



**DATE: AUG. 25, 2010**

**SUBJECT: OZARKS COMMUNITIES FULFILL HUNGER CHALLENGE GRANT**

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Community Foundation of the Ozarks' affiliates across southern Missouri rose to the challenge of feeding the hungry in their communities by raising \$105,000, which was matched with \$100,000 from a challenge grant offered by the Walmart State Foundation.

A total of 19 CFO affiliates completed the challenge grant with several surpassing their original goals. The funding is channeled through the Ozarks Food Harvest, which has a 28-county service area that largely mirrors the CFO's southern Missouri region. Ozarks Food Harvest will be able to leverage \$1 million worth of food from the \$205,000 in donations and matching funds.

The CFO affiliates that successfully responded to the Hunger Challenge are: Aurora, Bolivar, Cassville, DACO (Dade County), Dallas County, El Dorado Springs, Finley River (Ozark area), Houston, Jacks Fork, Southwest Missouri (Carthage-Joplin area), Marshfield, Nixa, Oregon County, Seymour, Stockton, Table Rock Lake, Taney County, and West Plains.

The Walmart State Foundation State Giving Program selected the Ozarks Food Harvest for its challenge grant program last year, which began in response to the national report – "Hunger in America 2010" – describing the extent to which hunger plagues Ozarks communities. An estimated 155,000 Ozarkers face chronic hunger issues, according to the report.

"We're seeing a new type of client – the unemployed middle class," said Bart Brown, president and CEO of the Ozarks Food Harvest. "These people have assets such as homes and cars, and if they can manage to hold onto them, these assets disqualify them for federal food programs. The need for private food assistance here in the Ozarks will continue to increase for the next several years because we will be dealing with sustained long-term unemployment, higher and deeper poverty levels, and dramatic increases in food insecurity."

Brown said the challenge grant money will fund services such as mobile food pantries traveling to some communities, equipment improvements for others with pantry operations already in place, and programs specifically for children.

"We are so proud of the effort our communities put into this challenge," CFO Board Chairman David Pointer said. "When it gets right down to it, what is a greater core need than making sure our neighbors are not going hungry? We are very grateful to the Walmart State Foundation for selecting the Ozarks for this grant and for our partnership with Ozarks Food Harvest."

**Note to Media:** If any media are interested in more specific photo or story opportunities in the individual communities, please contact the Ozarks Food Harvest for details.

**Community Foundation of the Ozarks**

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