

**NEWS RELEASE
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Metropolitan Detroit schoolchildren take a vacation from hunger
Charter One teams up for third year with Forgotten Harvest and Gleaners Community Food Bank to expand services to children and families during summer

DETROIT – Charter One announces the kickoff of *Summer Vacation from Hunger*, an initiative first launched in 2008 to help fight the impact of child hunger during the summer. As part of this effort, the Charter One Foundation has again pledged \$100,000 to Forgotten Harvest and Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan – our region’s two leading organizations in the fight against hunger – to provide much-needed funding to feed thousands of children throughout southeast Michigan.

The number of children affected by hunger in southeast Michigan is growing. Today one in five Michigan children under 18 years old reside in households receiving food stamps. More than 250,000 school children in the tri-county area are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches – an important resource that ends when school is out for the summer.

This year Charter One’s *Summer Vacation from Hunger* in partnership with Gleaners and Forgotten Harvest will shift its focus from mobile food pantries to complete lunches. From July 8 to September 3, Charter One will help provide 150,000 healthy sack lunches to children in Macomb, Oakland and Wayne counties with funding and a corps of volunteers.

Summer Vacation from Hunger will contribute to existing programs of Forgotten Harvest and Gleaners that reach thousands of children using a variety of methods. Forgotten Harvest’s “Million Meal Challenge For Our Kids” is an initiative to raise funds to rescue and deliver nutritious food during the summer and other times throughout the year. Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan’s Summer Food Service Program provides daily lunches at sites throughout metropolitan Detroit. Additionally, Gleaners’ Backpack Program provides easy to prepare foods for the weekend for kids who are not eating enough at home.

“Summer should be a carefree time for kids but too many children face the grown-up issue of hunger,” said Sandy Pierce, President of Charter One, Michigan. “Charter One is grateful for the leadership of Forgotten Harvest and Gleaners and their commitment to making a difference for children in our region.”

“Forgotten Harvest is making it our mission this summer to help ensure the children in our communities are properly nourished,” said Susan Goodell, president and CEO of Forgotten Harvest. “Children are always a top priority at Forgotten Harvest. They need the nutritious, fresh food we provide to stay healthy and strong. When school is not in session, they simply don’t get enough to eat.”

Forgotten Harvest and Gleaners will coordinate with 50 community organizations that serve children in the tri-county area to distribute packaged lunches.

“We appreciate Charter One’s leadership in combating child hunger in southeast Michigan,” said DeWayne Wells, president of Gleaners. “Its continued support of our work is directly resulting in thousands of children getting the nutrition they need to grow up healthy, happy and strong. Charter One truly is investing in our children’s futures by making sure they are adequately fed now.”

For more information on the *Summer Vacation from Hunger* initiative visit the following Web sites: forgottenharvest.org and gcfb.org.

About the Charter One Foundation

Charter One Foundation is a subsidiary of the Citizens Charitable Foundation, which is a charitable contributions vehicle of Citizens Financial Group, Inc., RBS Citizens, N.A. and Citizens Bank of Pennsylvania. The foundation’s support is focused on housing, community development and basic human needs. Charter One’s Web site is charterone.com.

About Forgotten Harvest

Forgotten Harvest was formed in 1990 to fight two problems: hunger and waste. Forgotten Harvest rescued more than 19.3 million pounds of food last year by collecting surplus prepared and perishable food from a variety of 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 absolutely free of charge to 165-plus emergency food providers in the metro Detroit area. The individuals and families served are as diverse as the community's residents – young and old, from all races and faiths. The common bond uniting them with each other and with Forgotten Harvest is hunger. Visit www.forgottenharvest.org.

About Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan

Gleaners Community Food Bank of Southeastern Michigan is one of the oldest food banks in the United States. Gleaners secures food from grocers, food manufacturers, farms and gardens, individual donors and other sources and distributes it to more than 467 local non-profit agencies that feed people in need. Some of Gleaners’ partner agencies operate soup kitchens or food pantries that provide nutritious meals and food packages, while others include shelters and human service organizations that serve meals. Since 1977, Gleaners Community Food Bank has grown to distributing more than 35 million pounds annually. Gleaners’ Web site is www.gcfb.org.

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