

SUMMER

2017

harvest gatherings

Shared Harvest

FOODBANK

HUNGER IS NOT A CHOICE.
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OUR MISSION:

To find, rescue and
distribute food to people
living in poverty through an
efficient network, uniting the
public and private sectors;
To raise awareness of the
impact of poverty.



Richard O Jones
Editor

The Truth About 'Food Stamps'

Feds' SNAP
program
faces old
stigma and
new budget

Although it's officially known as the "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program," or SNAP, many people continue to refer to "Food Stamps," and many spit out the words in great disdain.

It's not uncommon to hear opponents to the program – or any kind of federal "welfare" – complain of the American taxpayer being ripped off by people claiming benefits they aren't eligible for or selling off food stamps to buy non-food items, usually drugs, at least in this view.

The original Food Stamp Program was well-received and considered a great success when introduced by Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace in 1939. Under



A SNAP Story

For six years, David Deaton was an event specialist, working for Advantage Sales and Marketing, a good-paying job he gave up to take care of his elderly parents in their declining years. Now that his father has passed on and his mother is settled in a long-term care facility, David recently applied for SNAP benefits to help tide him over until he can find a job.

Growing up, my mom and dad worked every day. My dad worked at AK Steel and Mom sold insurance. I was an only child and they did spoil me, but they made me respect it. Like Dad helped me buy my first car. After that, I was on my own, but to get that first car I had to mow grass.

My father was a cancer survivor. He lasted 13 years, and my mother was diagnosed with dementia about three and a half years ago.

My dad asked me to stop [working]. I said, "Dad, you know I have to survive." He said, "Kid, I need you." So what do you do? They were there for me whenever I needed them, so I figured it was time to pay them back.

He passed away, his dying wish to make sure that my mom was all right. She was recently moved into Mount Pleasant Retirement Home. She had to be. It got to the point with the dementia – well, I'm not a professional, so there's only so much you can do.

I am on food assistance with the SNAP program now until I get back to work. That's a big blessing because without it I

Continued page 4...

Continued page 5...

Notes from our director...

I have to say for the first time in over 40 years of doing this work I am feeling overwhelmed. No, that's not the right word... exasperated? Yeah, that's it. Exasperated, with a little bit of confusion thrown in for good measure.

I'm exasperated because over the past 40 years, we have been collecting data that shows a relatively small investment, 2 percent of the federal budget, does amazing things. With this investment, each month 43 million poor and low-income Americans, mostly families with children and working parents, the disabled and elderly are able to put good food on their tables. Children are healthier and have better graduation rates. The elderly are better able to age in place rather than in nursing homes. The farm economy and the broader economy benefit because it creates a bigger market for food by supplying cash that is reinvested in the economy quickly. It keeps millions of people from falling into poverty and it helps those living in poverty from falling farther into the abyss.

Yet when it comes to cutting the federal budget, it is easy pickings because most folks who have never had to use it, don't understand the very real difference it can make. Some say it discourages work, but the data demonstrates that most recipients are working or can't work because they are too old, too sick or are children. Not to mention that cutting a program that represents 2 percent of the budget isn't going to balance anything.

Simple math and a little bit of research to find the facts should produce an understanding that cutting SNAP would do much more

harm than good, but more than that, it is just mean. And this is why I'm confused.

Every day I get to witness the goodness of ordinary people going out of their way to help, donating food, money, or their time to help us distribute millions of pounds of food each year. We pull together as a community to try to ensure none of our neighbors goes hungry. We come from all walks of life, all demographics, all political views, working together to fight hunger right here at home. But it doesn't just happen here in Southwest Ohio, it happens in every community all over this great land.

What confuses me is the assumption that all of these good people, working to help their neighbors, would really balk at two cents out of every federal tax dollar going to help 43 million of their neighbors. While SNAP is the biggest gun in this battle, it isn't the only one in the war, but we know that charitable food distribution is just a small weapon in the arsenal we use to fight hunger. And we know that resolving hunger plays a huge roll in learning, earning and living independently.

Taxes are the price we pay to live in a civil society, and that means taking care of the least of us. As Leonard Pitts so eloquently put it: "At some point, you have to grow up and realize that you are not in this world only to gratify yourself, that each of us has an obligation to all of us, and that this is where our goodness — and thus, our greatness — resides."



Tina Osso
Executive Director

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Hamilton Joes

July 28

Hunger Action Month

September

Rubber Duck Regatta

September 3

www.sharedharvest.org
for more information

Hunger In Real Life

True Stories From Shared Harvest SNAP Outreach

“I’m sorry honey. There is no more food to eat. I know you are still hungry. We will try and eat more tomorrow...”

Imagine saying these words to your children. Watching their little faces go from hopeful to disappointed, as you struggle to provide the most basic of human needs for them.

I met one mother in this situation at a food pantry in Southwestern Ohio. Her name is Amber. Her family is currently struggling with hunger. Amber and her husband are trying to

support themselves and their four children on less than \$1,000 a month. I processed Amber’s SNAP application and told her about other food pantries in her area.

I meet a lot of people at food pantries, prisons, hospitals, and everywhere in between. What stuck out about Amber was how much she cared about having enough food for her kids. I could see how distraught and sad it made her when she talked about her hungry children. She is able to go to food pantries while they are at school, but that is hard for her with no transportation. When Amber and I were done talking, I could tell that her spirits were lifted

and she was more optimistic about the future. SNAP will provide her family the food security they need to stay nourished and healthy.

I’m sure some of us can empathize with people in Amber’s situation, having experienced hunger at some point in our own lives. The quote at the beginning of this story is what my mother had to tell my brother and I, when our family was struggling with hunger. We need to stop these sad stories from happening in our country. No parent should have to watch their child go hungry.

— Robert

COMING THIS FALL!

September is Hunger Action Month



It’s time to get your ducks in a row!

Once again this year, Shared Harvest Foodbank & Freestore Foodbank are joining together to raise funds to fight childhood hunger right here at home, with the annual Rubber Duck Regatta. Presented by Dawn Sunday, September 3 at the Western & Southern/WEBN Fireworks, as many as 200,000 ducks will swim in the Ohio River near the Serpentine Wall.

First prize is a 2017 Honda HR-V LX, courtesy Cincinnati-Northern Kentucky Honda Dealers and possibly \$1 million if the duck is the “KEMBA Million Dollar Duck.” Second prize is \$100 from Kroger every week for a year (\$5,200 total), and five additional winners will receive \$500 cash from KEMBA Credit Union.

Look for the \$5, \$10 and \$25 tear-off coupons at the check-out during your next trip to your Kroger store from July 26- September 2.

Remember to go to www.rubberduckregatta.org to register your duck.



An empty plate means an empty stomach. And on an empty stomach, no one can reach their full potential.
Visit www.sharedharvest.org for things you can do during Hunger Action Month!

Old stigma, new budget *continued*

that iteration, people on public assistance rolls were able to purchase orange stamps that they could trade for food, and for every dollar they spent, they got an extra 50 cents that could be traded for certain surplus commodities. Grocers could deposit the stamps like money.

The plan died out in 1943 when both food surpluses and unemployment disappeared as a result of World War II, and stayed dormant during the boom years of the 1950s.

President Kennedy revived a pilot version of the program in 1961 by executive order in selected areas and without the surplus foods component. It became codified and expanded to the whole country in 1964 with the Food Stamp Act, part of Lyndon Johnson's Great Society Program.

In the 1980s, in an effort to cut down on counterfeit and fraud, states began using Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards, and actual "food stamps" soon became a thing of the past.

In efforts to fight the stigma of accepting government assistance, the 2008 farm bill (officially the Food Conservation, and Energy Act) changed the name of the federal program to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The bill also authorized \$10 billion for food assistance programs and an increased emphasis on nutrition, becoming law over a presidential veto on Oct. 1, 2008.

Of course, people being people, the program had instances of abuse and fraud from the very beginning. Within six months of Henry Wallace's original program, Birmingham, Alabama, grocer Nick Salzano pleaded guilty for accepting food stamps for unauthorized goods. Another person charged at the same time was accused of accepting food stamps for a fur coat.

But the facts suggest that fraud is not as rampant as many believe. In the mid-1990s, the error rate was at its highest at about 4 percent, but since the phasing out of paper for electronic cards, that has dropped to less than 1 percent, and most of that is due to clerical errors, not fraud.

Historically food stamps and SNAP have been supported by the executive branch.

In a 1969 message to Congress, Richard Nixon wrote, "That hunger and malnutrition should persist in a land such as ours is embarrassing and intolerable... the moment is at hand to put an end to hunger in America itself."

Such support may no longer be relied upon, however, as the current Congress starts sharpening its budget knives.

President Donald Trump's current budget propos-

al includes a \$193 billion reduction in spending on the food-stamp program over a decade. SNAP cuts would represent a 29 percent reduction in funding. Furthermore, in 2018, the Farm Bill is up for renewal and Sonny Perdue, Trump's agriculture secretary, has indicated that would be "the appropriate vehicle" for more drastic SNAP changes, assuring the public that the U.S. Department of Agriculture would be "compassionate," but that people shouldn't make a "permanent lifestyle" out of receiving food stamps.

This is why Shared Harvest Foodbank's groundbreaking SNAP Outreach program seems more important than ever.

Shared Harvest Foodbank began helping people learn about and sign up for food stamps in 2004 with a \$124,648 grant from the U.S.D.A., hiring Gloria Bateman, formerly a supervisor at the senior citizens center in Hamilton, to head up the program.

"We started the program from the ground up," Gloria said. "We started at Serve City in Hamilton where they had a pantry. I would let people know I was there and what I was doing. We didn't have computers, so I actually hand wrote everything on the application, then I would rush down to Shared Harvest and fax everything to Job and Family Services."

"We were doing such a good job that the other foodbanks in the country were putting feelers out asking if it was worthwhile to do this. Deputy Director of USDA from D.C. came in to see me and Tina, and the regional director from the U.S.D.A. came in from Chicago to present the grant. Once the grant ended Butler County Job and Family Services appreciated our work and agreed to partially fund the program."

The idea behind the SNAP Outreach is to take the process to the people who need it by going to places they go, like food pantries.

"The people seem like they like coming to us because they don't have to go to an office where they feel like they're being marginalized," Gloria said.

Since the outreach program started, people in Shared Harvest's five-county territory have not only received over \$12.4 million in SNAP benefits, but an advocate for their plight. •



www.midas.com/driveouthunger

SNAP Story *continued*

don't know how I would eat.

Food pantries and churches will only let you have something once a month, and then it's only enough for three or four days. I appreciate it. Something's better than nothing.

[Getting food assistance], I was like a pirate finding a pot of gold.

When you're down and out you have no choice. Did I want to do this? No. But my dad said, 'When your belly is touching your backbone and you're starving to death, you do what you have to do to survive.'

Without this program, I don't see how anybody could survive if they were in the situation I'm in. I'm not asking for sympathy. I'm just letting you know that this program really does help people in a lot of ways.

I think for someone such as myself or anyone that is stuck, it is helpful. I'm sure that it costs the state a lot of money. I respect that. I realize there are laws and stipulations, but you can't let someone go hungry either.

As poor as I am right now, as broke as I am, if I had food and someone came to me and said, "Dude, I haven't eaten in three days," I'm going to make them a peanut butter sandwich. I'm just going to do that.

My goal in life now is to try to get back on my feet, to get over the hurt and the heartache, and go from there. I'm 52 years old. I've got to do it for me. •

RAISE YOUR VOICE

Every year the USDA publishes a fact sheet about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), many of which address misunderstandings or myths about SNAP:

People

The vast majority of recipients are people who already work or are not expected to work because of age or disability. In FY 2015, 64 percent of SNAP recipients were children, seniors and those with disabilities. Thirty percent of non-elderly adult participants were working. (Source: USDA FNS, 20160F)

Impact

When SNAP benefits are added to gross income, 10 percent of SNAP households move above the poverty line. (Source: USDA FNS, 2016)

SNAP puts money back into the economy. Every \$1 in new SNAP benefits generates \$1.70 to \$1.80 in economic activity. (Source: Zandi, 20126F, USDA ERS, 2010)

Integrity

The FY 2014 SNAP payment accuracy rate is 96.34 percent, the combined measure of **benefit overpayments and underpayments** to recipients. (Source: USDA FNS, 20160F)

SNAP cannot be used to withdraw cash at ATM machines or to purchase alcohol, cigarettes, or non-food items. (Source: FNS Website)

Healthy Eating

Diets of SNAP recipients differ little from the average American's diet. (Source: USDA FNS, 2016)

At the end of FY 2016, SNAP recipients spent \$20 million in SNAP benefits at farmers markets, up from \$2.7 million in FY 2008. (Source: USDA FNS, 2017)

Budget

In FY 2016, SNAP accounted for 2 percent of the federal budget. (Source: USDA calculation, USDA FNS, 20171, 5F CBO, 2017)

The average SNAP benefit per person in FY 2016 was \$125.50 per month, down six percent from \$133.07 in FY 2013. This marked the fifth consecutive year that average monthly SNAP benefits declined. (Source: FNS website)

Help us raise our voice!

Visit www.sharedharvest.org and click on the Raise Your Voice icon to learn how you can become an advocate in the fight against hunger, or contact:

Sarah Ormbrek

800-352-3663

sarah@sharedharvest.org

National Letter Carriers Association Annual Food Drive 2017

No wind,
No rain,
No gloom of night,
Just **38,183** pounds of food...
or **31,819** meals!!!

Thanks to
the National Association of Letter Carriers
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Andrea & Sandy Ann
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& Steve Daviaux; Jim Burgess;
Mike & Veron Denning; and David
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by Virginia Elam

The birthdays of Tommy Ray & Sherri
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Josephine Loving
by Kevin Loving

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by Randy & Barbara New

Faye Catherine Yeakle
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Faye Catherine Yeakle
by Daniel & Irma Purcell

Mr. Balubhai & Umila Shah
by Nutan & Pushpa Shah

Harold Judd
by Mary Joe Staarmaan & Family

Dave Cassetta
by Ruth Tenbusch

Our mothers, Helen Uliano & Rose
Dixon, who provided the family with
many delicious meals
by Donald & Rosemary Uliano

Our brother Sam
by Joseph & Mary Ann Yedlowski

IN CELEBRATION OF...

The anniversary of Raymond & Donna
Allgeier
by Wayne Baker

The Anniversary of Jerry & Janet
Jackson
by Joe & Cheryl Jackson

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PROVIDES SEVEN MEALS
FOR A NEIGHBOR IN NEED**



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GIVING IS.

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Shared Harvest
FOODBANK



7:05 p.m.
July 28
Foundation Field

Support Shared Harvest Foodbank and cheer for
the Hamilton Joes as they take on The Copper-
heads at Foundation Field!
Bring a canned food item &
Get \$1 off your \$5 admission.