

Second Harvest Food Bank Advocacy and Agency Update



A Program of the Community
Action Committee of the
Lehigh Valley



**March
2017**

**Free Friday
items are now
viewable on our
ordering page
every Friday
morning.**

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News You Can Use

After 33 plus years, Janet Ney will be stepping away from Second Harvest Food Bank and CACLV on March 17th.

Janet first started back in 1983 as the Director of Second Harvest Food Bank. She came on board with the anticipation of Pennsylvania's launch of the State Food Purchase Program, and overhaul of the TEFAP program at the federal level. Janet was among the founders of the Pennsylvania Association of Regional Food Banks (PARF now known as Hunger Free Pennsylvania) and brought the importance of advocacy to everyone she worked with.

From 1990 to 2010, Janet held multiple positions within CACLV, she was the Director of Planning, Director of Operations, and Associate Executive Director.

In early 2010, Janet stepped into her current role as Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator. During this time, she was a part of the creation of Feeding Pennsylvania, which is a network of 8 food banks within Pennsylvania, working together to fight hunger. Most recently, our Fill a Glass with Hope campaign was formed.

Janet is grateful for the many people who have been a part of her life as a food banker; they have inspired and humbled her. In a nation of plenty, where there is enough food for all, our neighbors should be able to put daily meals for themselves and their families on their dining tables. Someday, there will be little need for the vast network of emergency providers; until then, the food bank and its member agencies are providing a critical, compassionate service, worthy of praise and generous support.

Advocacy and Agency Update

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Advocacy - SNAP

Farm Bill Hearings

Although it seems like a very short time since I addressed the Farm Bill in these pages, Congress has already held hearings on aspects of the bill. Getting an early start on what will be the 2018 Farm Bill, the House Agriculture Committee heard from experts about restricting the list of foods that may be purchased with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Always a concern for members of Congress is the nutritional worth of some of the foods that SNAP participants purchase. These purchases are consistent with the purchases of people who do not use SNAP and reflect the influence of commercial advertising on our food decisions.

Much discussion is centered around block granting SNAP. As the program works now, states can receive federal funds to meet the need. SNAP distribution amounts rise during difficult times and decrease when the economy improves. This response to the needs of people, so important for helping families through the storm, is built into the program. During the recent recession, we saw a significant increase in the number of people applying for SNAP; with unemployment receding, those numbers have been going down.

Block granting would fix the amount of money that each state will get - no flexibility for addressing changing economic times unless the state supplements the federal block grant with its own funds. As we have seen in Pennsylvania, state governments are having trouble making ends meet. Additional pressure to augment SNAP will not be welcomed by cost-cutting legislators.

States will be able to find ways to use SNAP dollars for other programs and, because block grants decrease in value over time, fewer people will be served. The administration of the federal program, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) demonstrates clearly the effect of block granting.

TANF was created as a block grant. According to Community Legal Services of Philadelphia, "Since 1996, TANF block grants have stayed at the same level. After adjusting for inflation, federal TANF funding to states has fallen by 32 percent." In 1996, TANF helped 68 of every 100 families in poverty; today, TANF provides assistance to 23 of every 100 families in poverty.

In short, block granting would devastate SNAP, causing greater hardship for people struggling to put food on the table and, at the same time, increasing the number of requests for help coming to our emergency food network of food pantries and soup kitchens.

News you can use

*Second Harvest's Development Team is looking for participants who would be willing to tell their story. Storytelling is a compelling way to help the public understand the needs of the community and of the people you serve. We welcome any and all types of stories. If you know of a participant that has a story that he or she is ready to share, please contact Briana at 484.287.4015 or bmcgonagle@caclv.org.

*Over the past month staff changes have been made at Second Harvest. Here is a list of employees, job responsibilities, and contact info.

Jessica Dokachev (operation manager) - invoicing/billing, everyday operations - jdokachev@caclv.org

David Cool (agency relations coordinator) - generalized agency questions/operations - dcool@caclv.org

Shawn Moser (interim warehouse manager) - agency deliveries (schedules, questions, driver issues) smoser@caclv.org

Valerie Rivera (inventory clerk) - agency pickups, order processing, and order sheet questions - vrivera@caclv.org

Kent Beers (product coordination coordinator) - questions with online ordering - kbeers@caclv.org

Janet Meyer (project coordinator) - CSFP and Back Pack Buddies - jmeyer@caclv.org

Briana McGonagle (development coordinator) - agency retail pickup, handles special events - bmcgonagle@caclv.org

Kathryn Hoffman (snap coordinator) - assist potential program participants with applying online - khoffman@caclv.org

Kristina Parise and Laura Scarpino (Cooking Matters Coordinators) - kparise@caclv.org - lscarpino@caclv.org

*Please extend a warm welcome to our new Nutrition Educator Beth Courtney. Beth's focus here at the Second Harvest will be implementing a childhood nutrition program in addition to holding nutrition education to our member agencies.