



OZARKS Food Harvest

The Food Bank

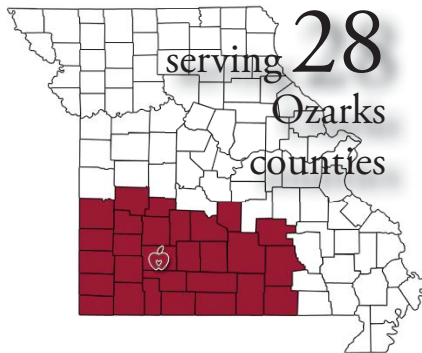
Harvest *time*



A member of

Your Community Food Bank Newsletter
Holiday Edition, December 2011

Learn about The Food Bank's Network of 300 charities at ozarksfoodharvest.org



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More families than ever need help right now *OFH Mobile Food Pantry helps supplement food pantries*

For Laurie, a 32-year-old mother of two girls, ages six and 12, "its hard just coming up with supper."

"This time of year, money's tight, food stamps are tight, everything's tight," the single mother says.

After paying her bills, Laurie's paycheck from her in-home health aide job went to fill her tank with gas, so there usually wasn't enough for food. Two years ago, her family didn't receive any kind of assistance. She says when the economy got worse, her savings went quick.

"Kids don't understand this is all we got. They always want to eat."

—Laurie, Mobile Food Pantry client

Food Harvest member food pantry that receives both commodity food boxes and emergency food from OFH.

"Kids don't understand this is all we got. They always want to eat," says Laurie. "My youngest will ask, 'What's for supper?' but my oldest understands times are hard for everyone and she's 12."

"She wanted a haircut because her bangs were too long. She said, 'Momma, I knew you couldn't afford to get me a haircut, so I cut them myself.'"



Laurie walks through Ozarks Food Harvest's Mobile Food Pantry line with her laundry basket to hold her food donations.

Laurie lost her job on the first of November, and Christmas is just days away.

Ozarks Food Harvest staff met Laurie and 209 other families on December 8 when The Food Bank's Mobile Food Pantry truck traveled to Nevada, Missouri, stocked with 17,000 pounds of sliced cheese and lunch meats, bread, yogurt, potatoes, milk, bacon, snacks and other produce and bakery items.

"It's good knowing you've got something to feed your kids," Laurie says hopefully.

"When my girls are in school, that's two extra meals a day I don't have to worry about, but I'm getting ready to get slammed with two to three weeks off of school."

In addition to free breakfasts and lunches at school for her children, Laurie receives food stamps, which she says run out before the middle of the month, so she goes to the Nevada Community Outreach Center, an Ozarks

Nevada is in Vernon County, which has a food insecurity rate of 17.9 percent. The child food insecurity rate is 32.5 percent, as compared to the state rate of 25 percent. Twenty-seven percent of the food insecure children in Vernon County do not qualify for any form of assistance.

Give time, food or money to help families like Laurie's have hope for a better New Year at ozarksfoodharvest.org.

- 6** meals were provided for every dollar donated
- 2,600** volunteers generously gave the gift of time
- 16,000** hours were donated by OFH volunteers
- 170,000** unduplicated individuals were fed by OFH's Network
- 12,000,000** pounds were distributed to 300 nonprofits



McDonald's Cans for Coffee becomes largest non-disaster relief food drive in Ozarks Food Harvest history

Tyson Foods, Inc. donates truckload of chicken to Cans for Coffee drive for fourth consecutive year

Tyson Foods, Inc. gave the McDonald's Cans for Coffee food drive a boost by donating nearly 40,000 pounds of frozen chicken to OFH.

Pictured below are OFH CEO Bart Brown, Tyson reps Steve Meves & Johnny Hughes and local McDonald's of the Ozarks owner-operator Chip McGeehan.



Ozarks Food Harvest received a record-breaking food drive this month!

The fourth annual McDonald's Cans for Coffee food drive collected more than 36,000 pounds of canned goods for Ozarks neighbors in need—more than any other drive in OFH history, excluding disaster-related drives. (See right.)

Cans for Coffee encourages community members to donate a nonperishable food item at any of the McDonald's of the Ozarks locations, and in exchange, donors receive

one free small McCafe® speciality drink of their choice.

This year's campaign began on Halloween and ended on Nov. 20, bringing in more than double last year's total of approximately 16,000 pounds. The grand total was 36,650 pounds, or enough to provide 28,192 meals.

"We are thankful for partners like McDonald's and Tyson who donate canned food items and protein, two of our most needed donations. With the help of these partners, our clients can put more meals—and protein-rich foods—on the table," said CEO Bart Brown.



Top 10 food drives in OFH history: (in thousands)

1. KTTS Katrina Relief 2005, 63.7 lbs.
2. Clear Channel Radio Joplin Relief 2011, 49.5 lbs.
3. McDonald's Cans for Coffee 2011, 36.7 lbs.
4. McDonald's Cans for Coffee 2008, 23.2 lbs.
5. Boys Scouts' Scout for Food 2003, 19 lbs.
6. McDonald's Cans for Coffee 2010, 16 lbs.
7. Boys Scouts' Scout for Food 2004, 14.1 lbs.
8. Kickapoo H.S. Fall Carnival 2005, 13.6 lbs.
9. Boys Scouts' Scout for Food 2000, 13.3 lbs.
10. Prairie Chapel Food Drive 2006, 13 lbs.

Food for Fines returns at Springfield–Greene Co. Library branches

January 22-28

Take advantage of The Library's third annual "fine amnesty week" and help Ozarks Food Harvest!

For each nonperishable food item donated at any branch or mobile library Sunday, Jan. 22 through Saturday, Jan. 28, you will receive a 50-cent credit on your overdue book fines. There's no limit on the number of items you may donate to pay down your fines.

Simply drop off your food items during branch hours the last week of Jan. at the check-out desk of any library.

More than four tons of food was collected during last year's Food for Fines week.

Heartfelt thanks to our generous supporters!

Significant Gifts made recently from Friends of The Food Bank:

- Gannett Foundation
- General Mills Foundation
- Land O'Lakes, Inc.
- MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger
- Jeanette L. Musgrave Foundation
- Ozarks Health Advocacy Foundation
- Roy W. Slusher Foundation
- Tyson Foods, Inc.



OFH Volunteer Sprouts help receive food donations at the first-ever Springfield Food Day Celebration, Oct. 22.

Food Drives collecting 1,600 lbs. or more since Sept. 1: (Find photos of these events at facebook.com/ozarksfoodharvest)

- McDonald's of the Ozarks, 36,650 lbs.
- Harvest on Wheels, 15,142 lbs. (1,000 lbs. & \$2,000 from the 2nd annual Harvest Soup Cook-off in Oct.)
- Turkey Trot, 7,734 lbs (Hosted by Springfield–Greene Co. Park Board & Developmental Center of the Ozarks)
- Missouri State University Homecoming CanStruction, 4,188 lbs.
- Kickapoo High School, 2,551 lbs. (annual fall carnival for OFH & Food Fight donations)
- 417 Bow Hunters, 2,234 lbs.
- Cherokee Middle School, 2,010 lbs.
- Chase Card Services, 1,676 lbs.
- Car Mart, 1,629 lbs.
- Crockett Chiropractic, 1,628 lbs.
- Springfield Food Day Celebration, 1,609 lbs. & \$1,000 (hosted by The Smart Group)

Special thanks to National Avenue Christian Church in Springfield for hosting the 2nd annual Alternative Gift Market, collecting nearly \$800 for The Food Bank!

Congratulations to CFO affiliates & OFH pantries who partnered to raise \$125,000 in the 2nd Hunger Challenge to receive matching funds from OFH, thanks to the Walmart Foundation State Giving Program. Read more & see photos at cfozarks.org.

Congratulations to our friends at Kraft Foods, Inc. & the Roy W. Slusher Foundation for being

Help “Pack ‘til they’re Back” with a gift to the Backpack Program & CFO will match it

The handwritten testimonials to the right probably caught your attention when you opened the inside of this newsletter. It’s hard to read some of the Backpack Program participants’ notes, knowing they are saving some food back for their younger siblings, or even hiding snacks in fear their parents may take a bite.

In our service area, one in every four children face food insecurity, meaning they don’t know where their next meal is coming from. Thirty percent of these children don’t even qualify for government assistance, like the free or reduced meals at school, which means this “gap” is truly relying on our Network and donors’ support.

I chose a few of our child testimonials to share with you during “Pack ‘til They’re Back,” Feeding America’s holiday campaign, intended to raise awareness for the children who rely on food bank Backpack Programs across the nation.

Over the course of the holidays, Feeding America food banks hope to increase awareness and funding for the children who rely on the

Backpack Program for meals when they are not in school.

That is one of the reasons why we’re so pleased to benefit from the Community Foundation of the Ozarks’ (CFO) Community Response Grant Challenge this year.

Nonprofits with missions that corresponded directly to the “Red-Flag” issues identified in the latest *Community Focus* report card were again eligible to apply for matching funds. Because of our childhood hunger relief work, particularly via the Backpack Program, we will receive a \$7,000 gift for these at-risk children if we are able to raise \$7,000 from donors who designate their gift to Ozarks Food Harvest CRG Challenge by Feb. 1.

Simply use the enclosed envelope and designate your Backpack gift to CRG before Feb. 2012. Please call me if you have questions.



Denise Gibson
Development Director

Cherokee Middle School named OFH 2011 Food Fight Champion

Typically, when you hear “food fight” and “school” in the same sentence, one giant mess in a cafeteria comes to mind; however, this wasn’t the kind of “food fight” Ozarks Food Harvest had in mind for local elementary, middle and high schools during its inaugural school *Food Fight*.

For one week in late Oct., OFH challenged schools to host a food drive to see who could collect the most food. Those schools accepting the challenge included Bingham, Bowerman, Boyd, Cowden and Delaware elementary schools, Cherokee and Pipkin middle schools and Central and Kickapoo high schools.

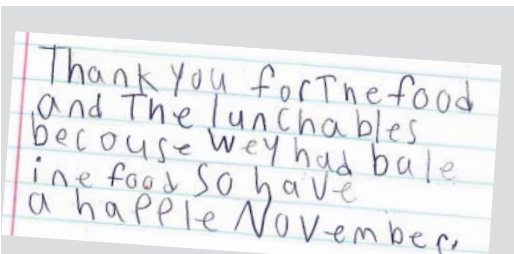
In total, **7,228 lbs.** were collected from these nine SPS schools, and in the end, Cherokee Middle School was announced the Champion. Cherokee collected 2,010 lbs., or an average of 2.5 lbs. per student. *Each school’s total was divided by number of students to determine the winner.*

Ozarks Food Harvest invited KY3’s Ron Hearst to help surprise the students during their Veteran’s Day assembly last month.

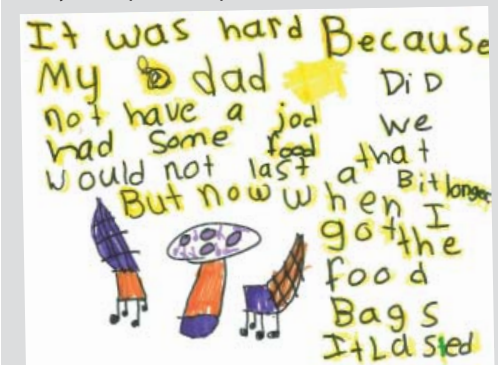
Last year, Cherokee’s seventh graders collected 2,466 lbs. of food, and they chose to host another drive this month, just two months after *Food Fight*. These students are true Hunger Heroes!



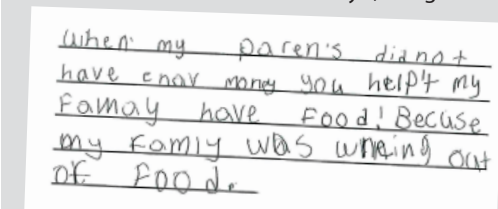
Cherokee Middle School Student Council President, Morgan Kyle, accepts Ozarks Food Harvest’s *Food Fight* traveling trophy from local celebrity guest, KY3 Chief Meteorologist, Ron Hearst.



Toby, Backpack recipient



Brooklyn, 4th grader



Emily, age 7

17th annual Turkey Trot collects nearly 8,000 pounds of food

This year’s Turkey Trot race collected 7,734 lbs. of food items for The Food Bank, making it OFH’s

largest *single-day* collection of the year, excluding relief drives for Joplin.

Special thanks to the Developmental Center of the Ozarks and the Springfield–Greene Co. Park Board for partnering with The Food Bank to collect food.

More than 8,000 runners and walkers donated the food. Since 2001, Turkey Trot has collected nearly 50,000 lbs. of food for OFH.



Oscar and Ethan Sickinger volunteer to accept food donations at Turkey Trot. The food was placed in OFH’s Mobile Food Pantry truck outside of the Springfield Expo.

For many struggling families, the “new norm” means relying on pantries

A lot of folks assume that the demand for food is at its highest during the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. When asked about this, my usual response is, “Actually, Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner are two days and two meals out of 1,095 meals eaten during the 365 days of the year.”



While it’s true Ozarks Food Harvest does distribute additional food items specific to the holidays, hunger will still be with us in the New Year. In fact, the need for food assistance is often higher during the first three months of the year, when charitable giving decreases and utility bills and other expenses rise.

At least, that used to be the case. In the aftermath of the Great Recession, unemployment remains high and some people refer to a “jobless recovery” as the new normal. What is becoming the “new norm” for many families is reliance on food banks as a mainstay to make ends meet. The new normal for Ozarks Food Harvest means an increase in demand every month, regardless of the season.

A report released this fall by Feeding America finds that food banks and the food pantries we serve—originally created to serve as stop-gap emergency food providers—are now playing a long-term, crucial role for Americans who routinely do not get enough to eat.

“You have to put aside your pride and do what you can

to feed your family,” Cheryl, a food pantry client, recently told me. “We didn’t know how to be poor before, but we’re learning fast now.”

Cheryl was laid off from her supervisory position 18 months ago. Her husband was out of work for nearly one year before he found a job that paid about half as much as his previous position paid. Cheryl continues to look for work. “I’ll take anything at this point. They say I’m overqualified for a fast food job, but how can you be overqualified when you don’t have an income?”

Cheryl and her family represent the new face of food insecurity in America—the unemployed middle class. These people are our neighbors, our coworkers and sometimes our own families.

On the bright side, we are also seeing a new norm for many of our generous supporters. Those who can give are giving throughout the year, as well as making a special holiday gift. This season, and in the year to come, your help is needed and appreciated more than ever.

Whether it’s one meal, one dollar or one hour, one person can make a difference. Together we are stronger, and I have to believe we can rise to meet our new normal this year and in the New Year.

Holiday Blessings to you and those dear to you,



Bart Brown
President/CEO

Check-out hunger through Dec. 31

Thank you for adding your \$1 tax-free donation to your grocery bill this holiday season!

If you haven’t shown your support in the check-out lane, remember to add a dollar to help *Put Hunger to Rest* at:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| Akin’s | Price Cutter |
| Bistro Market | Ramey |
| Country Mart | Save-A-Lot |
| Dillon Stores | Smillie’s |
| Harter House | Smitty’s |
| Murfin’s Market | Summer Fresh |
| | Woods |

Remember to sign your name on this donor card for the store to hang.



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Cindy Boggs, Office Manager
Melanie Toler, Receptionist

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Cassie Hanson, Research Development Coord.
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Linda Smith, Inventory Coordinator
Brian Wilson, Warehouse Associate

Thank You for your Donation

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Transform Hunger into Hope™*

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 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 E-mail _____
 Phone number(s) _____

I would like my gift of:

\$25 \$35 \$50 \$100 Other \$ _____

to support:

Feeding Children Purchased Food Program
 Feeding Families Joplin Long-term Relief
 Feeding Seniors Unrestricted

To give by credit card please provide:

Mastercard Visa Discover

Account# _____ Sec. Code _____ Exp. _____
 Signature _____

Use this form to make your tax-deductible gift, or simply provide your information directly on the enclosed envelope and send to the P.O. Box listed below.

To donate even faster, scan the QR code at right with your smartphone & give securely online.



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