



As Hunger Crisis Deepens, Forgotten Harvest Calls for Desperately-Needed Support From Metro Detroit Businesses & Individuals

OAK PARK, MICH.--December 16, 2011--New statistics from Southeastern Michigan and around the country are illustrating the depths of the hunger crisis in our community, driving Forgotten Harvest and other organizations fighting hunger to issue an emergency call for support in the face of an unprecedented demand for the most basic of human needs. Today, Forgotten Harvest is asking Metro Detroiters to take advantage of provisions in the Michigan tax code that expire at the end of this month to receive special tax deductions while funding Forgotten Harvest's food rescue operations.

A record number of Americans -- roughly half -- are classified as either low-income or in poverty, according to statistics released this week by the U.S. Census. In those households, daily decisions must be made between critical needs such as food on the table, heat in the home or medicines in the cabinet. In Metro Detroit, 800,000 people -- one in five -- face hunger every day, including one in four children. In the City of Detroit, almost 50 percent of children face hunger daily. Hunger is also a fact of life for the "working poor." According to a U.S. Conference of Mayors report released yesterday, one in four people asking for food assistance this year was employed.

"If hunger were a disease, it would be the greatest epidemic our nation has ever faced. If it were a war, the casualties would be unprecedented," said Susan Goodell, CEO of Forgotten Harvest. "When we say that we are in a hunger crisis in our country and in our region, we are not being alarmist -- we are being realistic."

Forgotten Harvest is asking individuals, businesses and organizations in Metro Detroit to take advantage of expiring 2011 Michigan tax deductions to allow the food rescue organization to collect and distribute more fresh and healthy food to emergency food providers in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties. As a certified hunger relief organization, individuals may claim 50 percent of contributions to Forgotten Harvest as a tax deduction up to \$200. Couples may claim 50 percent of contributions up to \$400. After meeting certain conditions, businesses may claim 50 percent of contributions up to \$10,000.

"We know where the food that would otherwise go to waste is, from the farm to the store," said Russ Russell, director of development for Forgotten Harvest. "There is more food that we could put on the tables of hungry people in our region if we had the trucks and resources to go out and get it. We need the support of the community to keep our trucks rolling, and we need that support now."

About Forgotten Harvest

Forgotten Harvest was formed in 1990 to fight two problems: hunger and waste. Forgotten Harvest “rescued” more than 23 million pounds of food last year by collecting surplus prepared and perishable food from 455 sources, including grocery stores, fruit and vegetable markets, restaurants, caterers, dairies, farmers, wholesale food distributors and other Health Department-approved sources. This donated food, which would otherwise go to waste, is delivered free-of-charge to more than 200 emergency food providers in the Metro Detroit area.

Learn more about Forgotten Harvest and how to help drive hunger from our community at www.forgottenharvest.org.

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