



# Harry Chapin Food Bank OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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Newsletter — Summer 2011

**Lee Tran and Publix Prepare For Food Drive on September 18**  
Mark your calendar now for Publix/Lee Tran's Food Drive — just when the Harry Chapin Food Bank's warehouse needs replenishing to help at-risk children, families and seniors!

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## Bulging Food Bank Warehouse Means 'Volunteers Urgently Needed'

Hundreds of thousands of pounds of food from the biggest food drive of the year represent hope to the children, families and seniors who face a difficult summer of hunger in Southwest Florida.

But that help will stall if the Harry Chapin Food Bank cannot quickly sort and pack the generously donated food and transport it to the local pantries and agencies that directly serve those in need.

In addition, many more pounds of perishable food are constantly arriving through greatly expanded food rescue programs with a host of community partners, including Publix, Sweetbay, Wal-Mart and Target. Enabling these programs is the Food Bank's growing fleet of refrigerated trucks that pick up and deliver nutritional fresh fruit,

vegetables and meats. And the vehicles for mobile pantry distribution are helping the Food Bank reach hard-to-serve areas.

The snowbird volunteers have gone, and this urgent call goes out to year-round residents. Listen to what volunteers say about their experiences: "The Food Bank is an amazing community service," said Judd Wetzel. "I like knowing that our efforts help alleviate hunger in the local area," noted Sandra Stone. "I enjoy the physical work, and it feels really great helping to make a difference," Sherry Pate said.

If you can stand for a three-hour shift and are at least 14 years old, we want you! Here are two great ways to volunteer:

- **Food sorters/packers** inspect items for

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*Feeding America's Mark Biewald (l) and David Blair guided Hunger Summit attendees on ways to increase their distribution capacity.*



*Hunger Summit participants shared ideas on how to overcome agency limitations — from facility structure to refrigeration, volunteer numbers and technology.*

## 4th Hunger Summit Works To Build Agency Capacity

A mother and son walked into a food pantry, and when they walked out with two bags of groceries, the child exclaimed, "Mom, we're rich again!"

The agencies that the Harry Chapin Food Bank serves "make a real difference," Food Bank Executive Director Al Brislain told the 140 representatives attending the 4th Hunger Summit on April 29th. But with more and more children and adults at risk of hunger, the real challenge now is to build greater capacity into the system.

Since 2007, the Food Bank boosted warehouse capacity from 12,000 to 50,000 square feet; added refrigerated trucks for a total of 14; expanded agency partners from 120 to 170; more than doubled volunteer hours to 28,000 a year; and created a store pick-up program that will deliver 2.4 million pounds of fresh vegetables, fruit and meat. The result: a dramatic jump in food distribution from 3.4 million pounds to a whopping 11.5 million in 2011.

Now, the spotlight is on agencies to move more food

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### Letter Carriers' Food Drive Nets 408,300 Pounds of Food!

On Saturday, May 14, Southwest Florida mailboxes overflowed with bags of food donations. When the annual Letter Carriers' Food Drive was over, 408,300 pounds weighed in, the second highest tally for the five-county area. The food donations go to the Harry Chapin Food Bank and directly to some smaller local organizations.

**For every \$1 donation, the Food Bank can source and distribute \$6 worth of food! Please give generously...**



## Harry Chapin Food Bank OF SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

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[www.harrychapinfoodbank.org](http://www.harrychapinfoodbank.org)

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## BANK NOTES...

From Executive Director Al Brislain

# Government Funding of Food Programs at High Risk

The Harry Chapin Food Bank is proud to serve 170 non-profit organizations that help families in need and improve the quality of life in Southwest Florida. Most are emergency food pantries and soup kitchens, but others provide support to low-income children and seniors; people with physical or mental challenges; and people in need of health care, counseling or other support.

Many of these partner agencies are facing sizable cuts in local, state and/or federal government funding.

The Food Bank itself is facing cuts in the Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which provides critical food and housing assistance, and in the USDA Commodity program, which provides about 20 percent of the food we distribute. The SNAP (food stamp) program has also been targeted for significant reductions.

We all need to economize and strive for efficiency. However, we hope our leaders are mindful of the critical needs of the most vulnerable in our society and of those families that have been touched by the recession. Once doctors used saws and axes to operate on patients, but they learned that a scalpel is much more efficient and effective. We believe that leaders should maximize efficiency but minimize the impact of budget cuts on the most vulnerable of our neighbors. If you agree, *please let your representatives know about your concerns.*



## Food Bank Welcomes New Board Members

Join the Food Bank in welcoming two new board members:

Former Food Bank board president **Craig Folk, CPA**, rejoins the board after a one-year hiatus. For 14 years he has been a partner at Miller, Helms & Folk, PA, managing income, estate and international tax planning for individuals and businesses. He previously worked for Arthur Andersen & Co. and Coopers & Lybrand LLP. A graduate of Vanderbilt University, he earned his MBA from the University of Chicago.

**Kristina Rodriguez** is the Director of Community Engagement and Nutrition Services for Senior Friendship Centers, overseeing 12 Community Engagement Centers & Dining Cafes in Lee County and a Meals on Wheels for Seniors program. She is a certified Master Trainer of six nationally recognized aging and caregiver programs, and a contributing author to two AARP publications.

## Grants and Funds Total \$58,000

*The Harry Chapin Food Bank is pleased to recognize the following grants and funds:*

**Banfield Charitable Trust: \$2,500**

**Theodore and Maria Bollt Foundation: \$10,000**

**Community Trust Fund of The League Club, Inc.: \$10,000**

**The Mosaic Company: \$16,000**  
**St. John's Episcopal Church: \$7,500**

**Sweetbay Supermarket: \$12,000**

*(2/25/11 to 6/1/11)*

**Our Mission...**To overcome hunger in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties through education and by working in a cooperative effort with affiliated agencies in the procurement and distribution of food, equitably and without discrimination.



Find the Food Bank on Facebook

## WCI Communities Embrace A Cause 'Right Under Our Noses'

When the recession hit Southwest Florida hard, David Fry had the responsibility to work WCI Communities through bankruptcy restructuring — not knowing himself whether a job would be waiting on the other side.

It was a “huge surprise” when he was asked to stay on as president and CEO. “I felt very fortunate to be there after all we’ve been through,” he said gratefully. At that moment, he knew that he had to do more to help others. A tour of the Harry Chapin Food Bank warehouse opened his eyes. “I couldn’t believe hunger was right under our noses,” Fry said.

Better than just trying to explain the need to his four daughters, ages 12 to 17, he engaged his family in assembling meals at a United Way event. (Six months later, WCI Communities sponsored a similar event, where 300 volunteers packaged 118,878 meals in three shifts.)

Fry realized that his newly found passion could help him elevate core principles and give the WCI team pride in the re-launched company. “What better way than to embrace a cause, and what better cause than fighting hunger right here?”

A summer promotion for golfers last year raised \$22,276, and WCI is thrilled to repeat the program this summer. **Golfers who donate \$150 to the joint hunger efforts of the United Way of Lee County and the Harry Chapin Food Bank via**

**the WCI web portal will receive a complimentary foursome certificate between June 1 and September 30 at one of five premier WCI golf courses in Southwest Florida.** Tee-time reservations are available two days in advance.

The courses include: Pelican Preserve Golf Club, Fort Myers; Raptor Bay Golf Club, Bonita Springs; The Colony Golf & Country Club, Bonita Springs; Tiburon, Naples; and Hammock Bay Golf & Country Club, Naples. *For more information, visit [www.WCIGolf.com](http://www.WCIGolf.com) and click on the Food Bank icon.*

Fry is hopeful that WCI’s 490 employees in Southwest Florida will become engaged in the fight against hunger. “Once you see and understand what goes on at the Food Bank,” he explained, “you just embrace it.”

### Golf Classic Raises \$30,000 in First Year



The inaugural Harry Chapin Golf Classic, hosted by Grandezza Golf & Country Club, raised more than \$30,000 for the Food Bank. The event produced a field of more than 100 golfers and 30 corporate and private sponsors.

## Senior Hunger Grows as Recession Adds To Ranks of Laid Off and Unemployed

Numbers really do tell the story of senior hunger.

According to *Senior Hunger in the United States*, conducted for Meals On Wheels Association of America, 5.7 percent of seniors (2.7 million people) are at risk of hunger. The report, however, doesn’t come close to reflecting the full impact of the recession and the burst housing bubble.



Lunch at Senior Friendship Centers’ Dining Café.

Many of these seniors qualify as the “new hungry” — older workers laid off or cut off from unemployment benefits and unable to find re-employment.

Moreover, living with grandchildren has become one of the highest risk factors for senior hunger. One senior couple volunteered (and ate lunch) at a Dining Café every day this past year. When they disclosed that they

didn’t have enough money to feed themselves, but were afraid that if they asked for assistance their grandchildren would be taken from them, the team at Senior Friendship Centers was able to help.

The agency further assists 45 clients with “Friendship Food Bags,” supplemented with 300 pounds of food per month from the Harry Chapin Food Bank.

Still, more than 100 people remain on the waiting list for food. “Senior programs that provide direct services to clients have not yet been cut,” Rodriguez noted. While funding has remained level for more than a decade, the agency manages to feed twice as many people but at twice the cost.

“Could you afford to eat today on the budget you had 10 years ago,” she asked, “with the added health problems of aging?”

### Publix Donates \$29,875 From Food For All Program



Publix Supermarkets presented a check for \$29,875 to the Harry Chapin Food Bank through its Food For All program, part of the Food Industry Crusade Against Hunger (FICAH). Pictured above are (l-r): Chris Robinson and Fred Richards, Harry Chapin Food Bank; David Garth, Publix Supermarkets; Neal McAlister, Harry Chapin Food Bank; and Shannon Patten and Mike Kot, Publix Supermarkets.

## Food Safety Begins and Ends with Washing

Each year one in six Americans (48 million) is sickened by food-borne illnesses, reports the Centers for Disease Control. The most important challenges in transporting and handling fresh foods are **cross-contamination and temperature control**, said Debbie Amico, an advisor on food safety ([www.foodsafetytrainingsolutions.com](http://www.foodsafetytrainingsolutions.com)).

Did you know that...

- Leafy greens must be separated from raw meat. Even in storage, fresh produce must always sit above meat.

- Because the bottom of crates of food may be dirty, counters they sit on should be thoroughly cleaned.

- Refrigerated units must remain at temperature to keep foods fresh.

- Hand-washing (20 seconds with soap in 100-degree water temperature) is required for anyone handling fresh foods and/or serving clients.

- Because moisture can cause bacteria growth, fresh produce isn't washed before distribution. So pantries should always inform clients to wash fresh foods at home.

## Hunger Summit Aims to Build Agency Capacity...

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faster and more efficiently to those most in need. Physical limitations on freezer and cooler sizes, shelving, volunteer numbers, technology, and facility structure can indeed present barriers. But with more training, education and peer exchanges, and by drawing on academic institutions, state networks, retired executives, and local groups, these can be overcome, noted

Mark Biewald, Director of Capability Development for Feeding America.

He and colleague David Blair, Manager of Capability Development at Feeding America, challenged the agencies to increase hours of operation on weekends and evenings or identify one area of organizational capacity that they can grow now.

Small steps by many can bring big results!



*Volunteers assist clients at a mobile pantry.*

## Volunteers Needed...

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safety, sort products, or re-pack bulk products at the Food Bank warehouse. Sorting hours are Monday to Thursday from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m., Fridays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. and most Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

- **Mobile pantry volunteers** set up tables, unload food, give food to clients, break down the distribution area, load unused items back into trucks, and/or clean up the area.

**Call 334-7007 to volunteer...or to set up a team-building opportunity for your company or service club.**

Volunteer Your Time!  
The Harry Chapin Food Bank  
can use your help this summer.  
Call 334-7007 x141 now!

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of Southwest Florida  
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