



HUNGER TASK FORCE

NEWS RELEASE

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JOIN HUNGER TASK FORCE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, LOCAL ANTI-HUNGER ADVOCATES ON \$1-A-MEAL FOOD STAMP CHALLENGE, SEPT. 14-20

CHALLENGE HIGHLIGHTS PLIGHT OF POOR WHO RECEIVE INADEQUATE FOOD STAMP BENEFITS

Milwaukee (Sept. 11, 2007)—Imagine trying to feed yourself on a dollar a meal . . . three dollars a day . . . \$21 for an entire week's worth of food. This is a reality for millions of low-income Americans on food stamps—\$21 is the average weekly food stamp benefit for the poor.

Sherrie Tussler, Hunger Task Force executive director, will highlight the insufficiency of food stamp benefits by living on this modest stipend for a week during the Food Stamp Challenge, Friday, Sept. 14-Thursaday, Sept. 20. Tussler will spend no more than \$21 on food for herself, accepting no free food from family or friends. Her daughter Madeline, age 10, will also be taking the challenge and will write a blog about her experience at www.hungertaskforce.org. They invite anyone interested in anti-hunger issues to join them.

“It's a simple, eye-opening challenge that will allow you to experience firsthand the impact of poverty on your food intake,” Tussler said. “I encourage parents, teachers and religious leaders to consider joining me in this difficult yet worthwhile challenge.”

Interested anti-hunger advocates can sign up to take the challenge by filling out the Food Stamp Challenge pledge form at Hunger Task Force's Web site, www.hungertaskforce.org. Then shop for food, spending no more than \$21 per household member for the week and saving all receipts. Hunger Task Force asks all participants to keep a log of eating experiences—after the challenge ends on Sept. 20, participants can share their experience by sending in a daily log, available for download at the Web site.

Sen. Herb Kohl has written a letter of commendation to men and women participating in the challenge, pledging to strengthen the Food Stamp Program and other federal anti-hunger and nutrition initiatives in the Farm Bill. Food stamps are the first and best safety net for the poor to combat hunger. In Milwaukee County, 59,000 people at any given time receive monthly food stamp benefits; as a state, Wisconsin currently has a record 386,000 participants. Each month, food stamp recipients pump more than \$31 million back into Wisconsin's economy through consumer spending, supporting the grocery stores, farmers' markets and supermarkets vital to the state's economic health.

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Food Stamp Challenge/ Add One

After paying for housing, energy and healthcare expenses, many low-income households have little or no money remaining to spend on food without food stamp benefits. The insufficiency of food stamp benefits forces thousands of food stamp recipients in Milwaukee alone to turn to food pantries and soup kitchens to get enough to eat.

Currently Hunger Task Force is feeding 33,000 people every month at affiliated food pantries, and 61,000 meals every month at affiliated meal programs and homeless shelters. Last year Hunger Task Force distributed 8.3 million pounds of food to the hungry, free of charge.

Farm Bill Crucial to Food Stamp Program

The Food Stamp Challenge also highlights the importance of the Farm Bill, a piece of \$180 billion legislation renewed every five years that authorizes funding for programs vital to feeding the poor, including food stamps, commodity foods, senior farmers' market programs and the Emergency Food Assistance Program. Simply put, ensuring that the nation's poor have access to sufficient, nutritious food is impossible without well-run and well-funded federal nutrition programs as authorized by the Farm Bill.

Joining Tussler in taking the Food Stamp Challenge is a host of Milwaukee-area anti-hunger advocates, including Barbara Beckert, assistant director of the Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations; Ed Beckert, Milwaukee Jewish Community Pantry; Tracy Wymelenberg, manager, Government and Community Relations, Aurora Health Care; Bob Haase. Virginia Verduyn and Gwen Jackson, commissioners for the Milwaukee Department on Aging; Marcus White, executive director, Interfaith Conference of Great Milwaukee; Lea Jepson and Julie Driscoll, City of Milwaukee Health Department; Mia Loft-Rogers, Independence First; and Tom Hlavacek, executive director, Alzheimer's Association of Southeastern Wisconsin.

Hunger Task Force is an anti-hunger organization which believes that every person has a right to adequate food obtained with dignity. Hunger Task Force works to prevent hunger and malnutrition by providing food to people in need today and by promoting social policies to achieve food security tomorrow.