BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD OF MISSISSIPPI FOUNDATION SELECTED AS 2011 HUNGER HERO

Congratulations to the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation for being selected as the Mississippi Food Network 2011 Hunger Hero. The Hunger Hero Award is a recognition Mississippi Food Network presents to an individual/company in appreciation of their leadership in the Network’s effort to alleviate hunger in our state. The Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation awarded a grant to Mississippi Food Network to help provide fresh produce to member agencies and their clients, pilot three community garden projects and provide nutrition education. Through the program we were able to provide more than 400,000 pounds of fresh produce to more than 180 member agencies in 43 counties. In addition, our community gardens produced more than 7,900 pounds of fresh produce and provided more than 150 volunteer opportunities. Fifteen nutrition education demonstrations were conducted at some of the member agencies and provided more than 500 people the opportunity to learn more about making healthy choices in the foods they eat. We appreciate the support of the Blue Cross Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation in these endeavors to provide healthy food to the clients served through our member agencies.
What does it mean to live in a “food insecure” household? First let’s look at what food security means. According to the United States Department of Agriculture food security for a household means that all household members have access at all times to enough food for an active, healthy life. Food security is a foundation for a healthy, well-nourished population.

Food Insecurity, on the other hand, is defined as, households that are uncertain of having or are unable to acquire enough food to meet the needs of all their members because of insufficient money or other resources for food at times during the year. Food insecurity is a phrase used by professionals, government agencies and other organizations that have to sum up what it means to do without food. Food insecurity can mean different things to different people. To the child dependent on school lunch, it may mean going hungry over a weekend. To a senior citizen on a fixed income, it may mean being hungry the last few days of the month. To a parent trying to make it on a minimum wage salary, worry and anxiety because they have to choose between paying utilities and buying nutritious food for their children.

Here in Mississippi almost 20% of our population struggles with food insecurity. A large number of these citizens who are in need nonetheless earn too much to qualify for government assistance. We are supplying food to more and more people who never imagined they would have to reach out to a non-profit to feed themselves or their families. With the economy remaining weak and prices of food continuing to rise we are seeing the need increase each month.

Fortunately our donors, volunteers and board members do not stand idly by while there are Mississippians in crisis. Through the hard work of faithful volunteers and contributions from generous donors, Mississippi Food Network is currently supplying food through our member agencies to almost 100,000 individuals each month and are distributing upwards of 1.5 million pounds of product each month.

So like a well oiled machine Mississippi Food Network continues to work overtime in our mission to supply food to those who are in need. Many thanks to all of those who have supported us and please continue your much needed efforts. Food security IS a foundation for a healthy, well-nourished population and all Mississippians deserve to have that.
2011 VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR ANNOUNCED

Congratulations to Johnnie Esters for being selected as the Volunteer of the Year for the Mississippi Food Network. Through his service as Board Member and Chairman of the Board in 2009, Johnnie’s leadership has been a tremendous asset to the organization. We appreciate his commitment to our Mission and the people we serve.

OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

John Rings, Johnnie Esters, and Richard Stockett were all recognized for their service to Mississippi Food Network as members of the Board of Directors. Thank you for your dedication to Mississippi Food Network and our Mission to relieve poverty-related hunger.

KROGER MAKES DONATION FOR FLOOD DISASTER RELIEF

Thank you to Kroger who has been instrumental in providing water, food and cleaning supplies to Mississippi Food Network for tornado and flood victims. We appreciate Delta Marketing Group in Memphis reaching out to us for our “wish list” and helping meet the needs.

ALL AMERICAN CHECK CASHING MAKES DONATION FOR DISASTER RELIEF

All American Check Cashing made a generous donation of a truckload of canned Blue Runner beans to be used in disaster relief efforts during the tornadoes and floods. We appreciate their community support.

Picture courtesy of Kroger and Rick Guy

Walker Satterwhite, John Rings, Johnnie Esters, Mary Hill
Not pictured: Richard Stockett
**TYSON FOODS FACEBOOK CAMPAIGN HELPS FIGHT HUNGER**

Through a Facebook Campaign during Hunger Action Month in September, Mississippi Food Network won a 30,000 pound truckload of chicken. The chicken was delivered on November 16 - just in time for the holidays.

Our thanks again to everyone who voted for us and helped spread the word. Such a great thing being able to help provide food for our fellow Mississippians.

**GOVERNOR BARBOUR DONATES PROTEIN TO MISSISSIPPI FOOD NETWORK**

Governor Barbour recently donated 10,000 pounds of chicken and 10,000 eggs to the Mississippi Food Network. The Mississippi Poultry Association donated the chicken and eggs to Governor Barbour who in turn donated it to help provide food for fellow Mississippians. Our thanks to Governor Barbour, Mississippi Poultry Association, Cal-Maine Foods, Wayne Farms, Tyson Foods, Sanderson Farms, and Marshall Durbin for providing this much needed protein to the people of Mississippi facing hunger.

**IN MEMORY OF JOHN ALFORD**

*July 23, 1935 – October 1, 2011*

Former Mississippi Food Network Executive Director John Alford passed away at his home on Saturday, October 1, 2011. John was from Indianola, MS and a graduate of Mississippi State University. From 1991 through 2005, John worked with the more than 300 churches and non-profit member agencies of Mississippi Food Network to provide 275 million pounds of food to those in our state who were facing hunger. We express our sympathy to John’s family.
FOOD DRIVES

UPS HOSTS 1ST ANNUAL SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS FOOD DRIVE

UPS, Clear Channel, 16-WAPT, Kroger and Grainger all partnered on Friday, November 4 to host a food drive for Mississippi Food Network. This is the first year the food drive has been held in the Jackson area, but they plan to make it an annual event. UPS trucks were located at the Kroger I-55 North, Kroger Albertson Drive and Grainger Industrial Supply ready to accept donations from 6:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Many thanks to all of these businesses, volunteers and donors for helping provide food to fellow Mississippians for the holiday season.

3RD ANNUAL STUFF THE BUS FOOD DRIVE HOSTED BY US 96.3

Our thanks again to Scott Steele and the staff of US 96.3 for hosting the 3rd Annual Stuff the Bus Food Drive benefiting Mississippi Food Network and the people they serve. This year the bus donated by Cline Tours visited Kroger, Spillway Road; Kroger, I-55 North; Kroger, Clinton; Kroger, Albertson Drive, and Kroger, Colony Crossing. We appreciate the management of Kroger for allowing us “park the bus” at their locations. This year had new additions to the food drive with the employees of Richard Schwartz & Associates volunteering every day to collect the food, Cline Tours for providing the bus and the Decal Guys for great artwork and sign.
FOOD DRIVES

2ND ANNUAL PACK THE PICKUP COLLECTS HOLIDAY FOOD

Many thanks to WJTV Caring for Mississippi for hosting their 2nd Annual Pack the Pickup Food Drive at the Kroger at Dogwood. Patty Peck Honda donated two trucks to be used that afternoon and we packed both of them full! Linda, Byron and Tony, along with other WJTV staff members, Patty Peck Honda staff and volunteers joined together on Sunday afternoon to collect food for holiday baskets. And, a special thanks to the Hawkins Middle School in Forest for hosting a food drive raising 696 cans after hearing about it on the news!! Thank you WJTV for your continued support.

If you are interested in holding a food drive with your church, office or other group please call 601-973-7086

NUCOR STEEL EMPLOYEES HOST HOLIDAY FOOD DRIVE

Our thanks to the employees of Nucor Steel for hosting their Annual Holiday Food Drive. Each year they pull up with truckloads of food the week of Thanksgiving to help with our holiday needs. Thank you for your continued support.

HUNTER’S HARVEST PROGRAM PROVIDES PROTEIN

Through a partnership with the Mississippi Wildlife Federation’s Hunter’s Harvest Program, Mississippi Food Network is receiving donated venison this year. Mississippi Wildlife Federation received a grant to pay the processing fees at pre-selected processors. For more information of how you can donate, visit their website at: www.mswildlife.org/hunters-harvest/.
Mississippi Food Network held their Agency Relations Conference and Annual Meeting at the River Room Conference Center on November 17. The morning session began with a motivational talk by Barbara Wilburn, Director of MS Center for Police & Sheriffs. Afterwards, workshops on Client Choice Food Pantries; Getting the Most From Being a 501c3 Organization; Nutrition Education for Seniors, Families and Children; Helping Clients with Food, Medical and Educational Assistance; Food and Fund Sourcing; and Food Safety were held for the participants. After lunch the Mississippi Food Network Annual Meeting was held with Executive Director Walker Satterwhite discussing the accomplishments during 2011. The 2012 Mississippi Food Network Board of Directors were elected during the Annual Meeting. Awards were presented to some of the member agencies: Pilgrim Baptist Church, Natchez; Choctaw County Baptist Association, Choctaw; TEAM, Port Gibson; Edwards Street Fellowship, Hattiesburg; Grenada Food Pantry, Grenada; Berean 7th Day Adventist, Jackson; Deliver Me Senior Support Services, Jackson; Parkview Church of God in Christ, Jackson; Greater Mount Calvary, Jackson; Love’s Inc., Meridian; Marion County Food Pantry, Columbia; Neshoba County Baptist Association Food Pantry, Philadelphia; Pinelake Baptist Church, Brandon; Scott County Baptist Association, Forest; and We Care Community Services, Vicksburg; Copiah County Human Resource Agency, Hazelhurst; Christian Services, Hattiesburg; Jackson Revival Center, Jackson; and South Rankin Food Resource Center, Richland.
HAVE YOU REMEMBERED MISSISSIPPI FOOD NETWORK IN YOUR WILL?