

AGENCY AND ADVOCACY UPDATE



June, 2010

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF LEHIGH VALLEY AND NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA IS A PROGRAM OF COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE OF THE LEHIGH VALLEY



June, 2010



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DATES TO REMEMBER:

The Food Bank will be closed Wednesday, June 30th – Friday, July 2nd for inventory. If your standing appointment falls during that time, please call to re-schedule.

News You Can Use

Senior Boxes Program Expands

Beginning with the July distribution, the federally-funded Commodity Supplemental Food Program (sometimes called “senior box”) will expand by 43%! That means for the moment, there will be no waiting list, but we are encouraged to continue registering eligible people. Individuals over 60 with household income below 130% of the current federal poverty level (right now, \$1,174.00 gross per month, with increasing amounts for couples and larger households) are eligible to apply. Each monthly package includes cereal, juice, milk, canned fruits, vegetables and protein, pasta, and cheese. For more information, contact Corrine Kucirka at Second Harvest (610-434-0875 X 3304).

Hydrate!

Summertime is time to remind all member agency participants of the need to stay hydrated! Fortunately, Second Harvest has a nice supply of a variety of beverages that will help. See the order sheet and select from Juicy Juice (100% juice) in jugs and boxes, sparkling blueberry juice (full of antioxidants), 100% juice spritzer, water in all sorts of flavors including unflavored, and iced tea concentrate.

Welcome New Staff

Please join us in welcoming our new Food Stamp Outreach Worker, Kathryn Hoffman. Kathryn will be happy to meet with member agencies to discuss providing information on SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly “food stamps”) to your participants. You can reach her at 610-434-0875 X 3306.

New “Choice” Pantry

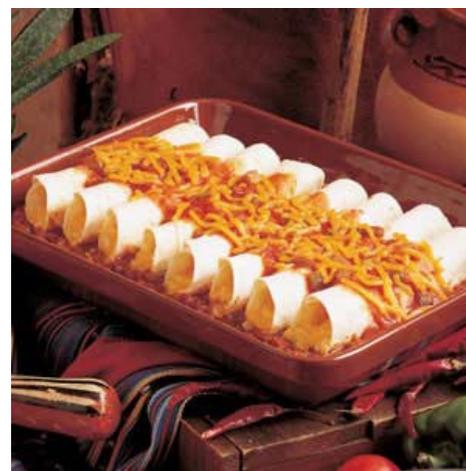
Congratulations to Calvary Baptist Food Pantry located in Bethlehem. They are the latest pantry to take the “choice” plunge and will be allowing their participants to select their own food package during July and August (as a test). We are sure that this new way of distributing will prove so efficient and successful that they will continue! Several pantries around the region are also allowing “Client Choice.” If you would like to connect with one (so that you can see how it works), call Maria at 610-434-0875 X 3301 for information.

Cook's Corner

Cheesy Chili Enchiladas

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 (10 ounce) package corn tortillas
- 1 (16 ounce) package Cheddar cheese, grated
- 2 (19 ounce) cans chili without beans
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 (8 ounce) package processed cheese, cubed, divided



Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 9x13 baking dish.
2. Warm oil in a small skillet. Use tongs to dip tortillas into the oil one at a time, turning to warm both sides. Sprinkle an even amount of Cheddar cheese down the center of each warmed tortilla. Roll tortillas to enclose cheese; place seam side down in the prepared baking dish.
3. Combine the chili, onion, and half of the processed cheese in a large bowl. Pour the chili mixture over the tortillas; top with the remaining processed cheese.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until hot and bubbly, about 20 minutes.

Nutritional Information	
Servings Per Recipe: 10	Amount Per Serving
Calories	525
Total Fat:	36.5g
Cholesterol	89mg
Sodium	1,178mg
Total Carbohydrates	24.1g
Dietary Fiber	3.5g
Protein	26.6g

Thanks to allrecipes.com for this recipe and for providing the nutritional information. <http://allrecipes.com/Recipe/Cheesy-Chili-Enchiladas/Detail.aspx>

Helpful Tips for Everyday Questions

How can I use SNAP benefits to stretch my food dollars?

- ◆ **Plan before going to the grocery store.** Even if you are buying only a few things, make a shopping list.
- ◆ **Shop from your list.** You will buy less if you use the list. Shop when you are not hungry. This way you will not buy more than you want and need.
- ◆ **Check the store's sales.** Pick things that match your list that are also on sale. Use coupons. These can be used with SNAP benefits. Coupons can help you buy more with your SNAP benefits.
- ◆ **Buy generic or store brands.** They usually cost less.

How can I cook healthy meals that are quick and easy? I do not have the hours to spend in the kitchen.

Healthy cooking can be done without needing a lot of time. The key to healthy cooking is planning ahead and making wise choices.

- ◆ **Look for recipes that use only 5-7 ingredients.** These are usually quick and easy.
- ◆ **When you have only a little time for fixing meals and cleaning up, use recipes for "one dish" meals.** These are recipes that combine all foods in one dish— great for busy families.
- ◆ **If your dinner meal includes a frozen item, put it in the refrigerator the night before or the morning,** By doing this, the item is thawed safely and ready to use when you begin to fix dinner.

Shopping with my kids is so hard, but a babysitter costs too much. How can I shop with my family along?

- ◆ **Establish rules before you leave home so the kids know what to expect.** To start, let them know you will all stay together so everyone can help.
- ◆ **Let your child choose a fruit or vegetable to add to the shopping list.** Let them tell you where to find that food item in the store.
- ◆ **Give everyone, even your smallest child, a job.**
 - If young kids are learning their colors, have them point out as many different colored vegetables as they can.
 - Have school-aged children read the labels to find healthy choices. Tell them why you are picking that food based on what the label says.
- ◆ **When shopping, try to find a vegetable or fruit that you have not tried before.** Use grocery shopping as a time to teach your kids what you have learned. Shopping will take a little longer when the kids help. But this time will help your kids learn healthy eating habits that will last a life time.

Where can I find menus and recipes for the whole week?

- ◆ www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle
- ◆ www.nal.usda.gov/foodstamp

Consumer Perceptions About Processed Foods

Consumers (43%) have a negative attitude toward processed foods, according to a recent study conducted by the International Food Information Council (IFIC) and Artemis Strategy Group. The study, which interviewed 1,500 adults in the U.S. who are the primary grocery shopper in their household, found that negative perceptions are deeply rooted and cross all demographics.

Researchers discovered that both the obesity epidemic and the move toward local and organic alternatives are driving forces in this attitude shift, and growing concerns about the healthfulness of processed foods are leading to the de-selection of some of these foods in certain food and beverage categories. The term "processed foods" itself also carries with it a negative perception.

"We know that weight is tied to both diet and exercise, but processed foods have been the primary target, mostly due to negative information that isn't always science-based being perpetuated in the media," says Lindsey Loving, Senior Director, Food Ingredient & Technology Communications for IFIC. "Another issue is the use of certain ingredients in processed foods. There is a lot of misinformation out there about the purpose, function, and safety of many ingredients in processed foods, which creates uncertainty and fear."

While consumers' general attitudes toward processed foods are negative, there is recognition of the significant role processed foods play in their everyday diets. In addition, some types of processed foods have more negative views associated with them than others. For example, sodium, trans fats and high fructose corn syrup are poorly perceived.

When selecting foods and beverages, consumers rate taste, freshness, safety and value at the top of their wish list. Additionally, they are interested in foods that stay fresh longer and are enjoyable to eat. Interestingly, these are all qualities of most processed foods.

Nearly all consumers eat both fresh and processed foods, and two-thirds of those interviewed consume some organic foods. However, one-third of consumers plan to reduce their consumption of processed foods in the next six months or say they have recently done so (actual purchasing behavior was not observed in this study).

Some of the most mentioned processed foods consumers say they eat include cheese, canned soup, frozen meals, soda, lunch meats, chips and cereal.

Foods identified as "fast" foods or "junk" foods top the de-selection list, but virtually all categories of processed foods receive a mention. The majority of consumers (80%) are in the process of changing how they eat, and of those, 48% are doing so for improved health and nutrition. Thirteen percent cited the economy.

Consumers in this study acknowledged the positive aspects of processed foods, like convenience, value and consistency, and they do seem to understand that it is unrealistic to buy solely fresh, local and organic foods – especially during these tough economic times.

"Local foods provide another option for people looking to add fresh produce to their diets; however, this option may not be as convenient or cost effective for some consumers," says Loving.

Also, Loving points out that de-selection of processed foods could have its own negative consequences, potentially leading to a greater risk of foodborne illness from eating spoiled food and the consumption of fewer nutrients. Some processed foods contain preservatives and/or use special packaging to maintain freshness, and some processed foods are fortified to provide essential nutrients that are not as abundant in fresh foods.

"It would be difficult to eliminate all processed foods, since almost everything we eat is processed in some shape or form. Choices would be extremely limited," says Loving.

Processed foods are a critical component of our everyday diets. Retailers have an opportunity here to remind consumers about the potential benefits of processed foods, which include cost/value, convenience, consistency, staying fresher longer, and food safety.

"It's important to educate employees about the benefits of food processing and technology," says Loving. "Providing information at the point of sale would also be helpful in aiding consumers in making an educated decision."

Understanding Adult Basic

What is adultBasic?

adultBasic is an insurance program that is run by the Pennsylvania Insurance Department and private insurance companies. It provides basic coverage for adults who do not qualify for other kinds of insurance, including Medical Assistance (Medicaid). About 50,000 people receive adultBasic insurance.

Who is eligible for adultBasic?

Adults between ages 19 and 65 are eligible for adultBasic. They must be Pennsylvania residents. They must meet income guidelines based on their family size (\$21,660 per year for single people and \$29,140 for couples). People may enroll in adultBasic even if they have preexisting health conditions.

What are the benefits of adultBasic?

adultBasic costs \$36 per month. People who receive adultBasic insurance receive coverage for doctor and hospital visits, with co-pays ranging from \$10 to \$50 per visit. adultBasic does not cover prescription drugs, mental health treatment, or dental care.

Does adultBasic have a waiting list?

adultBasic has a long waiting list. About 390,000 people are waiting to enroll. Most people wait 3 years or more on the waiting list before they are enrolled in the program. While people are on the waiting list, they may choose to buy coverage for an increased cost. People on the waiting list pay \$600 per month for coverage. They will have to pay \$629 per month beginning in July 2010.

How may I sign up for adultBasic insurance?

You may call 1-800-GO-Basic to sign up over the phone, or to ask to receive a paper application in the mail. You may also apply online at www.compass.state.pa.us.

What is the future of adultBasic?

The Governor's 2010-2011 executive budget proposes \$199 million in total state funds to maintain adultBasic enrollment at 50,000. The bulk of that funding would come from the Community Health Reinvestment Plan Agreement (CHR), which is due to expire in December, 2010. The four Blue Cross plans have not made any commitment to continue the CHR contributions beyond this date.

Why is this important?

Until components of the federal health reform law are implemented in Pennsylvania, adultBasic will continue to be a critical lifeline for working families who are unable to obtain adult health coverage.

Second Harvest's very own study, *Continued Hunger in a Valley of Plenty* (2007) found that the lack of access to affordable health insurance is one of the root causes of hunger. The future of adultBasic could have a profound effect on Second Harvest's program participants. We will continue to inform you about how federal health reform and state health care initiatives affect our program participants through the monthly Agency Update.

Advocates' Corner

What's going on with Child Nutrition Reauthorization—and how can we use advocacy to help?

Every five years, lawmakers work together to improve and reauthorize government-funded Child Nutrition Programs. These programs—including the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs, the Commodity and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program, and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)—**provide children with access to quality, nutritious food during school as well as in out-of-school settings.**

When President Obama issued his proposed budget for 2010, he recommended that \$1 billion in new funding every year for ten years be allocated to Child Nutrition Programs. These funds would go a long way to helping us meet the goal of ending child hunger by 2015.

During the first quarter of 2010, Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation worked its way through the Senate Agriculture Committee, which formulated its version of the bill. As it stands now, the bill includes \$450 million in new funding per year for child nutrition programs. This is a good step forward, but falls far short of the \$1 billion per year requested by the President.

Currently the Senate Bill:

- Expands the At-Risk **After School Supper Program** to all states.
- Includes \$40 million in mandatory spending to **test innovative strategies to end child hunger**, and \$10 million in mandatory spending for **research on causes and consequences of child hunger.**
- Removes the cap on the number of **summer food sites and children that can be served** by private non-profit organizations.
- Allows California to operate its **year-round pilot feeding program** until 2015.
- Requires schools to **coordinate outreach efforts with Summer Food Programs.**

Next Steps

Child Nutrition Reauthorization legislation will now go to the Senate floor, possibly by the end of spring or early summer. Based on the recommendations of the Senate Agriculture Committee, the Senate will debate funding levels and other additions or changes to the legislation. The House of Representatives will also have to vote on its own version of the bill. This process will begin in the House Education and Labor Committee.

As the legislation moves forward in both houses, there will be several chances to increase funding levels and amend the bill. Feeding America will let us know of key opportunities when your voice in the process can help us secure the additional funding we are seeking.

What Can You Do Now?

- Invite members of Congress to visit your sites.
- Make phone calls and send emails in support of CNR to your elected officials.
- Contact Elisa Zaehring, Advocacy Coordinator, at 484-893-1106 or ezaehring@cacfv.org and ask about how you can help advocate for CNR.



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Bits and Pieces

Stamp Out Hunger! throughout America

On Saturday, May 8, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) held the 18th annual food drive to “Stamp Out Hunger!” across America with support from Campbell Soup Company, the U.S. Postal Service, Feeding America, Valpak, the National Rural Letter Carriers’ Association, the AFL-CIO and United Way Worldwide in order to provide assistance to the rapidly increasing number of Americans who are struggling with hunger.

Last year the letter carriers collected a record total of more than 73.4 million pounds of food from generous Americans, surpassing the previous record of 73.1 million pounds collected in 2008.

Stamp Out Hunger! throughout the Lehigh Valley

In 2009, 165,000 lbs of food was collected throughout the Lehigh Valley.

This year, thanks to the generosity of our Lehigh Valley Neighbors, we collected approximately 135,000 lbs of food that will be distributed to our Member Agencies.