



Colorado Food Bank Association Digest

"Building a well nourished Colorado through education, advocacy and resource development"

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Local Perspective - Care and Share, Colorado Springs

Creating health means ending hunger

More than one-third (38%) of people standing in line at community food pantries across Colorado are in the queue because they have to choose between paying to put food on the table and paying for medical expenses. The link between health and hunger is visible in several ways. In Colorado Springs and Pueblo, Care and Share Food Bank operates a weekend meal program called Send Hunger Packing for 100 children from very low-income families. Children receive a backpack every Friday filled with non-perishable food such as cereal, pasta and tomato sauce, and canned fruits and vegetables that they take home over the weekend when school meal programs are not available. A 9-year-old boy recently joined Send Hunger Packing because his single mother, who works full-time at McDonalds, had to take several weeks off work to recover from a severe broken leg.

On the broader scale though, the impact of poor nutrition on hungry families reaches into the core of every community. Hungry children are not as well able to learn, have lower school grades, suffer physical consequences such as increased risk of anemia and type II diabetes, and they are more prone to social problems such as fighting.

The Harvard School of Public Health, along with Brandeis and Loyola Universities, published a report in June 2007 called "The Economic Cost of Domestic Hunger." The report shows that the annual direct and indirect cost burden to the United States because of poorer health, illnesses, and increased use of psychological services associated with not having enough food to eat is \$66.8 billion. Hunger is not only a solvable problem – it is a problem we cannot afford to not resolve.

National Perspective - Business Week 4-14-08

Supplies Dwindling at Food Pantries

In many parts of the world, extreme food price increases and shortages have led to riots. In America, while the effects of high food prices are felt widely, they are especially hard on the lowest-income consumers. Many food banks around the country are reporting empty shelves even as the ranks of hungry people coming in have risen. The BedStuy Campaign Against Hunger, a nonprofit food pantry in one of the poorest sections of Brooklyn, N.Y., is feeding as many as 6,000 people a month, up 15% from last year, with children comprising half of the visitors.

"I'm sorry to say that the families who came in to pick up food last Tuesday found that we didn't have any milk, rice, juice or pasta," says Reverend Melony Samuels, who runs the pantry and is also a pastor at the Full Gospel Tabernacle of Faith church. Samuels says it has become harder for private donors to supply food because costs have gone up. Her group also depends on the federal government, which distributes surplus commodities to thousands of food banks. However, these surpluses have dwindled. Samuels' pantry now receives only half what it did from Uncle Sam in 2007.

State Perspective

Food banks across the state are experiencing a major increase in the number of individuals in need of food. Families are limiting food purchases to buy fuel. In Colorado, local food banks have seen an increase of 30% or more in the number of individuals who come in search of food for their families. The Colorado community and stakeholders must take a strong stance to support the Colorado Food Bank Association monetarily to purchase nutritional foods and offset the skyrocketing price of transportation.

Join us September 9, 2008 for a tour of the food bank facilities across the state. A formal invitation will be forthcoming before the end of the session.



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