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## **ST. LOUIS AREA FOODBANK NAMES MEREDITH KNOPP PRESIDENT AND CEO**

*Knopp chosen after extensive five-month nationwide search*

**ST. LOUIS** - The St. Louis Area Foodbank, the bi-state region's largest nonprofit food distribution charity, has named Meredith Knopp President and CEO, effective February 26. She succeeds Frank Finnegan, who retired after leading the agency for nearly 30 years.

Under Finnegan's leadership, the Foodbank has grown to provide more than 35 million meals annually to individuals and families in need.

Knopp was chosen by the Foodbank's Board of Directors following a nationwide search conducted after Finnegan announced his decision to retire last year. Knopp most recently served as Senior Vice President of Programs and Operations for The Mission Continues, a national nonprofit organization that helps veterans and military members in 49 states continue to serve through leadership in their communities. During her six and a half years there, Knopp helped design and launch new programs to empower more than 25,000 veterans to leave a lasting impact on their communities in addition to awarding 2,000 community service fellowships to post-9/11 veterans nationwide.

Prior to her role at The Mission Continues, Knopp served as Senior Vice President for Junior Achievement of St. Louis. Her four years of nonprofit leadership there followed five years as a General Manager in large-format retail. She also served seven years with the United States Army during which time she rose through the ranks to become Captain, Company Commander and Senior Project Officer. She received a Bachelor of Arts from Michigan State.

Knopp will be based at the St. Louis Area Foodbank's 96,000-square foot facility in Bridgeton, Missouri, which serves as the organization's central food distribution hub, volunteer center, and hunger education and engagement center. In 2006, Finnegan led the capital campaign to fund the purchase and customization of the building. During his tenure, several updates have been made to the building to increase efficiencies and reduce environmental impacts while also equipping the organization to better serve food insecure individuals in the community. Under Finnegan the Foodbank also became a member of Feeding America, the nation's largest domestic hunger-relief organization with 200 member food banks.

"Under Frank's nearly 30 years of leadership, The St. Louis Area Foodbank has made a meaningful difference to the issue of hunger in our region by distributing more than 500 million pounds of food and personal care items to individuals throughout eastern Missouri and southwestern Illinois" said Tim Reeves, Board Chair and Chair of the Executive Search Committee. "As we develop and implement our next long-term strategic plan, it will take a leader with the vision and drive to build on that momentum. Key to success will be leveraging the collaborative nature of our organization to strengthen relationships with community partners at the local and national level, and we're confident Meredith is that leader."

Knopp was selected after a national search conducted by DHR International.

### **About the St. Louis Area Foodbank**

The St. Louis Area Foodbank began its service to the community in 1975. Since that time, with the support of the community, the organization has grown to become the bi-state region's largest nonprofit 501c3 food distribution center dedicated to feeding those in need. The Foodbank delivers more than 35 million meals annually to individuals of all ages and backgrounds in 26 area counties in Missouri and Illinois through a network of 564 partner agencies comprised of food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and other nonprofit feeding programs. More than 392,000 people in the bi-state region rely on the Foodbank for assistance each year. For more information about the St. Louis Area Foodbank, the issue of hunger, and opportunities to volunteer or donate, go to [STLFoodbank.org](http://STLFoodbank.org).

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