

Foodbank

St. Louis Area Foodbank

The People We Serve: The Working Poor

The working poor. We've all read about or heard this phrase, but what does it really mean? Who are the working poor and why do they need our help? Don't many of us struggle to pay our bills now and then?

When it comes to identifying the working poor, we can turn to various studies and statistics that give us snapshots or glimpses of this portion of our community. The most current studies span a timeframe dating back to the mid-1990s, showing, among other things, that in both good economic times and bad, our country continues to have a significant group of citizens who find themselves among



the working poor. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, nearly 3.7 million families with at least one member in the labor force for 27 weeks or more lived below the poverty level in 2001!

What are some of the factors that send or keep families like these in crisis?*

LOW EARNINGS. The likelihood of being among the working poor varies widely by occupation. During 2001, for example, the 2 million working poor in service occupations accounted for 31.3 percent of all those classified as the working poor. Within the category of service workers, 20.4 percent of private household workers (housekeepers, childcare workers and cooks) were among the working poor. The percentage of service workers other than those in private households or protective services (occupations such as

Continues on page 5

"The people who come to us for food assistance live from pay period to pay period, making minimum wage. They are hourly workers, so anything that cuts into their hours will mess up their household budget.

"If a kid is sick, the parent may have sick leave, but not sick pay. If there's a slowdown at work, it cuts into their work hours. If there's any kind of added bill, such as a car repair, it takes away from their ability to provide their monthly necessities.

"We work with a young couple with two kids. Both parents work. Between them, they earn \$1,450 each month. They receive \$125 in food stamps each month. Their car needed repairs, so the mother decided to "cash in" her sick days at work – basically sell them back to the company – to pay for the car repairs. Seems like a responsible thing to do, doesn't it? – The problem is her food stamps were docked because of that.

"Folks like these are just between a rock and a hard place. For them, it's a constant juggling act. Thank goodness we're here to help them and we have a community that that really supports our efforts."

**Judy Moody, director
Glen Ed Food Pantry**

(SEE MEMBER AGENCY PROFILE ON PAGE 3.)



5959 St. Louis Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63120
314.423.6100
www.stlfoodbank.org

Officers

Ron Gorgen, President
Edward Jones
John Van Gels, Executive Vice-President
The Boeing Company
Buck Fetters, Vice-President
Insituform Technologies, Inc.
Timothy Hayden, Treasurer
Summit Strategies Group
Gerald Schmid, Secretary
J.S. Alberici Construction Co., Inc.

Directors

Rick Bosworth
ReproMAX
Morris L. Berger
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Missouri
Kate Bradley
U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
R. David Bray
U.S. Bank Private Client Group
Mary Cronin-Doyle
WellPoint
Christopher J. McDonough
ARAMARK Corporation
Pat Newsham
Arcobasso Foods
Gary Parker
Sansone Group
Laurie Shaw
Community Volunteer

Frank Finnegan, Executive Director

This newsletter is printed on recyclable stock.



A United Way Member



from the Director

Putting Faith to Work

Although our mothers taught us not to discuss politics or religion in public, that seems to have gone out the window with the release of Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ." I think our mothers were probably right, because unfortunately, the discussion about the movie focused on our differences rather than the similarities we share.

All religions teach the virtues of love and kindness toward our fellow man but rather than putting our religious teachings into practice, we concentrate on our religious differences. Although the teachings of Christianity, Islam and Judaism are silent on many issues, each is very clear on our responsibility to care for the poor. On this, there is no debate. The way to salvation is to love your neighbor as yourself; to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, care for the sick.

Many of those that first immigrated to this country came to escape religious intolerance elsewhere. They came for the right to worship in the faith of their choice and once here, they formed a government that assures us religious freedom today. The country's Founding Fathers created a government system incorporating the separation of church and state. But, you have to look no further than a dollar bill to find the words "In God We Trust." Yet, in this country – a country founded on religious principles, governed by politicians that end speeches with the saying, "God Bless America," where the basic teachings of all religions agree on our responsibility to care for the poor – millions of people live in poverty. This is the richest country on the face of the planet, yet children go to bed on empty stomachs and senior citizens cut pills in half because they are unable to afford the prescribed medical dose.

Working at the Foodbank, which isn't affiliated with any single religious entity, I've met thousands of volunteers that believe they are called to help the less fortunate. Of the 450 agencies that receive our product, religious organizations operate the majority of our food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. On a daily basis, I see the religious beliefs taught by the church, mosque or temple, put into practice and still, millions of people live in poverty.

If our religious institutions, as hard as they try, can't accomplish the task, does a government, founded on religious principals, governed by people of religious beliefs, have a moral responsibility to feed the hungry and care for the sick?

I'm not sure yet. I believe in the separation of church and state, in democracy and in capitalism. But I also believe the answer would be apparent if I followed my religious teachings to love thy neighbor as thyself.

Sincerely,

Frank Finnegan
Executive Director

News Bites

Feinstein Willing to Match Your Donation Through April 30

Rhode Island philanthropist, Alan Shawn Feinstein, is once again offering a \$1 million matching grant to anti-hunger agencies throughout the country to use as a spur for their fund raising.

Feinstein's money will be divided proportionately among all participating agencies based on their percentage of the total money reported raised from this challenge. So, the St. Louis Area Foodbank will receive additional funds for every dollar you send us during this challenge period. Send your donation in today and it will grow!

Feinstein is founder of the Center for a Hunger Free America at the University of Rhode Island and the Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University. The Feinstein Match has become the most successful grassroots drive ever in this country to fight hunger. ⌘

Place Canned Foods by Your Mailbox on May 8!

The 12th annual National Association of Letter Carriers' Food Drive is Saturday, May 8 and letter carriers across the country will



collect non-perishable food donations left by mailboxes and in post offices and deliver them to local community food banks, pantries and shelters. This food drive is the largest one-day food drive in the nation and has resulted in delivery of well over a half billion pounds of donations to community food banks and pantries over the past 11 years.

Campbell Soup Company, the U.S. Postal Service, and America's Second Harvest are major supporters again in 2004. The drive also relies on the backing of the entire U.S. Postal Service, local United Ways throughout America, and the AFL-CIO Community Services network. ⌘

Member Agency Profile: Glen Ed Food Pantry

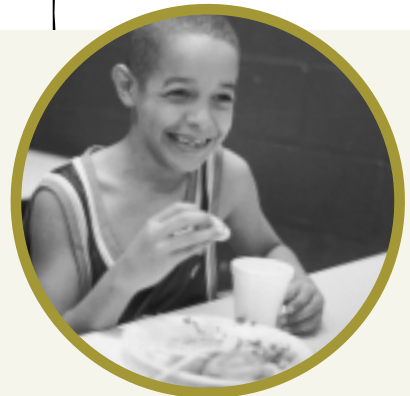
Where they are: Glen Ed Food Pantry is located at 337 South Main Street in Edwardsville, IL.

What they do: What began in 1980 with an ecumenical effort to provide food assistance in the community has grown to a program that now offers food assistance, clothing, job postings, and rent and utilities assistance. In addition, Glen Ed Food Pantry manages a back-to-school project each year to provide backpacks and school supplies to children throughout the Edwardsville School District. They also provide vouchers for new shoes for grades K-5 and for physical education uniforms for middle- and high-schoolers. Plus, the pantry also puts together special baskets of food at holidays such as Thanksgiving and

Christmas, as well as gift baskets for kids at Christmas and Easter.

Who they serve: Glen Ed Food Pantry touches the lives of approximately 1,500 residents of Southern Madison County each month. For those who are unable to come to them, the pantry makes deliveries within about a 15-mile radius. More than 500 volunteers from the community, including middle schools, parochial schools, and SIUE fraternities and sororities make the pantry's community impact possible.

What they get from the Foodbank: USDA foods, which are delivered to them by the St. Louis Area Foodbank. These foods are an extremely important part of the staples the pantry is able to offer to families and greatly



increase the amount of food assistance the pantry is able to send home with its clients. The pantry is particularly grateful for the Foodbank's delivery services because it does not have the capability to pick up the food.

When you contribute to the St. Louis Area Foodbank, you help our member agencies – like Glen Ed Food Pantry – continue providing important assistance to your neighbors and your community. ⌘

Foodbank Celebrates the Work of Long-Time Board Member

Morris L. Berger

Morris L. Berger, Director of Human Resources for Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Missouri, has been involved with the St. Louis Area

Foodbank since 1996 when we recruited him for the board. Since that time he has provided his support and guidance,

1993 14,189,370
1994 8,023,080
1995 7,703,461
1996 7,015,586
1997 8,736,442
1998 10,969,403
1999 10,097,210
2000 9,766,376
2001 11,345,796
2002 11,569,510
2003 12,884,601

serving on various Foodbank committees. He has chaired the Human Resources Committee, served as the Executive Vice President and was elected to chair the Board in 2002 & 2003. During his tenure as Board President, the Foodbank started the Commodity Supplemental Food Program that now feeds 5,000 senior citizens each month. He was also influential in the development of our first-ever "Taste of the NFL," which has now become an annual fundraiser with the St. Louis Rams. Most important, during Morry's leadership over the last two years, the Foodbank increased distribution more than ten percent, distributing a total of 12.8 million pounds in 2003. Although Morry has concluded his term as President, he will continue to serve on the board through 2004. Thanks Morry for a job well done. Because of your leadership and commitment, the Foodbank is a better organization. ♂



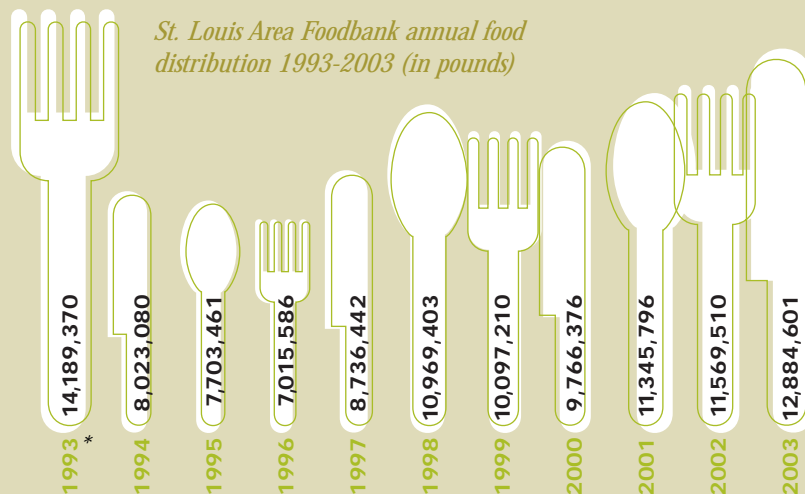
Volunteer Corner

The Letter Carriers' Food Drive is Saturday, May 8 and the Foodbank needs volunteers to collect and sort donated food at one of the collection hubs. If interested, call Lenora at 314.383.3335, ext. 3101. ♂



Through the years

St. Louis Area Foodbank annual food distribution 1993-2003 (in pounds)



**As a result of the Great Flood in 1993, we received an unusual amount of food from across the country for food relief.*

Food Drive News

In the Bank

University of Phoenix/St. Louis 232 lbs.

Radio Disney 190 lbs.

Missouri Society of CPAs 220 lbs.

Lammert Building 322 lbs.

K Force Healthcare 206 lbs.

Barnes/Jewish West Hospital 456 lbs.

St. Louis Child Enforcement Agency 136 lbs.

ConAgra Foods 656 lbs.

Select Specialty Hospital 420 lbs.

Forest Pharmaceuticals 310 lbs.

Prime America 286 lbs.

Facts & Comparisons 387 lbs.

Clayton United Methodist Church 516 lbs. & \$284.00

Drury Development 402 lbs.

On the Menu

For more information on upcoming food drives, contact Lenora Young at 314.383.3335, ext. 3101.

Letter Carriers' Food Drive

Saturday, May 8

Volunteer Spotlight

Lunchtime Volunteers Log Hours at Foodbank

Each issue, we try to identify a volunteer story for this space that highlights the positive impact an individual or small group can make on the St. Louis Area Foodbank. This time is no exception and in fact, the group we're focusing on here exemplifies the notion of a little here and a little there going a long way.


Last August, Jenne Ahlgrim, a research analyst at Monsanto headquarters in Creve Coeur, was looking for a volunteer opportunity. So, she logged onto a local TV station web site to check out their volunteer section. "I was originally looking for something I could do on weekends," says Jenne. "But then I saw that the St. Louis Area Foodbank needed help and realized one of their warehouses is only a couple of miles from my work. I also saw that they had opportunities for groups of people, so I thought maybe lunchtime would be a good time for me and some of my co-workers to volunteer."

Jenne started asking everyone she knew in her work area, and soon, 8 to 10

people were carpooling once a month to spend their lunch hour working at the Foodbank to fill monthly food boxes for seniors. "Brett Moeller (who serves as repackaging/volunteer center coordinator for the Foodbank) always has everything ready for us when we arrive so we can jump right in and get to work," says Jenne. "We feel like our time is really valued."

Starting in January, the volunteers began coming twice a month to help the Foodbank meet its food box requirements. From August through January, they have already logged more than 57 volunteer hours.

"I always find it exhilarating," says Jenne. "I really look forward to going and when I walk out of there after just an hour, I'm pumped for the rest of the day, and so are the other volunteers. On the way back to work, everyone is bubbling. It's so easy. A lunch hour a couple times a month is nothing to us, but it means so much to the Foodbank."

If you work for an employer in the Creve Coeur and Olivette area, please consider gathering some of your co-workers for some "lunches" at the St. Louis Area Foodbank. As these Monsanto volunteers have shown, even an hour at a time adds up to a lot. 

Mission Statement

Feed hungry people by acquiring and distributing food through our member agencies, and educate the public about the nature of and the solutions to the problems of hunger.

People *Continued from page 1*


bartenders, waiters and waitresses, dental assistants, janitors, hairdressers, and others) classified as working poor was 11.6 percent.

UNEMPLOYMENT. When the sole or primary breadwinner for a family who is barely making ends meet loses his/her job, the family can be plunged overnight into a financial crisis, where food, shelter and other basic needs are competing for very limited resources.

CHILDREN. The presence of children can reduce the ability of one or both of the parents to participate fully in the labor force. Thus, working families with children, regardless of the type of family, had higher poverty rates than families without children. The difference was greatest among families maintained by women. Among these families, 21.3 percent of those with children were poor in 2001, compared with 5.2 percent of those without children. And, the larger the family, the higher the level of income needed to keep the family out of poverty.

In addition to making it more difficult to participate fully in the workforce, the presence of children also may cause a significant portion of already low earnings to be dedicated to paying for childcare.

ILLNESS OR DISABILITY. Many families find themselves among the working poor when an earner is struck by sickness or disability.

We know that the people we serve are working hard to provide for their families. However, sometimes situations arise that cause them to fall short. This is where the Foodbank can help. And that's where you can help, too, by giving generously to the St. Louis Area Foodbank. 

^{1,2} "A Profile of the Working Poor, 2001." U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics, June 2003.



Executive Director Elected to National Hunger Organization Board

St. Louis Area Foodbank Executive Director Frank Finnegan has been elected to serve on the Board of Directors for the National Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

Operating in 34 states nationwide, CSFP – a program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA),



provides food boxes on a monthly basis to more than 530,000 people. The majority of CSFP clients served are senior citizens that meet federal low-income guidelines. Locally, the St. Louis Area Foodbank has been involved with CSFP since 2002 and currently provides monthly food boxes to

5,000 seniors living in St. Louis City and St. Louis County. “Senior citizens often have unique nutritional needs and overwhelming medical costs,” stated Finnegan. “In fact, one out of every ten senior citizens in our community is in need of food assistance. CSFP food boxes help combat this alarming percentage and I look forward to working on expanding the program throughout the rest of the country.”

Take Notice of Hunger Awareness Day

This year, America’s Second Harvest will hold its National Hunger Awareness Day on Thursday, June 3. The date is set to coincide with the start of summer vacation, when kids do not receive the benefit of the federal school lunch program.

Member foodbanks throughout the country plan different ways to recognize the event. The St. Louis Area Foodbank will ask the bi-state region to skip lunch for the day and instead, donate their lunch dollars to feed the hungry. “Skipping

lunch on June 3rd is your choice. However, for many children in our bi-state community, skipping lunch isn’t a choice. It’s a daily reality,” stated Frank Finnegan, executive director of the St. Louis Area Foodbank.

In conjunction with National Hunger Awareness Day last year, St. Louis-based corporation Hardee’s Food Systems, Inc. donated 1 million hamburger patties to several local organizations including the Foodbank, which received 250,000 patties.

“As a result of the recent introduction of our new Thickburger menu, we were able to make a substantial donation of the smaller hamburger patties we used to sell,” said Andrew Puzder, CEO of Hardee’s. “We’re pleased to help the needy through some very deserving, hardworking



organizations.”

In addition, Hardee’s hosted a lunch for kids at Foodbank member agency Make a Difference Center, a

St. Louis Area Foodbank Kids Café. Hardee’s provided lunch for the more than 100 children who attend the center. Kids Café is a nationwide program of America’s Second Harvest and is one of the nation’s largest meal service programs for children. In addition to providing hot meals to hungry kids, Kids Café programs like those at Make a Difference Center offer a safe place, where under the supervision of trustworthy staff, a child can get involved in educational, recreational and social activities that draw on existing community programs and often include family members.



Left to right: Noah Griggs, executive vice president of U.S. operations for Hardee’s; Mayor Francis Slay; Frank Finnegan, Foodbank executive director; and Andy Puzder, president and CEO of Hardee’s, at the Make A Difference Center.