



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Southeast Missouri Food Bank Joins Feeding America's Hunger Action Month Campaign to Ensure Food Isn't an Impossible Choice for 70,000 People Facing Hunger in Our Area

CHICAGO, IL (Aug. 25, 2022) – For Hunger Action Month this September, Southeast Missouri Food Bank will join Feeding America and other member food banks to inspire people to join the fight to end hunger and raise awareness of people experiencing food insecurity across the United States. Food banks around the country are working to make a real and lasting impact on hunger in their communities, and they are asking for the public's support.

September marks the 15th year Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization with a nationwide network of 200 food banks, including SEMO Food Bank and 60,000 partner food pantries and meal programs, has organized the annual call to action. This year's campaign presents the impossible choices that millions of people in America are often forced to make between food and other basic needs.

"Many people may not give a daily meal much thought. For people facing hunger, a daily meal is not as simple," said Claire Babineaux-Fontenot, CEO of Feeding America. "Instead, it becomes a different type of choice – an impossible decision between food or other crucial needs, such as electricity, childcare or medicine. Nobody should be forced to make a choice to go hungry. With the public's support, we can come together to help increase food access for all people, so they no longer have to make such tough decisions."

SEMO Food Bank serves more than 70,000 people each month across 16 counties through its network of partner agencies and programs. During September, the food bank encourages everyone to learn and speak up about ways to end hunger. Some of the food bank's activities for the month include:

- Proclamations of Hunger Action Month by communities, including Cape Girardeau, Jackson, Poplar Bluff and Sikeston.
- A coloring contest for local students to share their favorite foods; winners will be chosen by Facebook likes and will receive a prize.

- Encouraging businesses and individuals to Go Orange, the color of hunger awareness, on Sept. 23, which is Hunger Action Day. Wear orange and share your photos on social media with #semofoodbank and #hungeractionmonth.
- Help More, Feed More open volunteer opportunities from 1 to 4 p.m. Sept. 15 and 9 a.m. to noon Sept. 21.

Hunger Action Month will kick off with a mobile food distribution at the food bank Sept. 1. The distribution is sponsored by Anthem, which will have staff available to provide information about their services and have some giveaways for participants. The distribution will be 10 to 11:30 a.m., Sept. 1 at the food bank's Sikeston distribution center, 600 State Highway H, and is open to anyone in the food bank's 16 county service area in need of food. There will be a limit of two families served per vehicle.

"We know many of the people we serve face difficult choices every month. Imagine having to decide whether to pay your rent or buy food or if you should get groceries or your medication," said Joey Keys, CEO of SEMO Food Bank. "Over the summer, the food bank served an additional 1,000 families each month as inflation took a toll on people who already were barely making ends meet each month. We hope Hunger Action Month will remind people that hunger is a very real issue in southeast Missouri, and that they can help, whether it's through donating, volunteering or advocating."

Hunger Action Month is a time for everyone across the country to collectively act against hunger. Learn more about how you can join the fight to end hunger by visiting semofoodbank.org or hungeractionmonth.org.

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About Feeding America

Feeding America® is the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States. Through a network of 200 food banks, 21 statewide food bank associations, and over 60,000 partner agencies, food pantries and meal programs, we helped provide 6.6 billion meals to tens of millions of people in need last year. Feeding America also supports programs that prevent food waste and improve food security among the people we serve; brings attention to the social and systemic barriers that contribute to food insecurity in our nation; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Visit www.feedingamerica.org, find us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

About Southeast Missouri Food Bank

Southeast Missouri Food Bank provides food to 140 food pantries, soup kitchens, and shelters in 16 southeast Missouri counties. They include Bollinger, Butler, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Dunklin, Madison, Mississippi, New Madrid, Pemiscot, Perry, Reynolds, Ripley, Scott, Ste. Genevieve, Stoddard, and Wayne counties. The food bank also provides mobile food distributions, monthly boxes of food to eligible seniors and

weekend backpacks of food to 1,200 in 31 school districts. The mission of Southeast Missouri Food Bank is to end hunger and leverage the power of food to build a healthy community. The food bank is affiliated with Feeding America, the nation's largest food bank network, and has received the highest possible rating from Charity Navigator, attesting to its adherence to best practices. Those interested in helping can do so by making a tax-deductible contribution, donating food, or volunteering. Visit semofoodbank.org for more information.