

For Immediate Release

Food Bank receives award from Congressional Hunger Center

FORT WORTH (January 26, 2010) – Model practices by Tarrant Area Food Bank’s SNAP/Food Stamp outreach staff have garnered a 2009 *Victory Against Hunger Award* from the Congressional Hunger Center.

The Food Bank is one of 26 in the nation—one of four in Texas—to receive this honor that comes with a \$1,000 unrestricted cash grant.

The theme of this year’s competition, “Fighting Hunger Through Feeding America Food Bank Anti-Hunger Initiatives,” focused on the innovative outreach work that food banks nationwide are engaged in to connect families in need with programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (food stamps).

At Tarrant Area Food Bank, SNAP Outreach Coordinator Summer Stringer and SNAP Specialist Vicky Martinez have expanded their reach to potential SNAP applicants and increased the number of successful applications through several initiatives:

- Creation of a quick-tip guide to the SNAP program and application;
- Recruitment and training of 200 community volunteers who go to food pantries and other hunger-relief charities to inform food assistance clients about SNAP and help them with the application process;
- Treating the lack of access to food as a crisis so that the Food Bank gives selected members of its charity network more food for desperate applicants waiting for benefits.
- Raising awareness among politicians of SNAP benefits and challenges.

During 2009, as a result of these efforts, 4,587 people were given SNAP applications. Of these applications, in addition to any submitted by the applicants themselves, Stringer and Martinez turned in 446 to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission offices handling SNAP.

The Congressional Hunger Center, established in 1993, trains and inspires leaders who work to end hunger, and advocates public policies that create a food secure world.

Founded in 1982 as a nonprofit clearinghouse for donated food, Tarrant Area Food Bank is the primary source of food for 300 major hunger-relief programs in Fort Worth and 13 surrounding counties. Each month, this network of charities provides emergency groceries to more than 44,000 households and serves 576,000 meals and snacks on their own sites. During the past year (2009), the number of families served by pantries increased 25 percent. For more information, please visit www.tafb.org, or call 817-332-9177.

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