Community Conversations

15 of 16 Community Conversations have been held and
35 legislators and over 700 community stakeholders have attended to date!

Upcoming:
• Toledo Northwestern Ohio Food Bank, Inc. Community Conversation to be held on Friday, April 29, 2011 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm at the James C. Caldwell Community Center, 3201 Stickney Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43608!

Check out the OASHF “Community Conversation” web page to hear recorded podcasts and summaries of Community Conversations! http://www.oashf.org/about/page-detail.php?id=24

Shared Harvest Foodbank
Community Conversation
January 28, 2011
Representative Peter Beck and 30 community members
Memorable moment: Representative Beck spoke about how in this greatest nation “it is unbelievable that our children cannot get enough to eat. One of those children could be the one to cure cancer. Children need to have the chance to be great.”

Freestore Foodbank
Community Conversation
January 28, 2011
Senator Eric Kearney, Senator Bill Seitz and over 30 community members
Memorable moment: LaToya Thompson, a client of the St. Leo’s food pantry, talked about how not long ago she was 9 months pregnant and just out of a shelter when she found the FreeStore Foodbank. She got food, enrolled in college part-time. She had her child and started classes the same week. She is now employed as a financial aid officer. Even though she has employment it is hard with her kids and they are still in need of food. “I am the working poor.”

Mid-Ohio Foodbank Community Conversation
January 31, 2011
Representative Andrew Brenner, Representative John Patrick Carney, Representative Ted Celeste, Representative Mike Duffey, Representative Cheryl Grossman and over 100 community members
Memorable moment: Irene Botsko spoke to her experience as a business support professional in the healthcare, bioscience and banking industries. “When people ask me how long I have been unemployed I tell them very specifically. As of this morning it is 23 months, 18 days and 10 hours...The realities of being unemployed:
• Decisions about where you drive are now carefully calculated to make sure you will have enough gas to get to interviews and networking meetings.
• Your days and nights are spent working on different aspects of the new job search world.
• If you are fortunate enough to have healthcare you can’t afford to use it. No dentist, no mammograms or blood work that you would routinely get to make sure you are healthy.
• You worry that a potential employer will hold your credit report against you.
• You exhaust all options until there is no choice but to go to the food pantries. You wait because you don’t want to take something out of someone else’s mouth.”
Second Harvest Foodbank of Clark, Champaign & Logan Counties  
Community Conversation  
February 4, 2011  
Representative Bob Hackett and over 30 community members.  
Memorable moment:  
- Dr. Duffee, Rocking Horse Center: “Children who grow up food insecure do not develop the neuropaths that allow the brain to signal to the stomach that they are full which leads older children and adults to overeat and seek high sugar high fat foods, contributing to obesity... The budget is a moral document. We are judged by how we care for those in need.”

Second Harvest Foodbank of Southeastern Ohio  
Community Conversation  
February 11, 2011  
Representative Bill Hayes, Representative Debbie Phillips and over 55 community members.  
Memorable moment:  
Ronald Dupre, Food Pantry volunteer:  
- “I lived through the depression myself in this area. I listen as politicians tell me that one day we will export the same amount as we import – I do not believe it. I watch as government helps our jobs go overseas – where the people can make 25, 50, 75 cents an hour. Not everyone has an education – not everyone has access to that – we need manufacturing jobs back. People are not lazy – it is just that the government in Washington keeps sending jobs away.”  
- They are all millionaires and do not understand what it is like to be a common working person, does not think that they care about regular people.

Akon Canton Regional Foodbank  
Community Conversation February 7, 2011  
Senator LaRose, Representative Clyde, Representative McKenney, Representative Roegner, Representative Slaby and over 40 community members  
Memorable moment:  
- Representative McKenney was a pastor at a chapel where they had a pantry (also an OBB site). “We had a 10% gap in our budget. We looked at music, people in college, seniors. How can I cut the care that I give to people? So they did it for me...I feel like you are asking me to pick among my children. That is the feeling of being a law maker... Your best argument: we got hit hard the last budget.”

Frances, participant at the Miller Ave United Church of Christ Food Pantry, tells a story of how thankful her grandson is for his meal of beans, potatoes and cornbread.

Paul Fuhrmann from Fuhrmann Orchards
Medina County Community Conversation  
February 14, 2011  
Representative Dave Hall and 72 community members.  
Memorable moment:  
• Representative Dave Hall: “I was 10 years old before I understood that you were supposed to put milk and not water on your breakfast cereal...Children should not have to worry about their stomach rumbling during school – and worry about what food is left at home...I am here on behalf of Speaker Batchelder and I am going to take that information back to them.”

The Foodbank, Inc. Community Conversation  
February 25, 2011  
Senator Peggy Lehner, Representative Jarrod Martin, Representative Roland Winburn, and over 30 community members:  
Memorable moment:  
• Testimony of Kenneth Dolphin: “I sincerely ask you to think about: people get sick; places of employment close; the elderly; the struggling single parent; the blind; the crippled; someone’s unemployment benefits has exhausted; food for the children; the handicap; expecting mothers. Hunger shows no favoritism toward age, gender, race, body size, or health condition. Whatever the situation, people need to eat.”

West Ohio Food Bank Community Conversation  
February 28, 2011  
Over 25 community members.  
Memorable moment:  
• Kitty, a CSFP participant and diabetic living on Social Security, brings in $580.00 each month and spends $250.09 on one prescription. "It just helps," she says of the box of commodity food she receives each month from her food bank. "I worked. I thought it was enough. But it's not. The box doesn't give you detergent, toilet paper or body soap, but it gives you food so that I can buy those other things."

Second Harvest Foodbank of North Central Ohio  
Community Conversation  
March 11, 2011  
Representative Matt Lundy, representatives from office of Senator Sherrod Brown, office of Congresswoman Betty Sutton and over 60 community stakeholders.  
Memorable moment:  
• Representative Matt Lundy: “You don’t do more with less. You do less with less. You are in the front lines and you really see what is going on...you have to come to Columbus and tell your story.”
Second Harvest Foodbank of the Mahoning Valley
Community Conversation
March 14, 2011
Senator Capri Cafaro, Representative Gerberry, Representative O’Brien, Senator Joe Schiavoni, representative from Congressman Bill Johnson’s office and over 40 community members.
Memorable moment, from pantry volunteer:
• “We really appreciate the fresh produce. When the fresh produce is available, it changes everything. The conversation changes. It goes from talking about needs, struggles, and what’s bad that’s happening. Instead, they talk about memories of roasting big bunches of sweet corn in coals in a fire outside, and how happy they were. To be able to have that food and remember that happier time is priceless, it gives people a hope for a better tomorrow. That is what this produce means. “

New Philadelphia Community Conversation
March 18, 2011
Senator Jason Wilson, Congressman Bob Gibb’s State Director and over 25 community stakeholders.
Memorable moment:
• Senator Jason Wilson, “This paper plate campaign is the most powerful campaign I’ve ever seen…we need to seize the opportunities within our own counties, and our own state, to support those among us who are having challenges. There is probably no better example than food banks as a community effort to support people.”

Lake County Community Conversation coordinated by The Cleveland Foodbank, Inc.
March 21, 2011
Representative Fende, Senator Grendell and nearly 70 community stakeholders.
Memorable moment:
• Senator Grendell, “If there was ever an organization that gets the most out of a dime and a dollar it’s The Cleveland Foodbank. Thanks for what you do for my community….The sun will come up tomorrow. It just may cost us more to watch it…There’s a public dollar investment and a public dollar expense. Foodbanks, for example, you feed the hungry and that’s an investment. If you don’t feed them they go to Medicaid and it becomes an expense. Education and work force training is half the cost of incarceration. We need to maximize the public investment over expense.”
Prepared by the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks
Nora Nees, nora@oashf.org, (614) 940-4604, cell

Area Agency on Aging 8 Regional Advisory Council Community Conversation in Marietta, Ohio on March 25, 2011
Representatives from the Office of Senator Sherrod Brown, Congressman Bill Johnson. Senator Rob Portman and over 75 community stakeholders.
Memorable moments:

- **Dick Stevens, Executive Director, Second Harvest Foodbank of Southeastern Ohio:**
  “The numbers really do reflect real people, these are real people who we serve every day...Empathy is an action word, you need to put yourself in another person’s place and feel what they are going through.”

- **Noble County Commissioner:** “We need to show people how [food pantries] operate and the needs they meet.”

- **Meigs County Commissioner:** “Some of the things our elderly are going through are just astounding.”

- **Perry County Commissioner:** “We do have a voice. You can help us speak to Columbus and Washington, D.C.”

- **Tri-County Food Pantry:** “We started in 2003 and served 18 families. Today we serve 104 families. I’ve noticed that most of the things on sale at the grocery store are non-food items until the 3rd week of the month—the time when people run out of food stamps.”

- **United Seniors of Athens County:** “The average age of those we serve is 78. Society can be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable children and seniors...We are failing.”

- **Marietta Visiting Nurses:** “I do home visits and, it’s true, there are homes with dirt floors in this city. There are kids who are too excited at the sight of food. The only thing my clients have is us.”

Lawrence County Community Conversation in Jackson, Ohio on March 25, 2011
Representative John Carey, Congressman Bob Gibbs and 15 community members.

Join us at the upcoming Toledo Community Conversation to be held on **Friday, April 29, 2011 from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm** at the James C. Caldwell Community Center, 3201 Stickney Avenue, Toledo, Ohio 43608!

To RSVP visit [http://www.oashf.org/about/page-detail.php?id=20](http://www.oashf.org/about/page-detail.php?id=20)
call (614) 221-4336, ext. 239