

Feed My Sheep John 21:18

A newsletter from the Hunger Task Force of the Southern Ohio Synod

July - August, 2012

OHIO'S CHILDREN RANK THIRD IN NATION IN FOOD INSECURITY



Hunger and malnutrition have devastating effects on our children's ability to learn and grow into tomorrow's productive citizens. Hunger among our youngest Ohioans is growing and will dramatically affect already rising health care costs, educational achievement, future worker productivity and the ability of our State and nation to compete in the global economy. Yet, hunger is entirely preventable.

Each year the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) measures food insecurity and very low food security across the United States. In September of 2011, the USDA released data on food insecurity. They found that Ohio is 6th in the nation for **high** food security **but** that **16.4 percent of Ohioans are considered food insecure**. Ohio's increase of 7.9 percentage points in one year is the largest increase in food insecurity of all states. ***Ohio's food insecurity rate is higher than all surrounding states and the U.S average, and now ranks third of all the states in food insecurity.***

Feeding America produced the first comprehensive report about food insecurity at the state and county level in 2010. It has been expanded to include local level data on child food insecurity. This report determined that 26.5 percent (731,040) of Ohio children struggle with food insecurity. Forty percent of all food insecure Ohioans are not income eligible for federal nutrition programs like SNAP, school meals, or WIC because they live in households above 185% of the federal poverty level. Ohio's 12 Feeding America Food Banks and their network of more than 3,300 local agencies fed 2.1 million Ohioans, 35% of which are children 17 and under. Though families may have income, they must make hard choices of whether to eat or pay the rent, medical bills, utilities, or transportation costs to get to jobs. They usually choose to do without food.

Children develop nutritional habits very young, so it is important to ensure that children have access to fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. However, these foods are often more expensive to purchase than foods high in added sugars and saturated fats. According to the Archives of Pediatric Medicine, even one experience with hunger has negative impacts on children 10 and 15 years later. Food insecurity among children results in higher rates of depression and anxiety, diabetes and other chronic conditions, internalizing behavior problems, increased likelihood of needing to repeat a grade at school, lower math scores, and more risk of other developmental delays.

Volunteers, service organizations, and churches play important roles in addressing child hunger, from supporting Summer Food Service Program sites, maximizing partnerships and community resources, organizing food donations, to screening families for SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) benefits, and supporting policies to address the problem.

Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does a child's need for good nutrition. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free, nutritious meals and snacks to help children in low-income areas get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow, throughout the summer months when they are out of school. Several SOS congregations are already involved in the Summer School Food Program, but more sites are needed, especially in this synod's geographical area. Begin now to consider becoming a summer meal provider for next summer. To learn more about this program, go to www.ode.state.oh.us.

WATER BECOMES A GLOBAL CRISIS

The global water crisis doesn't often make the headlines. But the truth is it claims more lives per year than war or natural disasters.

Nearly a billion people — that's one out of seven people in our world today — lack access to clean, safe water. They walk an average of 3 miles each day to fetch water. Too often, the water they find is not safe to drink. Unclean water causes millions of people, especially young children, to die from water-related illnesses each year.

Consider this! Combined, unclean water and poor sanitation are the world's second largest killer of children. Water-related illnesses result in a loss of 272 million days of school attendance for children, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Close to half of all people in developing countries are suffering at any given time from a health problem caused by dirty water or unsanitary conditions.

Millions of women spend several hours a day just collecting water. Clean water is one of the most powerful ways to make change in the world. When a woman has a well right in her village, she doesn't have to spend all morning walking to get water. She can reclaim enough time to make up two full months of labor. Earn money. Put food on the table. Send her children to school so that they secure a better future, all while investing in the local economy. One water well can open a world of opportunity.

Lutherans are people who roll up their sleeves and get to work. This year, ELCA youth will join together to do just that through the 100 Wells Challenge. The goal is to raise \$250,000 in 2012 to support the water projects of ELCA World Hunger where they are needed most. Just think, \$250,000 could mean 100 wells — each one with the potential of bringing clean water to 500 families at a time.

Congregations need to get involved. Here are some Fundraising Ideas from ELCA 100 Wells Challenge.

Noisy offering Fill water jugs or empty water bottles with change for two, three or four consecutive Sundays. Pass the containers at youth group, confirmation, congregation council and other meetings.

Build a well Just \$2,500 could build a well. Set a goal for your congregation to "build a well" on its own. Decorate a poster, build a well or fill a well to measure your progress.

Dunk tank Rent a dunk tank and dare your congregation's pastor, youth director and other leaders to take the plunge! Suggest a donation for each try to dunk the leader.

Water pledge Challenge the congregation to drink only tap water for a week or month. Ask them to donate the money they would have spent on bottled water, coffee, soft drinks and other beverages.

Balloon toss Host a water fight after Sunday morning worship. Charge \$1–\$5 for each water balloon and donate the proceeds.

Water bottle sales Order a supply of ELCA World Hunger water bottles and sell them for a profit — donating the proceeds to the challenge.



For more information and resources about the water crisis go to the **ELCA 100 Wells Challenge at www.elca.org/100wells**.

CONGREGATIONS IN ACTION

Epiphany, Dayton

Pastor Larry Hoffsis and his wife Cindy sent information about a Lenten project Epiphany completed this past spring. Perhaps this success will inspire other congregations to try a similar project during the coming holidays or next Lent.

The congregation adopted the ELCA Good Gifts project as its Lenten Mission Project. The planning team sent the Good Gifts catalog to every family along with the challenging goal: sponsor 300 Good Gifts! (Order code ELCACAMA1007)

The congregation met that goal and far surpassed it, finally ending with 379 sponsored gifts. The most thrilling gift was the digging of an entire well (\$2500) for a village. All this was the result of the combined effort of Lenten soup supper attendees. Another one of the most popular gifts was purchasing a goat (\$50), perhaps because live goats were present in the narthex one Sunday during Lent! Altogether the congregation sponsored 56 goats!

The purchase of the 379 gifts have a value of over \$16,000.

The following is a breakout of donated gifts according to category:

GOD'S GLOBAL BARNYARD: 730 chicks; 56 goats, 26 pigs, 26 ducks, 4 sheep, 4 alpacas, and 2 cows.

WATER PROJECTS: 7,000 water purification tablets, 48 water jugs, 1 share of a well, and one entire well.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN: 13 school fees for a girl, 6 textbooks for a child, 2 microloans

HEALTH CARE: 20 health and dental care for a child; 16 vaccination series for a child, 3 to restore sight to the blind

MALARIA: 33 mosquito nets, 4 train a village health team, 3 medicine gifts to treat malaria patients

AGRICULTURE: 23 fruit-tree seedlings, 10 farming tools and training

GROW THE CHURCH: 9 Bible and hymnals, 5 gifts to help ELCA missionary provide surgical training, 1 gift to help start a Sunday School program

INTERNATIONAL DISASTER RESPONSE: 40 blankets

HELP AT HOME: 8 gifts to feed ten at a soup kitchen

GIVE WHERE NEEDED MOST: 4 gifts (totaling 257.50)



The planning team thanked the congregation on behalf of all gift recipients with the observation that their Lenten project reflected Epiphany's mission statement: "We love Jesus by serving others" and the ELCA motto: "God's Work; Our Hands."

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer, Cincinnati

Cindy Zorn and members of this congregation have applied for an ELCA Hunger Grant for 2013. This is a good example of how one person can make a difference and how the ELCA at large may be able to help. Below is a major portion of Cindy's letter to the Grant Committee, which is part of the grant application process.

In July of 2012, I was an adult chaperone on an Appalachian Service Project, serving with the senior high school members of our church. I have always had a heart and a yearning to help the people of Appalachia after attending a Global Mission event in the early 1990's, and hearing about their struggles. This trip was finally my opportunity to help out in Appalachia. Upon returning from this mission trip, I began to feel that the work of our church in this area needed to continue. We only live four hours away, and we needed to do more - but where to start?

Two months later my husband, Pastor Henry Zorn, received a blind e-mail from Manna from Heaven Outreach in Myra, Kentucky. After much research and diligence, I concluded this was a very worthwhile ministry and proceeded to ask our LCR Outreach Committee if we could commit \$1,000 from our Annual Hunger Appeal for the purchase of food. The food was to be delivered December 22 in time for Christmas.

On the week of December 10, 2012 a community group held a garage sale in our fellowship hall, and left the unsold clothing and toy items in our fellowship hall at our church. Our church secretary called and asked if I would like to take them to Manna from Heaven. When I got to church I realized that there were enough items to completely fill up my

van. With the help of several Bible study ladies, I made my first trip to Myra, Kentucky. I brought my 55 lb dog for company and protection as I really wasn't too sure where I would be going!

After an uneventful 4 ½ hour trip, Morris (the dog) and I arrived at Manna. The greeting was sincere and the appreciation for someone's leftovers was utter gratitude. I got to meet Lois and Ralph Tackett the leaders, organizers and spirit led Christian couple who founded Manna from Heaven Outreach. Their facility is a very modest cement block building. There are plenty of shelves for food and clothing, but not much on them. I found out that Lois and Ralph were not Christians until 12 years ago. They had a baby daughter Angel Tackett who only lived for one hour. After the baby's death, Lois was deeply depressed. A friend invited her to seek a Christian grief counselor and come to her church. As Lois said to me, "it doesn't matter if you live 100 years or one hour, all life matters. Angel was only with us one hour, but she brought her mommy and daddy to Christ."

Manna from Heaven became their response to a difficult situation, as Ralph says; it is Lois' salvation, helping others. They both exemplify Christian discipleship at its finest. They told me when they first started Manna from Heaven Outreach; people wouldn't talk to each other because they were different religious faiths. They now have everyone working together and in community with each other as Christ's beloved children. After a time of prayer, Morris and I headed back to Cincinnati, knowing we had a partner in mission and ministry.



One week later, MaryAnn Erdmann and I returned with the \$1,000 of food and some Christmas gifts, once again filled with the Spirit. As we were driving home we thought about all we had delivered, but starting thinking about what else should be done. How could we partner with Manna to create some sort of cottage industry, to help the people provide for their long term needs. Lots of brainstorming occurred!

Our joke going home was, we can't bring back coal, and the only other commodity in the area is moonshine, perhaps we could start, "Shine, Jesus Shine Ministries!" MaryAnn told me to keep thinking!!!

We decided our next course of action would be to talk to Lois and Ralph and get some ideas from them. They know the talents of their folks. Thus was the beginning of the idea for a quilting cottage industry. After extensive networking, we actually had a group of Hasidic Jewish women in New York City donate 9 cartons of fabric and sewing notions to the ladies in Myra. We had a bake sale at LCR and raised \$500 for additional supplies for their quilting group. Three of our Stitch n Stuff ladies went to Myra this spring to lead a workshop. We also hosted a luncheon for the ladies. By the middle of the day it was a question of who was teaching whom! The ladies in Myra hope to have 25 quilts completed before our return visit in July. We hope to provide the avenue to sell these quilts at church and community craft shows and fairs. The ladies are now meeting every two weeks, and as Lois has said, "you don't know what you started down here." Some of these ladies were part of the groups that didn't speak years ago, now they are quilting together.

In the spring, four LCR members attended Community Day at Manna from Heaven, helping to distribute seeds and seedlings to well over 200 families. The people were eager to go home that day and start their gardens. We were able to provide a lot of seeds, but only two tomato, 2 pepper and 2 cabbage plants. They would have loved more! Manna from Heaven has a ¼ acre garden that local families can help cultivate, tend to and pick crops. Ralph and Lois say, "we don't want to just give a hand out, but a help up." This year we purchased 15 flats of seedlings, next year we hope to purchase 30, from local growers.

While the garden is a good supplement, we also realize that there will always be a need for emergency food and we would like to be able to provide more food. We get donations from Northern Kentucky Kids Against Hunger, and hope to get a donation from Matthew 25 Ministries this fall. We are going to ask our own congregation to support Manna with \$1,800 in donations again this year. We also are in the planning stage of organizing a community food drive for the fall.

As I stated, we would like to provide more seedling and plants to help their self sufficiency. In September, we will host with Manna a harvest celebration, providing food from our gardens as well as chicken legs and hot dogs. We want to

talk with the people of Myra and find out how their garden grew, what was successful. If necessary, perhaps do a workshop on farming, with the help of a local 4-H representative.

As you can see, we are still in the infancy stages of this partnership. We are committed to helping the people of Myra, Kentucky in whatever small ways we can. We realize that hunger in Appalachia is a systemic problem, but we want to shine Jesus' light of hope upon them, letting them know that we care. A grant of \$6,000 would make a huge impact in the mission of Manna from Heaven Outreach. While, we presently purchase food in Cincinnati, we plan on making our future food purchases in Pike County as another way to help their local economy. I realize that hunger is present in so many places, but what I find in Appalachia that makes it different is that there are not the "haves" and "have not's." In Pike county alone 16,270 people are living with an annual income of \$7,987 a year. They do not have the infrastructure to help out their own community. They presently need help from churches like LCR and other hunger action programs. They desperately need our help!

Thank you for your time and consideration of this 2013 Domestic Hunger Grant Proposal. Cindy Zorn

From July 29 through August 26, LCR will have a special worship focus on hunger. Members are "the boy" in the story of the Feeding 5000 miracle. During this prime harvest time in Cincinnati a special offering of fruit and vegetables from member gardens and orchards will be received and given to Inter Parish Ministry. In addition, an offering of canned goods will also help to stock the IPM shelves. For those who forget their canned goods, a table in the Narthex will have canned goods available which can be purchased for \$1 or \$2 each. (Profits of the sale will go to the Manna From Heaven ministry in Appalachia).

A GLANCE AT 2012 DOMESTIC GRANT AWARD WINNERS

Editor's note: In the next few issues of Feed My Sheep, there will be a story featuring the work of at least one agency which has been awarded a 2012 ELCA Domestic Hunger Grant. It is hoped these stories will inspire congregations and agencies in the SOS area to consider applying for a grant, and inform others of the great work going on in the Synod to help others in difficult circumstances

TOGETHER, WE TAKE BACK OUR NEIGHBORHOOD

"Violence rules the neighborhood of First English Lutheran Church in Columbus, OH. The police precinct has the highest crime rate in the city. Prostitutes sleep in the church yard. Drug dealing is so common that the neighbors are afraid to walk the streets in daylight. Boarded up houses indicate the sad reality that many families have moved away and vagrants, homeless, and gangs now occupy deserted buildings and loiter on street corners . . . Most of all, neighbors have no hope."

This strong statement in the Application Letter from [First English Lutheran Church, Columbus](#) (FELC), to the ELCA Grants Committee requesting a 2012 grant to continue their program, **Together We Take Back Our Neighborhood**, gives good reason why the funds are needed.

FELC is implementing three new strategies to make a positive impact against the violence, transform the image of the neighborhood, and to bring neighbors together. In partnership with other neighboring organizations, FELC is a catalyst for energizing local leadership by giving support to specific neighborhood activities and instilling hope in the people who live in that portion of the city.

Strategy 1. Provide a positive presence on the street corner known for drug dealing. Every Friday night in the summer, volunteers carry chairs, tables and a grill from the church to the corner and provide hot dogs and sides for anyone who stops by. In winter, hot chocolate and cookies are provided. Funds may be provided so that eventually neighbors can purchase the food and continue the project.



Strategy 2. Stimulate interest in growing, cooking, and eating fresh vegetables. FELC has a garden from which they harvest and cook the produce, inviting neighbors to come together with them and eat 2 times a month. They share recipes, encourage healthy eating, and share the process of cultivating and growing good food in the garden plots. Other local groups have become involved in the garden project by donating plants and seeds and watering the plots.

Strategy 3. Keep kids safe and positively involved on Saturdays in an environment of learning and caring and to engage the parents. FELC has started a Saturday Kid's Camp for ages 5-13, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. They provide breakfast, lunch, games, tutoring, Bible stories, music, crafts, and interaction time with caring adults. A monthly field trip may be included. Volunteers also visit the homes of the children, hopefully to engage the parents and invite them to Sunday worship services. The church also hosts three Vacation Bible Schools sponsored by Trinity Seminary and other church groups.

There is at least one success of the program reported: in the past year, **13 neighbors were baptized!**

ELCA MALARIA CAMPAIGN

The ELCA Malaria Campaign, which was rolled out to the whole church less than a year ago, is already making a difference in people's lives. In Zimbabwe, the ELCA Malaria Campaign supports the work of our companion church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe. Every Sunday in Burure, says Pastor Champion Zhou, the local malaria focal person speaks to the congregation about how to prevent the disease and how to recognize its symptoms. The educator encourages parishioners to take advantage of the nets and insecticidal spraying provided by the government, and parishioners spread the word to their neighbors. And now every household in Burure, whether members of the congregation or not, is following good prevention practices. Community leaders agree: "This is one of the best things that has happened in our community. The effects have been immediate."



NO NEWS IS GOOD NEWS

In early April, a powerful earthquake struck off the coast of Indonesia in the same area that was devastated by a major earthquake and tsunami in 2004, an event that dominated the news for weeks. This time, no major injuries or structural damage were reported. No news here. Why? The people quickly evacuated to tsunami shelters on higher ground. This fast action was the result of good disaster preparedness work, thanks to your undesignated gifts to ELCA Disaster Response. In Indonesia, ELCA Disaster Response and our partners support the Center for Disaster Risk Management and Community Development Studies. Part of its mission is "to facilitate community disaster management and risk preparedness." The staff work with communities to help people plan what to do and where to go in case of emergency, and also serve as communication centers for their

communities. And this is exactly what happened. Thanks to a solid disaster preparedness strategy, people knew what to do and did it. They knew where to go and went there. A clear plan of action eased fear. Proper communication channels kept confusion to a minimum. Lives were saved that might otherwise have been lost. Very good news indeed – even if it looked like no news.

US DISASTERS AFFECT ELCA CONGREGATIONS

The last month and a half have been a busy time for disaster response around the U.S. As wildfires continue to rage throughout Colorado, Montana and surrounding states, and record breaking rainfall in Northeast Minnesota that led to flash flooding. In Florida, Tropical Storm Debbie drenched much of the state leading to rivers cresting past flood levels. Below is an overview of these disasters and how our church is responding.

Colorado Wildfires Currently, 14 separate wildfires have consumed over 50,000 acres destroying more than 600 structures and threatening thousands more. The fires have led to three deaths and many injuries. It is predicted most fires will be contained by the middle of July, but will continue to smolder and burn until winter snows put them out. The fires have also led to the evacuation of Sky Ranch Lutheran Camp, one ELCA pastor losing his home and one ELCA congregation having 95 percent of its members evacuated. Wildfires are also threatening parts of the ELCA Montana Synod.

Northeast Minnesota Flash Flooding Duluth has experienced massive flash flooding that destroyed roads and homes, even picking up and moving vehicles. The City of Moose Lake was unreachable for five days because of high waters. In the early assessment, much of the damage seems to be infrastructure, yet many basements are flooded and homes have been lost. Hope Lutheran, an ELCA congregation in Moose Lake, was flooded but did not sustain any major damage.

Florida Flooding Tropical Storm Debbie brought heavy rains over many days that led to sporadic flooding and many rivers cresting above flood stage. Assessment is still on -going. The state is reporting four fatalities associated with the flooding. There have been no reports of affected ELCA congregations or members.

In each of these areas, the ELCA Disaster Response is working with local Lutheran Social Service Agencies. While the hard work of first responders and local agencies continues, please keep these people in your thoughts and prayers. Also pray for ELCA congregations, church bodies and affiliates as they continue their work of being the church, even in the midst of disaster. May God give them strength, patience and wisdom.

Gifts to ELCA Disaster Response allow the church to respond at home and globally in times of need.

WELCA ASSEMBLE FLOOD BUCKETS FOR ELCA DISASTER RESPONSE

Help those affected by floods, tropical storms, and hurricanes get the supplies they need to start cleaning up their homes. Flood buckets are one way to mobilize the women in your congregation to respond to immediate needs in the aftermath of a hurricane, tropical storm or flood.

What exactly is a flood bucket?

It's a collection of cleaning supplies and safety equipment, all packed into a 5-gallon plastic bucket. When a flood happens, an assortment of items is needed to clean up, including some things that people might not have around the house. After receiving a flood bucket, a family affected by a flood can get right to work cleaning their house because the bucket contains everything they need.

Download a 2-page flyer that lists flood bucket contents and describes how to assemble them and where to ship them.

Before assembling flood buckets, please contact your local 2-1-1 or the distribution center you plan to use to be sure that flood buckets are needed at this time. If they are not, save or come back to this information for use during a future disaster.

Financial support of ELCA Disaster Response knows no season. Encourage the women in your unit to make a gift through Women of the ELCA. Make your check payable to Women of the ELCA and write "Flooding—U.S." on the check memo line. Mail the check to: Women of the ELCA Designated Gifts, P.O. Box 71256 Chicago, IL 60694-1256.



Hunger Task Force Members: Rev. Henry Zorn, chair; Rev. Glen Bengson; David Drumm; Rev. John Eilert; Rev. Joene Herr; Lora Jollis; Rev. Mary Molnar; Rev. Mike Poole; Rev. Monte Stevens; Rev. Jeff Wick, synod staff; Susan Truchses, newsletter editor