

PRESS RELEASE

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United Way
of Jackson County

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

THOUSANDS RECEIVE FRESH FOOD THROUGH NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Special fresh food pantry helps feed nearly 2,400 hungry Jackson families

JACKSON, Michigan (November 9, 2009). Thanks to contributions from the community and special matching dollars from the United Way, nearly 2,400 Jackson families received almost 60,000 pounds of fresh food during the months of September and October (2,376 families, 7,256 individuals).

The food was made available free to Jackson County residents thanks to the Neighbors In Need collaboration and the special fund raising drive held late last spring (Triple Match Monday, May 4). “We were able to stretch a few hundred dollars into thousands of pounds of fresh produce each week”, said Major John Mallett, Corps Officer of the Salvation Army. “We helped nearly 300 families every Monday during September and October with everything from fresh potatoes and corn to baked goods.” The cost of the food was approximately \$2,400 for 59,681 pounds of food, or approximately four cents per pound.

The delivery of fresh food was facilitated by the Food Bank of South Central Michigan and their coordinator for Jackson County, Sue Phillips. Phillips’ position has also been made possible by the Neighbors In Need fundraising, and has helped streamline food deliveries to 34 Jackson County agencies, including 20 food pantries. The Salvation Army served as the host site for each of the fresh food distributions.

“We’ve seen an incredible increase in the amount food delivered to Jackson County”, said Phillips. “The Food Bank has already delivered over a million pounds of food in Jackson County so far this year, which is nearly 70,000 pounds more than we delivered in all of 2008. And our biggest months are still to come”.

The fresh food initiative was one several programs to help Jackson County residents deal with the ongoing effects of the difficult Michigan economy. It is part of the Neighbors In Need collaborative, a joint effort of the United Way and over 30 community organizations. Highlights of some of the accomplishments to date include:

- Over 700 trips to doctors, food pantries and other critical appointments have been provided to Jackson County residents through free bus passes from Jackson Transit Authority, dial a ride service or gas cards. New or replacement identification has been provided to individuals to help them secure vital support services, jobs and education.
- Foreclosure intervention services helped over seventy households from becoming homeless by receiving foreclosure counseling and assistance. Over \$2 million worth of mortgages have been saved. 43 households received full scale loss mitigation counseling, and 6 households have received modifications to their current mortgage.
- Demand for food in Jackson County has increased over 25% from 2008 levels. With assistance from Neighbors In Need, an additional 200,000 pounds of food was delivered to pantries through the first ten months of 2009, including nearly 60,000 pounds of fresh food and produce. One new food pantry is being served by the Food Bank, with an additional three pantries coming on board. As of mid-October, 1,007,404 pounds of food has been provided to Jackson County agencies by the Food Bank of South Central Michigan.

The United Way Community Needs Campaign supports Jackson County residents through a combination of nearly 50 different programs and community collaborations. More than 30 local human service organizations partner with the United Way to address needs in Jackson County:

For further information on United Way programs and services call the Jackson County United Way office at 784-0511, or visit their website, www.uwjackson.org. Contributions can also be made online at the website by clicking on the “Donate Online Now” button on the United Way of Jackson County homepage.

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