



WINTER ISSUE 2010-2011



Food for the Mind

A NEWSLETTER OF
THE SOUTH TEXAS FOOD BANK

PROUD MEMBER
OF:



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The South Texas Food Bank

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STFB Tackled Hunger at Hal's Landing



STFB tackled hunger at Hal's Landing this past January—From left to right: Cindy Liendo-Espinoza, Tom Lamont and Marianne Lamont (Hal's Landing owners), Pancho Farias, and Salo Otero.

The South Texas Food Bank kicked off the new year at Hal's Landing with their Tackle Hunger event on Tuesday, January 11, 2011.

"Thank you to our friends, Tom and Marianne Lamont at Hal's Landing, for opening their doors and welcoming this event in benefit of the food bank," said Alfredo Castillo, Executive Director of The South Texas Food Bank. "We appreciate that they always have the food bank and the needs of the community in mind."

"The South Texas Food Bank programs depend, in great part, on the support from our local institutions, organizations, and businesses to keep them going," he added.

Despite the cold and rainy weather conditions, more than 100 people came out to Hal's Landing to support the event.

The event featured the lively music by Jus-B-Cuz and great prize giveaways. Some of the items that were raf-

fled were: a custom-made barbecue pit courtesy of the Laredo Job Corps, ice chests, beer, framed artwork by Pancho Farias, and gift certificates from La Quinta Hotel, Rudy's Restaurant, and Hal's Landing among other local businesses.

All the proceeds will benefit the South Texas Food Bank programs.

"Thanks to the support of community, we were able to raise \$5,000," said Ellie Reyes, South Texas Food Bank Events Coordinator. "Every dollar that we raised will be converted to 7 meals; this translates to 70,000 meals! We definitely try to make the most of every dollar that is donated to the food bank." •

STFB Opens Area's 13th Kids Café in El Cenizo

Walk into the Agua Viva Church Community Center at 3520 Cecilia Lane in El Cenizo Monday through Friday from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. and chances are you will see about 100 children's happy faces.

The south Laredo Lutheran Mission, run by pastor Moises Mendez and wife, Mariana, started feeding children an after school meal in February of last year. One year later, Agua Viva (Living Water) has become the South Texas Food Bank's 13th Kids Café.

"Today is a happy day for us and the community of El Cenizo," said Ellie Reyes, Kids Cafe Coordinator for The South Texas Food Bank. "We are happy that we could finally make this Kids Cafe site a reality. I know that it will be a great blessing for the children of this community."

"We started with a lot of difficulties, but we knew the need was there," Ms. Mendez said. "We had 41 kids the first day and the most we've had is 108. We've always received help from Mr. Castillo (STFB executive director Alfredo Castillo) and the food bank, but now we are official." And the "official name," christened by Ms. Mendez is Pan de Vida (Bread of

Life) Kids Café.

At the grand opening on Friday, Jan. 28, a total of 91 children enjoyed venison burgers and the trimmings. The deer meat was a donation to the South Texas Bank Ranchers and Hunters for the Hungry program coordinated by the STFB's Resident Artist, Pancho Farias. The idea for the program was originated by Laredo hunger advocate Robert Laurel and his cousin Oscar M. Laurel Jr. two years ago at their Zapata ranch when they harvested more than 3,000 pounds of deer meat.

Longtime South Texas Food Bank board member Galo Garcia, also a Zapata rancher, donated the meat for the Pan de Vida Kids Café grand opening. Garcia, fellow STFB board member Jaime Arizpe, who works with the Texas Department of Human Services, and South Texas Food Bank staffers were on hand to kickoff the program.

Ms. Mendez lauds her Agua Viva volunteer group of six women, mothers of children who eat at the Kids Café, led by coordinator Odilia Garza.

"Odilia is here everyday and there's a group of five who take

turns from noon to 5 p.m.

"They get the menu on Monday for the whole week and start the process. We'll get about 60 percent of our kids from the elementary grades and the others from middle school and high school."

Pan de Vida is also more than a Kids Café. "We have educational programs on nutrition, spiritual worship and a community garden," Ms. Mendez said. She fervently adds, "These kids are our present and future of Laredo. We have to teach them good values. Kids from this area are highly at-risk. From this little corner, we're encouraging them. The South Texas Food Bank Kids Café is a big part of their upbringing. It is also a sanctuary for them."

The South Texas Food Banks has 12 additional Kids Cafe sites around Laredo-Webb County serving an average of more than 700 children per month. •



Children from Agua Viva's Kids Café in El Cenizo, TX enjoyed delicious hamburgers thanks to Ranchers for the Hungry who donated the fresh hamburger meat.

Summer Family Nutrition Program a Huge Success



Laredoans drove down to the Laredo Civic Center—the first of several food distribution points the South Texas Food Bank had this summer for its Summer Family Nutrition Program.

Hundreds of Laredo families defied the heat this past summer as they lined up in various distribution points throughout the city to receive their 50-pound bag of groceries through the STFB's Summer Family Nutrition Program.

More than 24,000 bags were distributed in June, July and August in the STFB's eight-county service area, including 15,000 in Laredo-Webb County via the original grant from the Texas Food Bank Network that totaled 1.2 million pounds.

By September's end, the food bank handed out two million pounds of product, putting a dent in the Laredo and area childhood hunger issue.

Texas ranks No. 1 in the nation in childhood hunger for ages 18 and under. Childhood hunger numbers for Laredo are even more shocking food bank executive director Alfredo Castillo said, noting "Webb County childhood hunger is at 41.5 percent and adjoining counties like Zapata and Dimmitt have rates in excess of 46 percent."

Board president Olga Maldonado praised Castillo and staff "for their long and untiring hard work in getting food to needy families."

Castillo was extremely grateful for all the hard work that both STFB staff and volunteers did to make the program a success.

"The 2010 Summer Family

Nutrition Family Program was a great task, but I am very proud of the staff and volunteers who put so much time and effort to make it a success. They gave so much of themselves to make it happen," Castillo humbly said. "Without their help, it couldn't have been possible."•

"Webb County childhood hunger is at 41.5 percent and adjoining counties like Zapata and Dimmitt have rates in excess of 46 percent."



Volunteers of all ages helped distribute food this summer during the Summer Family Nutrition Program.



Empty Bowls IV Event A “Smashing” Success

The Laredo Energy Arena - South Texas Food Bank Empty Bowls IV took place Wednesday, August 25, 2010 at the Laredo Entertainment Center.

This year's honoree was long-time STFB supporter Texas Senator Judith Zaffirini. Three Dog Night was the event's musical guest.

More than 50 artwork bowls from more than 20 Laredo artists went up for bid during a silent auction. STFB Resident Artist, Francisco “Pancho” Farias, in charge of the bowl art for the STFB, painted 17 bowls himself!

Local and national celebrity autographed bowls have been a feature of Empty Bowls. Among the autographs were: Carlos Mencia, George Lopez, Chicago, Foreigner, Three Dog Night, Daddy Yankee, Intocable, Bucks

coach Terry Ruskowski, former Laredo major league shortstop Freddie Benavides and former Dallas Cowboys Bill Bates, Roy Williams and Chad Hennings.

About the honoree, food bank executive director Alfredo Castillo said, “Sen. Zaffirini has been a true champion for the hungry of Laredo and South Texas. Through her efforts the food bank has helped thousands of families put food on the table in these difficult economic times. She knows well the food bank mission of feeding the hungry. Because of her contact with Wayne Reaud, the Beaumont Foundation has donated thousands of dollars to the South Texas Food Bank.”

Roy Medina, general manager of the Laredo Energy Arena, said, “The Laredo Energy

Arena is proud to be a part of the Empty Bowls fundraiser put on by the South Texas Food Bank. Each year the event has grown bigger and been more successful than the previous year. In 2010, we recognized Texas Senator Judith Zaffirini during the Empty Bowls and featured music icons Three Dog Night as the event's entertainment. It was definitely an extremely entertaining evening that helped support a great cause—to feed the less fortunate.”

Every year, the South Texas Food Bank Empty Bowls event seems to be growing in popularity and support.

Stay tuned for Empty Bowls V event information •



Pancho Farias - STFB Resident Artist

“Each year the event has grown bigger and been more successful than the previous year.”



Ranchers for the Hungry, Newest STFB Program



Ranchers for the Hungry logo designed by STFB resident artist, Pancho Farias.

Laredo and area ranchers are stepping up to the plate to help the South Texas Food Bank mission of feeding the hungry, donating a steer per month donated.

STFB Executive Director Alfredo Castillo reported that local ranchers have already started to donate steers to be processed for use to feed children in the Kids Café program.

“We’re recruiting more ranchers to participate,” Castillo said. “We’re

“We’re hoping for a steer per month and for the program to work hand-in-hand with the Hunters for Hunger.” Outdoor enthusiast Pancho Farias of the STFB staff is in charge of the Ranchers for the Hungry and Hunters for Hunger project.

If interested in participating, contact Farias at (956) 568-3724. All donations are tax deductible. •

Emergency Food Assistance and Hispanic Children

The following are the findings and recommendations of the Low-Income Hispanic Children Need Both Private and Public Food Assistance study, one of two studies prepared by The Urban Institute and sponsored by the Feeding America program:

Families that use emergency food assistance often also get help from federal nutrition programs.

Hispanic families, however, less often receive help through SNAP, the mainstay of federal nutrition assistance, than families of other racial/ethnic groups. Hispanic families frequently do receive benefits through WIC and school-based programs that target nutrition for children. The child nutrition programs are due to be reauthorized this year. Proposed improvements include extending the Afterschool Meal Pro-

gram to all 50 states, increasing direct certification for school meals, 11 and enhancing school meal nutritional quality. Proposals also would allow states to certify children for WIC eligibility for up to one year (currently the limit is six months) and would ensure that more children have proper nutrition during their critical development years. The broad use of food banks and pantries among low-income families with children confirms that enhancements in the federal nutrition safety net are needed. Policymakers need to recognize the important role that emergency food assistance plays in the lives of low-income children. Even when families receive SNAP, they often turn to food pantries because the

SNAP allotment combined with their own resources is not sufficient.

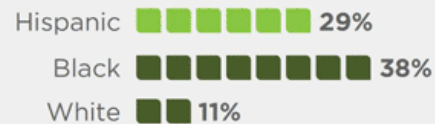
The emergency food assistance system takes on even greater importance for low income Hispanic families since they less often receive SNAP benefits, the cornerstone of the federal nutrition safety net. •

Story and graphics by:

Feedingamerica.org

CHILDREN IN FAMILIES THAT RECEIVE EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE

(by percent of all children in the U.S.)



Source: Feeding America 2010 Hunger in America (HIA) survey.

South Texas Food Bank Programs

- Adopt-A-Family
- Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP)
- SNAP (Food Stamps) Outreach
- Food Pantries
- Kids Café
- Ranchers for the Hungry

The South Texas Food Bank serves EIGHT COUNTIES:

- Webb
- Zapata
- Jim Hogg
- Dimmit
- Val Verde
- Kinney
- Maverick
- Starr

For more information, call the food bank at: (956) 726-3120 or visit:
www.southtexasfoodbank.org

Food for the Mind Newsletter

Alfredo Castillo,
STFB Director & Contributor

Salo Otero,
STFB staff writer

Angie Osterman,
STFB staff writer

Winter 2010-2011 Issue

From the South Texas Food Bank Executive Director:



It is with steadfast excitement that we await on the hope and challenges that this new year will ring in. Here, at the South Texas Food Bank, our greatest (and continuous) desire is that we can continue to provide food and assistance to the residents of the eight counties we currently serve. As long as we can continue to do this, we will consider ourselves satisfied and grateful.

Overall, 2010 was a good one for the Food Bank despite the faltering economy that has posed a grave problem for many non-profit organizations the past handful of years. The South Texas Food Bank was blessed with the generous support of many national, state, and regional organizations, not to mention hundreds of community members, who are always more than ready to assist the Food Bank's mission either through volunteer or monetary support. To all these organizations and community members, I express my sincere gratitude on behalf of the STFB staff and board members, as well as all the families and individuals who benefit from your support. The Food Bank most certainly couldn't have done it alone. Without your help, we could not have assisted the amount of people that we did this year.

Speaking of amounts, 2010 was a record breaking one! We've had a significant increase in the number of people the Food Bank was able to assist—close to 25,000 families. The food bank distributed close to 10.3 million pounds in 2010—the most ever! We averaged close to one million per month! Incredible!

The downside to these incredible numbers is that they are only a small reflection of the ever-increasing hunger problem, and need, our communities in South Texas face. While we are aware that hunger is a problem that we may never be able to completely eliminate, for to do this, we would have to be eradicated poverty first; however, here, at the Food Bank, are also aware of the relief and hope that a simple bag of groceries can give a person.

In this time of joy and giving, let's keep those less fortunate than us in mind—always remembering that is better to give than to receive.

On behalf of the South Texas Food Bank, I wish you a very prosperous and blessed new year!

Best regards,
Alfredo Castillo,
South Texas Food Bank
Executive Director

MISSION STATEMENT:

To end hunger in South Texas by collecting and distributing food through partner agencies and programs while creating awareness and educating the community on the realities of hunger.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Romeo Salinas
Ed Sherwood
Erasmus Villareal

Executive Staff:

Alfredo Castillo
Executive Director

Become Involved: Organize a Food Drive

Everyone has a role in ending hunger. Although an ever-growing problem, hunger can certainly be relieved.

Take an active role to end hunger by organizing a food drive in benefit of the South Texas Food Bank. Your efforts will help us meet increased demand for nutritious non-perishable foods.

By working with the South Texas Food Bank, the food you collect and donate will be distributed to your community and throughout the eight other counties that the food bank serves.

"Without the generosity of Webb County citizens we would not be able to meet the increasing demands of our community's hunger," said Alma Gloria Hinojosa, Food Drive Coordinator for the South Texas Food Bank.

"Any individual or organization can conduct a food drive. We

welcome your help in collecting food for the needy," she added.

Some well known food drives are those conducted by local schools, businesses, government entities, churches, and other civic organizations food drives, not to mention individual food donations.

What exactly is a food drive?

A food drive is an organized effort to gather food in your organization, company, school or community.

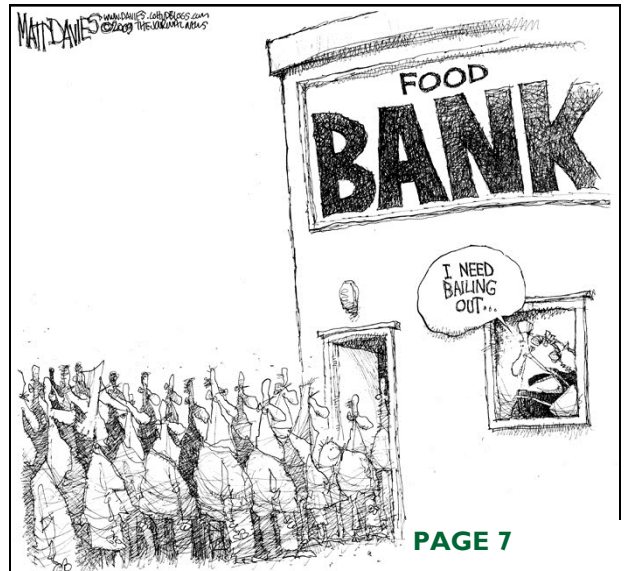
The goal and range in size and duration of your food drive is up to the individual and/or organization.

"The food industry makes generous donations to the food bank, but the demand is such that we run out of certain important foods. This is why local food drives are extremely important to us," Hinojosa said.

"To organize a food drive, all you have to do is call the South Texas Food Bank Development Office and we will be more than happy to discuss with you the process of organizing a food drive: from setting a date(s) to establishing a collection goal to providing you with a list of preferred food products that the food bank might be in need of at that given time among other things," concluded Hinojosa.

If you would like to conduct a food drive or would like more information on how to, please contact Alma Gloria Hinojosa at The South Texas Food Bank Development Office at 568-3673 during business hours: Monday through Friday from 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. •

A Small Serving of Humor:





THE SOUTH TEXAS FOOD BANK

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South Texas Food Bank– BMP Radio Drive Reaches Fifth Year

This year marked the fifth annual Border Media-South Texas Food Bank radio drive—one of the top Food Bank fundraising events.

The drive took place from June 28 to July 11.

The five BMP stations — La Ley 100.5 FM, Hot 106.1, The Works 94.9, Digital 107.3 and Norteño 1490— teamed up with the South Texas Food Bank not only to raise funds and food products, but to create awareness about the grave hunger problem in Laredo and surrounding communities.

“We certainly believe in the food bank’s mission and have

seen the need first hand,” said Ana Rivera-Soto, BMP Radio General Sales Manager.

During the radiothon, listeners were able to call in donations and pledges daily for two weeks. Cricket Communications of Laredo provided three dedicated numbers to this purpose. Sponsorships were \$1,500, \$5,000, and \$10,000.

The Border Media-South Texas Food Bank radio drive brought in more than \$100,000 in donations and pledges.

The 2011 Radiothon is scheduled for July 4-15. •



Salo Otero, STFB Director of Development and radio drive coordinator, joined the BMP Radio sales staff and on-air talent for the 2010 Radio Drive.