

Food Bank News

HOLIDAY CHARITY TRADITIONS

Here at the Food Bank we prepare for our busiest time of the year with the dedicated help of two local organizations: The State College Elks Club and the Nittany Leatherneck Detachment of the Marine Corps. For more than 30 years, the Elks Club has provided holiday food baskets for needy families through their Christmas Charity Program. Their members then help us distribute the baskets along with toys provided by the Marine Corps Toys for Tots Program at the Elks Club on the Saturday before Christmas. This year, Harold Black of the Elks Club is heading up this effort which will involve many generous individuals and businesses in our area. The Food Bank donates a small amount of the food, but most is provided by the Elks. Last year, they prepared 275 baskets. In 2001, they are planning to put together 300 baskets!

The Nittany Leathernecks Detachment of the Marine Corps League here in Centre County is planning their hugely popular holiday charity program, Toys for Tots, a tradition dating back more



than 13 years. Each year the program ensures that over 2800 less fortunate Centre County children enjoy the holiday spirit with toys. The Centre County Toys for Tots campaign accommodates for religious protocols (in concert with economic eligibility) for Christmas, Hanukkah, Ramadan, and Kwanza during the December-January holiday season. Look for drop off sites around the county.

The Leathernecks suggest that companies or organizations ask employees or members to bring one new unwrapped children's toy or present as admission to your organization's holiday party. If desired, a representative from the Marine Corps League will come to your party to collect these presents and/or to provide information about the program. If you do not have a holiday party, you may establish a collection point in your lobby or break area. Particularly needed are toys for very young children (up to three years old), and suitable gifts for teenagers, who are sometimes overlooked.

Please call Gene Weller at 234-9831 for more information.

TO ALL OUR FAITHFUL SUPPORTERS:

In the aftermath of the September 11 terrorist attacks, Americans showed themselves to be amazingly generous. They opened their purses to support victims and relief workers alike. How wonderful!

Now, we on the Food Bank Board of Directors want to appeal to that same generous nature. Even though the needs of those affected by the terrorist attacks were urgent and massive, we continue to have needs here, too. There are still hungry folks among us; as the economy slumps, the need here will be even greater. So, we are asking you to



show that same generous spirit again, and go the extra mile to fund this important work here in the State College area.

The Board of Directors is confident that you will continue to support the work of the Food Bank, and we thank you in advance for your gifts and your partnership.

Carola Rohrbaugh
for the Board of the State College Area Food Bank

"We are busy working on a new Web site for the State College Food Bank. We hope to unveil the URL (Web site address) in our next newsletter, so stay tuned! The site will contain information about the Food Bank, including an up-to-date needs list, electronic archives of our newsletters, links to hunger education/advocacy resources, and ideas for ways you can get involved!"

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VOLUNTEERS AT THE NITTANY MALL



Late last winter, a group of students from the State College High School and some other sturdy volunteers (if you look closely you will see Food Bank Treasurer Barbara Dreese and Bob Ott, a Centre County official) spent a chilly morning moving food supplies into newly-donated space at the Nittany Mall.

WAGES IN PENNSYLVANIA

According to *The State of Working Pennsylvania 2001*, wages in Pennsylvania have fallen over the past year, and it is likely they will fall further as the downturn continues. This report found that the inflation adjusted median wage earned by Pennsylvania employees in 2000 was \$12.27, down nine cents from 1999. Among men with only a high school education, the drop was more significant -- from \$12.92 an hour in 1999 to \$12.50 in 2000.

Why do the authors of this report feel that wages will fall further? They point out that union influence and a relatively high minimum wage have tended to shore up wages during past downturns. However, today the only factor holding up most wages has been low unemployment. With many firms now laying off employees, this picture is changing: "Loosen the labor market and we expect wages to fall" (or fall more).

When wages decrease, families are less food secure and make more visits to local food pantries. When Pat Coble is asked what is happening here at the State College Area Food Bank, Pat replies "Business has been very brisk."

from *The Pennsylvania Hunger Advocate*,
October 2001



EMPTY BOWLS

This year's Empty Bowls Meal, held at the State College High School on May 17, was a huge success, and has earned more than \$5,000 for the State College Area Food Bank. This meal, which has become an annual event, was created by students at the State College high school who wanted to contribute to community food security by using their artistic and organizational skills. It has grown dramatically, particularly in the past year.



Donna Symons, granddaughter Madison and Pat Coble at the Empty Bowls Meal

What makes this event so special? While the proceeds are certainly welcome and will be put to good use in purchasing items needed by Food Bank clients, the involvement of so many people in the preparation for the event and the participation of such a large segment of the community in the meal itself are heartwarming. In the months before May 17, students at the high school held their annual Throw-a-Thon under the guidance of James Richey.

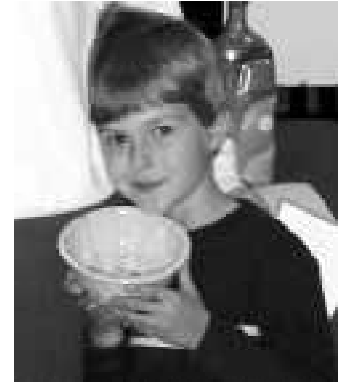
The Potters Guild, in collaboration with Donna Symons, held a Celebrity Throw-a-Thon at Creative Oasis. Together, both groups crafted more than 1,000 beautifully formed and glazed bowls.

RE/MAX real estate agency purchased a full page color advertisement for Empty Bowls in the Centre Daily Times the weekend before the event. Potters put the finishing touches on ceramic pieces for the silent

auction. Local restaurants prepared an appetizing array of soups, breads and desserts, while singers and musicians thought about the programs they would present during the meal on May 17. IB Green on Froggy Radio talked about the upcoming event. Preparations involved a community-wide, cross-generational group of individuals and organizations.

The response on May 17 was almost overwhelming.

More than 900 people attended the meal, and they seemed to enjoy themselves, taking their time to choose their bowls, clutching them carefully like Joshua Gladd (see photo) and not minding the occasional waiting in lines. To top it off, Fox 8 news at 11 PM that evening



Joshua Gladd with his bowl

had an excellent segment on the Empty Bowls Meal.

Pat Coble and the Board of Directors of the Food Bank would like to thank everyone involved with the event, and all the families and members of the community for their participation and contributions. It was a truly memorable evening.



James Richey and a student potter

The October 2001 issue of *The Pennsylvania Hunger Advocate* noted that many people in Pennsylvania are searching for emergency food. Hunger Action's Food Information Line took 257 calls in August and 239 calls in September. This situation is expected to worsen during the current economic downturn.

A BIRTHDAY PARTY - IN A BAG?

From time to time, the Food Bank has offered “birthday bags” to clients about to have a birthday. These bags were brown lunch bags decorated with crayon drawings and contained cake and icing mixes, candles and a few pieces of candy.

Then a young volunteer who had seen these bags decided to make creating some special birthday bags the focus of *her* upcoming birthday party. Saying that she didn’t need any more “things,” she asked her friends to bring cake and icing mixes, candles and other items to her birthday party instead of gifts. She and her family provided white bags, and ribbon and other materials to use to decorate them. This very thoughtful young person donated 20 beautiful birthday bags to us, but even more importantly, she started a trend, so that now the Food Bank has a marvelous supply of really lovely birthday bags to offer our clients. Our clients are very touched and thrilled when they receive them. We are happy that children are being inspired to use their birthdays as an opportunity to reach out and give to those in need.



A sampling of birthday bags, courtesy of some of our youngest volunteers

A Member Agency of the Centre County United Way

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
State College, PA 16801
Permit 270

The State College Area Food Bank
P.O. Box 907
State College, PA 16804