the Azar family in 2007, to house administrative offices, some CHFB programs and retro-fit the former commissary into a bulk-repack area, adding equipment necessary to allow for minimal processing of locally grown fresh produce.

"If Community Harvest weren't here there would be a significant economic impact," said Jane Avery, executive director Community Harvest Food Bank shortly after announcing the capital campaign and honorary co-chairs Senator Richard Lugar and Mike Packnett, President and CEO Parkview Health to a warehouse full of invited guests. "The vision of the "Help Fill the Need" campaign is to reduce Hunger in northeast Indiana by 50% by 2015 and we can do it with your help." said Avery. "There are important things and then there are very important things," added Mike Packnett, Parkview Health President and CEO. "This is such worthwhile work. Distributing ten million pounds of food annually in our nine northeast Indiana counties to people who need it is just staggering to me. I can't imagine a more important mission. Making a difference in a child's life by putting food in his belly, a senior being able to put a meal on the table without having to choose between that and buying the medication they need. It just doesn't get any better than that."

Senator Richard Lugar spoke at length about the role of farmers in hunger relief. "I appreciate the excitement that comes with the thought of Community Harvest Food Bank seeking five million dollars to expand operations in order to feed more people and that Indiana farmers are the key," said Lugar. "The demand for food is growing world-wide and with us living longer healthier lives it will continue. Even as we think of the world, of starving people, it's very difficult to think about the statistics in northeast Indiana. Fifteen percent of the population here are food challenged. 21,100 people helped here every week is an awesome situation. With each of us living 20 years longer that also means were eating 20 years longer. More consumption of food means more breakthroughs are needed to raise more of it. I just hope while we are saving the world hungry that we hopefully have in our heart enough capacity for these nine counties in northeast Indiana and without any judgment calls we can help this food bank prosper for years to come so it can continue to help this community. I am devoted to this remarkable enterprise."

Community Harvest Food Bank has been serving northeast Indiana for over 25 years as the largest single provider of charitable food resources to over 450 pantries, soup kitchens, homeless shelters and other member agencies. What began as an emergency food distribution operation from the beds of pick-up trucks to bring food aid to workers impacted by the International Harvester closure has grown into a sophisticated food distribution operation providing assistance to over 90,000 unduplicated people per year. Food distributed has grown to nearly 10 million pounds per year within the CHFB nine county service area — 50% of which is via direct service programs that

address childhood hunger, older adult hunger and healthy families initiatives. An innovative organization, CHFEB was recognized by America's Second Harvest (now known as Feeding America) as the 2005 "Food Bank of the Year." This is the highest recognition that a member food bank can be awarded and CHFEB is the smallest food bank in the country to ever receive that recognition.

Working to Alleviate Hunger

The continuing goal of Community Harvest Food Bank is to acquire and distribute as much donated food from its service area as possible with a focus on locally grown, nutritionally dense proteins, vegetables and fruits. That goal is accomplished by working closely with food wholesalers, retailers, farmers and 4-H clubs and then distributing these food donations within the counties where the food is collected. This stimulates greater collaboration as donors appreciate the "neighbor helping neighbor" attitude that CHFEB espouses. Collaboration has resulted in over 1 million new pounds donated in 2009. Large donations from state or local donors are distributed equitably throughout CHFEB's nine county service area. Shelf stable food donations are collected from national, state and local retail stores, reclamation companies, wholesale stores, and numerous food drives such as CANstruction, seasonal/holiday food drives, etc. Community Harvest is also the local distributor for USDA federal commodities in northeast Indiana.

Achieving Goals through Programs and Partnerships

Community Harvest is open six days a week to insure that it is serving its target audience of the working poor. CHFEB provides hunger relief services through its network of 501(C)(3) nonprofit agencies (pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, etc.) and through these direct service programs:

- Kids Cafe – afterschool feeding programs for children at risk of hunger where CHFEB partners with other groups (Boys & Girls Clubs, churches, neighborhood centers) who prepare and serve the food CHFEB provides at no cost
- Backpack – backpacks filled with nutritionally-balanced food for meals are sent home with children who experience weekend hunger
- SeniorPak – grocery bags are packed and delivered by volunteers to homebound older adults living on fixed, low incomes every two weeks
- Community Cupboard – an on-site food pantry modeled after a small grocery store where agency referred clients can select foods and other grocery products using a voucher redeemable for pounds which is subsidized by the referring agency (i.e., Aids Task Force, Catholic Charities, Cancer Services, etc.) This provides meaningful amounts of food to people/families in need while stretching the referring agency's direct assistance budget
- Farm Wagon – two trucks that travel throughout northeast Indiana with donations of fresh produce and other perishables to low-income people in rural and urban areas. The CHFEB Farm Wagons have approximately 30 stops per week with each stop distributing an average of 1,200 lbs.
- Crisis Assistance – emergency food to people who come to the food bank as a result of a personal disaster (fire, domestic abuse, homelessness, etc.)
- Disaster Services – provide food, water and other beverages, cleaning supplies, gloves, masks, etc. to first responders as well as to those impacted by a natural or man-made disaster. CHFEB assists in its service area, state or anywhere in the United States as requested by Feeding America

Facilities, Infrastructure and Governance

Community Harvest's primary facility with a footprint of 48,000 square feet is located on the south side of Fort Wayne. This facility was built for \$1.7 million in 1994. In 2007, the Azar Family donated their former business office and commissary site on the northeast side to the food bank. This space has a footprint of 36,000 square feet and is comprised of dry and perishable food storage

space, as well as the former Azar restaurant commissary and a sizeable amount of office and program space. CHFb currently has a fleet of nine vehicles all of which are refrigerated.

Community Harvest Food Bank of NE Indiana, Inc. employs 35 FTEs and reflects the diversity of the area it serves. Jane Avery is the Executive Director and has been with the food bank for 14 years. Community Harvest values its loyal workforce, 20% of whom have been with the organization for 10-19 years. The food bank is also blessed with hundreds of volunteers who annually contribute thousands of volunteer hours of service – some on a weekly basis while others make volunteering a special annual event at the holidays. Community Harvest is governed by a volunteer board of directors who are able to serve two consecutive 3-year terms.

Hunger Increasing in Northeast Indiana

Community Harvest Food Bank is a member of Feeding America, the nation's largest charity dedicated to domestic hunger relief. Every four years since 1996 Feeding America has conducted a national hunger study and CHFb has participated in every one of the hunger studies with the most recent having been conducted in 2009 and the results released in February 2010. The key findings from northeast Indiana in the most recent study are:

- 21,100 unduplicated people are served weekly
- 90,000 unduplicated people are served annually
- 45% are members of households that have children under 18 years of age
- 62% are white, 23% are black, 11% are Hispanic and the rest are from other racial groups
- 39% of households include at least one employed adult
- 44% of clients served report having to choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel
- 40% had to choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage
- 35% had to choose between paying for food or paying for medicine or medical care
- 30% report having at least one household member in poor health

Clearly, the work of the food bank is important when it is impacting nearly 15% of the population of its service area.

Vision for the Future

The plan for the future is to reduce hunger, especially childhood and older adult hunger, by 50% by 2015. The goal: to ensure that CHFb provides as much high quality, locally produced and/or donated, and nutritionally dense food as possible. To this end, Community Harvest Food Bank is using the federal food pyramid as its guideline for both food acquisition and distribution throughout its nine counties. Additionally, CHFb uses the 185% of federal poverty level (the working poor) along with unemployment statistics to guide its work for where more is needed by working through its member agencies and/or adding more direct service programs. Specifically, Community Harvest wants to accomplish the following:

999 East Tillman Rd. building

- Expand and enhance the Community Cupboard to be able to serve more clients in a more efficient manner.
- Expand and enhance the SeniorPak program to be able to provide more space for staff and volunteers to prepare more bags of food to serve more homebound seniors.

- Expand and enhance the SeniorPak program to be able to provide more space for staff and volunteers to prepare more bags of food to serve more homebound seniors.
- Reduce office spaces and remove the inefficient freezer/cooler to create more dry storage space to service Community Cupboard and SeniorPak and the entire food bank program more efficiently.

Create a secure and completely segregated salvage area that will allow for the opportunity to offer reclamation services to area retail stores. This new service could bring tens of thousands of new pounds into the CHFB system.

1010 North Coliseum Blvd. building

- Relocate administrative offices and some program services.
- Remodel the commissary into a bulk-repack area and add the equipment necessary to allow for minimal processing (blanching and freezing) of locally grown fresh produce such as sweet corn, potatoes, carrots, green beans, etc. Having the capacity for bulk repack will also allow CHFB to accept large shipments of meat that require repackaging into smaller portions – an important source of protein that CHFB currently does not have the capacity to accept.
- Create a temperature-controlled dock area to maintain cold chain compliance.
- Install sprinkler system in the produce cooler to better maintain quality for longer shelf life.

Install a new integrated inventory business accounting system that will better track inventory (bin system) and allow for real-time menus for member agencies.

More food is available locally. In order to take advantage of as much food as possible, Community Harvest Food Bank must adapt to changes in the food industry — particularly the prevalence of frozen and refrigerated food. As its facility and equipment continue to age, CHFB has an ever-growing concern that it will be forced to turn food away based on its poorly functioning cooler and freezer. Last year, the food bank was forced to rent freezers to safeguard food already under its roof. Community Harvest must modernize and grow to have the capacity to safely store and distribute food, ensure food does not go to waste and feed more of northeast Indiana neighbors in need.

Making the Vision a Reality

There are many details to developing two, more efficiently operated facilities. What's most important is what these facilities will allow:

- Donations to reach the right locations in the most efficient manner possible
- More nutritionally sound food on the tables of struggling families throughout northeast Indiana

Community Harvest's current primary facility lacks the space and technology that is needed to distribute more food and expand programs. Funds raised during the "Help Us Fill the Need" capital campaign will be primarily spent on construction, IT enhancements, additional equipment and facility upgrades, including more efficient freezing and refrigeration. Community Harvest will be renovating and optimizing two existing facilities to create an efficient receiving, storage and distribution process.

Community Harvest Food Bank has sought the professional input of various relevant industries including warehousing and distribution, food retailers and architects. With this assistance, CHFB has designed a plan that will result in the most efficient use of its facilities.



**For more information or to donate contact:
Rebecca Aurand, CHFB Development Manager
260/447-3696 raurand@feedingamerica.org**