



NEWS RELEASE

From Mayor Dean DePiero

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PARMA FOOD COLLECTION DRIVE TO BENEFIT LOCAL HUNGER CENTER

(PARMA) – The City of Parma has begun a food collection drive to benefit the Parma Hunger Center on Broadview Road. Collection boxes for non-perishable foods are located in the lobby at Parma City Hall and outside the Parma Recreation Department located near Penney's at Parmatown Mall.

"We are trying to ease the burden of area residents who are having a tough time putting food on the table," said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. "The economic recession has created a crisis for neighbors and families everywhere who don't have much money left after paying household bills."

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) reports 13 million more American households had trouble putting food on the table in 2008 than they did in 2007. In the agency's annual Household Food Security report, the agency stated in all, 14.6 percent of U.S. households — roughly 17 million — were "food insecure," the most since surveys of this kind were initiated in 1995.

"We see the realities of hunger in America every day," said Arch Stevenson, co-director of the Parma Hunger Center. "It's astounding. The Center has seen a dramatic 40% jump in the number of individuals being served in Parma, Parma Heights, Brooklyn Heights and Seven Hills."

So far in 2009, the Parma Hunger Center has served more than 9,500 individuals and nearly 3,000 families. The Center is located at Parma Lutheran Church, 5280 Broadview Road. The church has been serving local folks in need for more than 40 years.

"The effort to help those in need is a year-round responsibility by those who can help," said Mayor DePiero. "Hunger is a burden not only during the holidays. It's truly a crisis that will be with us for years to come."

(more)

The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has estimated that we will need to produce 70 percent more food for an additional 2.3 billion people in the world by 2050.

Agriculture experts claim hunger is a serious and growing domestic problem, with about 49 million Americans in need of food assistance. We need to continue to enhance our productivity to feed the country and the world.

“Doing the most we can for those who have the least defines community on all levels,” said Mayor DePiero. “Those who are struggling to feed their families are desperate and they need our help – now!”

The Parma Hunger Center recently received \$1,250.00 in Giant Eagle Grocery Store gift cards donated by the Parma Law Department. The money was collected through the city’s Juvenile Diversion and Traffic Diversion Programs in which offenders can choose to donate to a local charity as their community service requirement in lieu of actually performing community service hours.

Parma City Hall is located at 6611 Ridge Road. The Parma Hunger Center is located at Parma Lutheran Church. Staff members can be contacted at 216-351-6376.

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