



St. Mary's
Food Bank
ALLIANCE 2831 N. 31st Avenue • Phoenix, AZ 85009 • (602) 352-3640 • Fax (602) 352-3659
www.FirstFoodBank.org

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Kara Ritter (602) 343-3160

Cell: (602) 621-0526

kjritter@FirstFoodBank.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 7, 2008

ARIZONA FOOD CRISIS PERSISTS AS NEED FOR EMERGENCY FOOD BOXES SKYROCKETS

Average emergency food box request for October up 70 percent from summer months

Phoenix, AZ –St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance reports a skyrocketing increase in requests for emergency food box relief, with demand up 70 percent in October over all summer months combined, mirroring the latest U.S. Labor Department unemployment rates for the month, which bolted to a 14-year high.

“This increase in demand has us very concerned for the holiday season,” says Terry Shannon, St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance's President and CEO. “With our inventory, we have been able to keep pace so far, but we can't continue to keep pace at this rate going forward.”

St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance works as a regional food distributor to smaller Arizona food banks and serves more than 700 agency locations in the Valley that rely upon the organization for emergency food supplies, such as smaller food pantries. Consider:

- The average demand in emergency food box need for September/October versus May/June and July is up 55%

URGENT NEEDS:

- Peanut Butter
- Juice
- Tuna
- Canned Vegetables & Fruit
- Rice & Pasta

- The total pounds of food distributed year to date versus last year is already a 12% increase
- The total pounds for September/October jumped 28% versus last year, indicating a significant increase in the trend line just in the last two months

The U.S. Labor Department announced today that the nation's unemployment rate jumped to a 14-year high of 6.5 percent in October as another 240,000 jobs were cut.

“The financial support the community can provide gives us the ability to buy our most urgent needs and multiply that financial support given our bulk buying power,” Shannon says. “It also enables us to turn that financial support into a multiplier for the state. For example, one dollar enables us to deliver seven meals worth of donated or purchased food into the community.”

“We must work together – as a nation, as a state, as a community – to provide for our neighbors in need. This year is different. It's not just those who live in poverty we must help – it's not just children and the elderly – this year, it's our neighbor. We have to do this together. It is for the good of our neighborhoods and our communities.”

To Make a Monetary Donation: Visit www.firstfoodbank.org

To Make a Food Donation: Visit any U-Haul or Goodwill store location or drop by

St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance

2831 N. 31st. Avenue

Phoenix, AZ 85009

####

ABOUT THE FOOD BANK: St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance, the world's first food bank, is a non-sectarian, nonprofit organization that alleviates hunger by efficiently gathering and distributing food to 675 sites that serve the hungry. Serving 13 of Arizona's 15 counties, the organization is committed to volunteerism, building community relationships, and improving the quality of life for Arizonans in need. During Fiscal Year 2006-2007, the Food Bank distributed 51.5 million pounds of food to families and individuals, provided enough food for 200,000 meals every day, and garnered more than 230,000 volunteer service hours. Web site: www.FirstFoodBank.org, Phone: 602-242-FOOD.

ABOUT OUR AGENCIES:

Nicole Peña/Director of Public Relations and Events

Phoenix Rescue Mission

(602) 346-3342 [office]

(602) 516-8576 [cell]

www.phoenixrescuemission.org