
Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare Join Forces to End Hunger
Anti-Hunger Conference is Among Hunger Action Month™ Activities

WALLINGFORD, CONN., September 8, 2017 – This September the Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare are joining with the Feeding America® nationwide network of food banks, to mark Hunger Action Month in Connecticut. Among the planned events is a September 20 conference in Hartford that aims to gather a coalition of people and organizations to work on action plans to end hunger in the state.

Hunger Action Month is designed to inspire people to act and to raise awareness of the fact that more than 41 million Americans, including nearly 13 million children, are food insecure, according to the USDA.

According to the most recent USDA data, 12.3% of Connecticut households - more than 450,000 people - struggle with hunger. That number includes one in six children who may not have enough to eat. While overall food insecurity both nationally and in Connecticut has dipped, the percentage of people in Connecticut with very low food security has remained essentially unchanged, bucking the national trend of a slight drop.

“The three-year trend is even more troubling,” said Connecticut Food Bank CEO Bernie Beaudreau. “Since 2013, the percentage of Connecticut households experiencing very low food security has risen from 5% to 6.3%, while the national trend was slightly downward,” Beaudreau said. “That means more than 235,000 people in Connecticut are missing meals because they can’t afford food or may forego eating so their children can eat.”

Foodshare President and CEO Jason Jakubowski said the numbers represent increasing challenges for Connecticut families. “Both Foodshare and the Connecticut Food Bank continue to see high numbers of people visiting our programs,” Jakubowski said. “We know that even with one or more people in a household working they may not be able to meet their basic needs. They turn to the food assistance network for help.”

Connecticut’s two regional food banks and the state’s anti-hunger education and research organization are presenting activities that will both raise awareness and generate action steps toward ending hunger. On September 20, the Connecticut Food Bank, Foodshare and End Hunger Connecticut! will co-host ***Hungry for Change: Building a Coalition to Solve Hunger in Connecticut***. The half-day conference, sponsored by Bank of America, is aimed at bringing together a cross-section of people who are engaged in the issue of ending hunger to develop action steps they can pursue as a coalition. The event is free, but reservations are required. Information and reservations are available at <http://bit.ly/hungryCT>.

Additionally, the food banks’ leaders are taking the “SNAP Challenge,” to highlight the difficulties many people who receive SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps) benefits face in eating enough healthy food on approximately \$4.50 a day in Connecticut.

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“Far too many Connecticut residents struggle to get enough nutritious food,” said Beaudreau. “The SNAP Challenge is a way for people to begin to understand what it’s like to struggle on low wages or on disability income in Connecticut.”

Jakubowski will also take part in the challenge. “We can’t fully understand what people who rely on SNAP and food pantries or soup kitchens experience, but we can begin to see what the food safety net is like and how we can do more to help our hungry neighbors,” Jakubowski said.

The maximum income a person can earn monthly to receive SNAP is \$1,832 and the average SNAP benefit in Connecticut is \$134.82, Jakubowski said. Noting the average monthly rent for an apartment in Connecticut is \$1,100, Beaudreau said “it’s a simple fact that many people who work hard at a full-time job or multiple part-time jobs may not earn enough to get by.”

Both food banks have web pages devoted to the SNAP Challenge.

Foodshare: http://site.foodshare.org/site/PageServer?pagename=programs_movement_education_snapchallenge. Connecticut Food Bank: <http://www.ctfoodbank.org/connecticut-food-bank-special-events/hungeractionmonth/take-the-snap-challenge/>.

September 14 is Hunger Action Day[®], when Feeding America encourages communities and individuals across the nation to call attention to their fight against hunger and raise awareness.

“By wearing orange and sharing your participation on social media,” Beaudreau said, “you can encourage others to learn more about the issue and how they can help.”

“It seems simple,” Jakubowski added, “but letting your personal networks know you are engaged can inspire them to take similar steps.”

“Essentially, we want you to be a bright and memorable reminder of the challenge and a symbol of the commitment to end hunger,” Beaudreau said. “Go orange on September 14 and share your message.”

Beaudreau invited participants in wearing orange and people sharing their empty plate images to post photos to social media with #HungerActionMonth, @CTFoodBank @Foodshare and @FeedingAmerica to join the conversation.

Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare are Connecticut’s two regional food banks. Both are members of the national Feeding America network. Connecticut Food Bank serves Fairfield, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, and Windham Counties. Foodshare serves Hartford and Tolland Counties. Last year, Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare distributed enough food to provide more than 31 million meals through a network of nearly 1,000 local hunger-relief programs including food pantries, shelters, and community kitchens. For more information, visit www.ctfoodbank.org and www.foodshare.org

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