



An Introduction to

Childhood Food Solutions

2010-2011 Mission and Donor Opportunities



Childhood Food Solutions
A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit
Federal Tax-Exempt ID: 26-0489068
2573 St. Leo Place
Cincinnati, Ohio 45225
www.kidsfed.org

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Our Need

To our existing and potential donors:

The purpose of this document is to communicate the scope of our need, details of our mission and organization, and to solicit support. It is essential that we continue to deliver food sacks to our clients on a consistent basis, or else we will not achieve the results we hope for.

Our “clients” are low-income elementary-age students and the “results” are the joy of receiving much-needed food – and improved reading and math skills as result of fewer hungry days.

Your donation is a worthwhile investment in our community with a tangible social return. It not only alleviates short-term hunger in young children, but the nutrition you provide aids them developmentally and in school learning. It is our hope that your donation will create more opportunities for these children to escape the poverty cycle.

Please read on to learn more about us and feel free to contact us for more information.

2010-2011 Food Plan

Our food distribution plan for the 2010-2011 school year has been expanded significantly from 2009-2010 and includes more schools and more students. As a result, we need greater donations of food, cash with which to purchase food and volunteer time to package and deliver food sacks at the appropriate moment.

Priority ¹	2010-2011 Food Plan for 4 schools	# of Students	# of food sacks ²	Total food cost ³	Estimated Volunteer hours	Estimated Distribution \$'s ⁴
1	Winter break (December, 2010)	1,800	1,800	\$30,000	180	\$3,000
2	Spring break (April, 2011)	1,800	1,800	\$15,000	90	\$1,500
3	Summer 2011 (five deliveries)	1,800	1,800	\$100,000	600	\$10,000
4	Weekends - 16 (Average of 2/mo.)	1,500	1,500	\$25,000	180	\$2,500
	General Admin. Expense					\$8,000
	2010-2011 Total:	6,900	6,900	\$170,000	1,050	\$25,000

Total Planned Expense for year: \$195,000

Projected Shortfall (as of 4/1/2011): \$90,000

¹ Our resources are allocated based on Priority, for example, end-of-month weekends are desirable but may be dropped due to lack of funds.

² See Appendix A for more detail on food sack content and cost.

³ See Appendix A for more detail.

⁴ Admin costs are low. Most labor is volunteer. There are costs for equipment, fuel, drivers, web site and printed materials.

Status as of April 1, 2011

We are approaching the critical summer season where students do not receive school lunches and food shortages are more critical. We depend on donations to continue our program and are actively looking for donations to meet our expected shortfall (see chart, above).

Donation suggestions

Our suggestions here are based on past experience, but we are always willing to consider new, creative approaches. The important thing is to attract volunteers and donors so that food deliveries can proceed on schedule.

Donation suggestions:	Annual Support	Weekend delivery	Summer Delivery
Cash donation	\$90/student/year	\$500/weekend/school	\$5,000/community
Cash donation - Corporate Sponsor	\$45,000 for a school	\$8,000 for late-month weekends for one school	\$25,000 supports one community throughout the summer
In-kind donation	Technical assistance for planning, fund raising, documentation.	Provide van and/or driver for food transport/delivery.	Provide truck, trailer, school bus or driver for food transport/delivery
Food Drive	CFS provides specific suggestions for appropriate food items		
Promotional Partnerships	A December, 2010, joint promotion between CFS, Cincinnati Public Radio (CPR) and Green BEAN Delivery (GBD) yielded a donation of GBD fruit for our students and demonstrated the caring commitment of CPR and GBD.		
School, community and corporate volunteers	Students (a multiple handicaps class packs food sacks as part of their pre-vocational curriculum)	Community volunteers (typically mothers and grandmothers of recipient children)	Community, church, or corporate packing teams (volunteers have been aged 8 through 80)
Volunteer Commitment	Depending on food-sack size, we pack 25 - 50 sacks per volunteer hour	8 volunteers for less than an hour	15-20 volunteers for 1 - 1.5 hours
Regular Volunteers	Individuals volunteer who help periodically	Van drivers and loading volunteers	Truck drivers and loading volunteers

We appreciate your consideration and are grateful for all the help you can give us.

Sincerely,



Tony Fairhead
Executive Director,
Childhood Food Solutions

Our Mission

The mission of Childhood Food Solutions (CFS) is to develop solutions for childhood food insecurity that can be applied in a community, tested for effectiveness and duplicated in other communities.

CFS, as a result of six years research and testing, has developed a “Food Safety Net”⁵ to help food insecure children receive the nourishment they need to reach developmental maturity and to promote learning in the critical childhood years.

The effectiveness of the “CFS Food Safety Net” is validated by improved reading and math proficiency⁶ “Before & After” food.

CFS is not the only organization working to eliminate hunger, but we have developed a unique approach, not addressed by others, to filling “gap” periods when food from other sources is not available. Typically these are the periods during school holidays and end of month weekends, after public assistance has run out, that result in greater hunger and poor attention to school learning.

Scope of the problem

Childhood hunger is a reality. In fact, one in five American children has to skip meals and might not know when they will receive their next meal.⁷ CFS research confirms childhood hunger is worst on late-month, non-school days, especially late December (winter break), late March (spring break) and late June and July (during the summer break).

Communities suffer when children do not become productive members of society. Incarceration and high adolescent birth rates are common impediments to education, even as young as seventh and eighth grade. (Elementary schools in the low-income communities we serve include students from Pre-K to eighth grade.)

Our goals

Over the short-term we’re focused on food delivery to children in the highest risk Cincinnati communities. These deliveries must be consistent and regular so we can collect relevant test data from local schools to validate the “food safety net” approach.

Longer-term it is our goal to generate greater community involvement in this project, stimulated by our experience and results. Further down the road we hope to see these practices adopted by community and government agencies on a wider scale, allowing CFS to step aside and know that far more children can be reached than through their local effort.

⁵ Appendix A includes a description of typical food safety net items, their caloric value and cost.

⁶ Appendix B provides a graphical representation of the improved math and reading results.

⁷ Cincinnati Enquirer March 24, 2011 (see Appendix D) and other recent news reports.

Our Method and Results

As stated above, our Mission is to create a food safety-net for children, not to become a primary supplier of food. The safety-net is important during periods of hunger, when other sources of food aren't available. When are these periods?

- When food stamp money runs out, later in the month.
- When school lunches aren't available, such as during long school holidays.

We call these periods the “food gap”. The challenge for CFS has been to fill this gap by putting supplemental food in the hands of young at-risk children so they do not have to depend upon adults, who often themselves grew up in a food-insecure household and consider periodic hunger to be a natural situation and, perhaps, an opportunity to “toughen up.”

Our methods for meeting this challenge center on the schools attended by these students, enlisting the support of the school administrators and teachers, soliciting food donors who are active in these same communities and providing the logistics to allow everything to come together at the right time. Other key points include:

- Food sacks are small enough for a young child to carry and much of our food can be “hidden” in a back-pack.
- Food content⁸ does not need refrigeration, requires limited preparation, has a long shelf-life, is high in caloric value, and has a “gummy” factor to prevent rapid ingestion. Food insecure children often eat all they have; afraid they won't get another meal.
- Food sacks are delivered to children at the end of the school day, at school, during the school year.
- Summer food deliveries are more complicated. Typically, we drive our delivery van to residential areas to find the children, honk the horn, tie balloons to the vehicle or play loud music. Surprisingly, it's very effective.

Client schools

The CFS 2010-2011 Food Plan provides for 4 schools. In the event that there is insufficient funding, CFS prioritizes schools as follows:

1. Roll Hill Academy (our lead school, which services a very disadvantaged area)
2. Ethel M Taylor Academy (the other elementary school in zip code 45225)
3. Frederick Douglass (where we have been able to supply periodic support for two years)
4. Rothenberg Preparatory Academy (in Over-the-Rhine, our most recent addition)

Measurable results⁹

Our intent is to concentrate our efforts on these four specific schools for an entire school year, so that academic measures may be compared from year to year, and between schools that receive the CFS food safety-net and other peer schools. We have seen a marked increase in reading and math proficiency in the two schools where we have provided food for two years. We have more work to do to achieve statistically significant results. This is one of the short-term goals for CFS.

⁸ See Appendix A for a breakdown of food sack content, caloric value and cost.

⁹ Appendix B includes a summary of the results we've seen in math and reading proficiency improvement.

Our Donors – How can you Help?

We have received tremendous support from a broad range of volunteers and financial donors in the years since CFS was founded. We depend on this support to meet our commitments to the children we are helping and to expand our program from year to year. There has been a large increase in food deliveries since 2007, which is evident in our financial statements included in the section of this document titled “Our Organization”. Another significant change has come in the “cost efficiency” of the food we select for children. (See Appendix A for the food we now include in our “food safety net” food sacks.)

Our 2010 support included 5 corporate sponsors, 6 churches, and over 200 individual donors. In 2010, CFS received \$62,419 in total cash donations, \$27,366 in direct donations of food items, over 1,000 hours of individual volunteer help, and about 600 hours of student help at local schools (packing sacks). In addition, storage space and delivery vehicles have been provided by our donors.

There is growing recognition of the potential of the “food safety-net” approach. For the past two years, Cincinnati Public Radio (WGUC and WVXU) have included CFS in their December Pledge Drive and Green BEAN Delivery has provided fruit to add to our safety-net food.

More is needed all the time because we’re a relatively new organization, there isn’t an endowment and we cannot expect regular donations from the same sponsors every year. We need to continually expand our base of donors through efforts to make our mission better known.

Here are some ways that you or your organization can help us¹⁰:

	Financial Assistance	Helping hands	Donation of goods or services
Corporate	Sponsor a weekend, summer or whole school delivery.	Assemble an employee group to pack food sacks and assist in their delivery.	Food donation, use of delivery van, technical web assistance, promotional partnership.
School	Funding and awareness raising events.	Student community service activity, e.g., packing and delivering food sacks.	Food Drive, or partner with CFS to design new ways to provide food for non-school days.
Church	Mission budget donation.	Mission project on a one-off or regular basis.	Food Drive, food storage space, delivery vehicle loan.
Individuals	\$90 sponsors a child for a year, \$500 for one weekend, \$5,000 for one summer community delivery.	Food pick-up and packing, van drivers, delivery of food, technical assistance.	Invite friends and neighbors to a “sack packing” party

¹⁰ See the section of this document titled “Our Need” for more specific donation suggestions.

Our Organization

Tax-exempt status

Childhood Food Solutions is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Our tax exempt ID is 26-0489068.

History

In January 2005, three people met in the Cincinnati poverty zip code 45225 (which includes North Fairmount, Millvale and the Fay Apartments) and decided to attack childhood hunger in zip code 45225.

We began by testing a number of interventions, including:

- Inviting mothers to meals and food-budgeting classes – unfortunately, the mothers of the neediest children did not attend.
- Increasing attendance at the St. Leo Food Pantry, by augmenting their food and hoping that word of mouth would bring in more families. We purchased hundreds of frozen chickens and brought in thousands of pounds of donated bread and produce from retailers in Montgomery, Ohio – but we detected no higher attendance.
- Promoting the USDA summer lunch program using multicolor flyers and a full zip-code mailing – but no more children attended the program.
- Partnering with Hamilton County Job & Family Services (JFS) to understand the “food stamp” program. At our request, JFS sampled over 120 of the food stamp recipient records for zip code 45225 and found that 90% of the monthly benefit is spent in 3 days. We asked if the benefit could be paid in more than one installment each month to help recipients budget for food. Although permitted, as a test, under their regulations, JFS would not test this potential solution.

For nearly three years everything we tried led to a dead end.

Childhood Food Solutions (CFS) was founded in July of 2007. By this time, we were convinced that any solution would need to (1) provide food directly to children and (2) focus on non-school days – days when children do not receive the approximately 1,000 calories of nutrition that free breakfast and lunch provide at school. In-class days only total about 178 days a year so we needed a solution for the other 187 days.

CFS began providing a “CFS food safety net¹¹” for non-school days, as follows:

- Winter & Spring Breaks: CFS purchases groceries, students pack food sacks, teachers distribute food sacks at school
- Summer break: CFS, schools, and communities collaborate in street-by-street distribution of food sacks
- Late-month weekend food, as funds permit

¹¹ The appendix includes a description of typical food safety net items, their caloric value and cost.

All of these efforts have been very successful and have been met with enormous appreciation not just by the children receiving the sacks, but also by their parents and grandparents. Teachers and other school employees have recognized routine hunger in their students and gladly help with food distribution and express gratitude for the work of CFS. When the Winter Break Sacks arrived at Taylor Academy, one of the school cafeteria workers came running up to thank us for helping fill the need she sees on school days but is unable to fill during breaks.

We quickly began to receive anecdotal evidence that children were experiencing less hunger but we had no valid success indicator. In August, 2009, we discovered a success indicator – academic performance. Students who received the “CFS food safety net” were doing better in their Ohio proficiency testing.

By the next year, after two years receiving the CFS food safety net, the August, 2010 Ohio proficiency testing revealed that the two elementary (Pre-K-8) schools in zip code 45225 were showing a 41% increase in the number of students achieving reading and math proficiency. Their peer schools (the Pre-K-8 Cincinnati “Elementary Initiative” schools) only showed a 12% improvement.

Although encouraging, our 2-school sample is not large enough to show statistical significance. CFS is now providing food to students at 4 low-income schools with the intention of showing that food for non-school days, as provided by the “CFS food safety net,” significantly increases the chances of a low-income child achieving reading and math proficiency in elementary school.

The school where we have provided the most support, Roll Hill Academy, was singled out by Cincinnati Public School District because of its success. The Principal, Vicki Graves-Hill, brought Childhood Food Solutions representatives to three events celebrating Roll Hill’s success.

Roll Hill’s administrators and teachers are outstanding but CFS believes that the food support CFS provides for non-school days is a building block for the academic success.

Board of Directors

Angela Anno	CFS Finance Director; Pastoral Associate, St. Leo Church
Rodney Christian	Cincinnati Water works; Elder, Third Presbyterian Church
Lemuel Davis	Vice President, Community Lending, Union Savings Bank
Tony Fairhead	CFS Executive Director; Planning/Project Management Consultant
Carl Hall	Founder and CEO of Datalliance
Lisa Hyde-Hill	CFS Board Chair; Service Coordinator, Fay Apartments Comm. Center
Jennifer Madine	Attorney
Anne Van Kirk	Principal, Symmes Elementary School, Sycamore Community Schools

Financial statements

**Childhood Food Solutions 2007-2010
Profit & Loss**

						Budget
		2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Non Profit Income						
	Foundations		34,500	32,500	16,500	35,000
	Churches		4,459	5,096	9,704	10,000
	Businesses		4,150	13,200	7,200	25,000
	Individuals	7,315	33,675	17,008	29,016	50,000
	Store Gift Cards		-	-	603	
	Subtotal: Income from Gifts	7,315	76,784	67,804	63,023	120,000
	USDA Summer Program		-	4,455	7,029	30,000
	In-kind Food Donations (estimated)	1,000	2,000	4,000	27,366	20,000
	In-kind Products & Services Donated	4,647	6,946	5,781	15,722	25,000
Total Income/Support		12,962	85,730	82,040	113,140	195,000

Expenses						
	Food purchases	5,775	70,640	50,263	56,089	105,000
	In-kind Food Donations	1,000	2,000	4,000	27,366	20,000
	Subtotal: Food distributed (excluding USDA Program)	6,775	72,640	54,263	83,455	125,000
	Food transportation				4,618	6,000
	Insurance				1,987	2,000
	Travel				1,851	2,000
	Other Products & services	5,551	7,216	6,168	3,243	5,000
	USDA Summer Program			4,460	4,521	30,000
	In-kind Products & Services Donated	4,647	5,984	5,781	15,722	25,000
Total Expense/Support		16,973	85,840	70,672	115,397	195,000

Excess of Income over Expense: (4,011) (110) 11,368 (2,859) -

Appendix A: Food Sack Worksheet–Contents, Cost, Calories

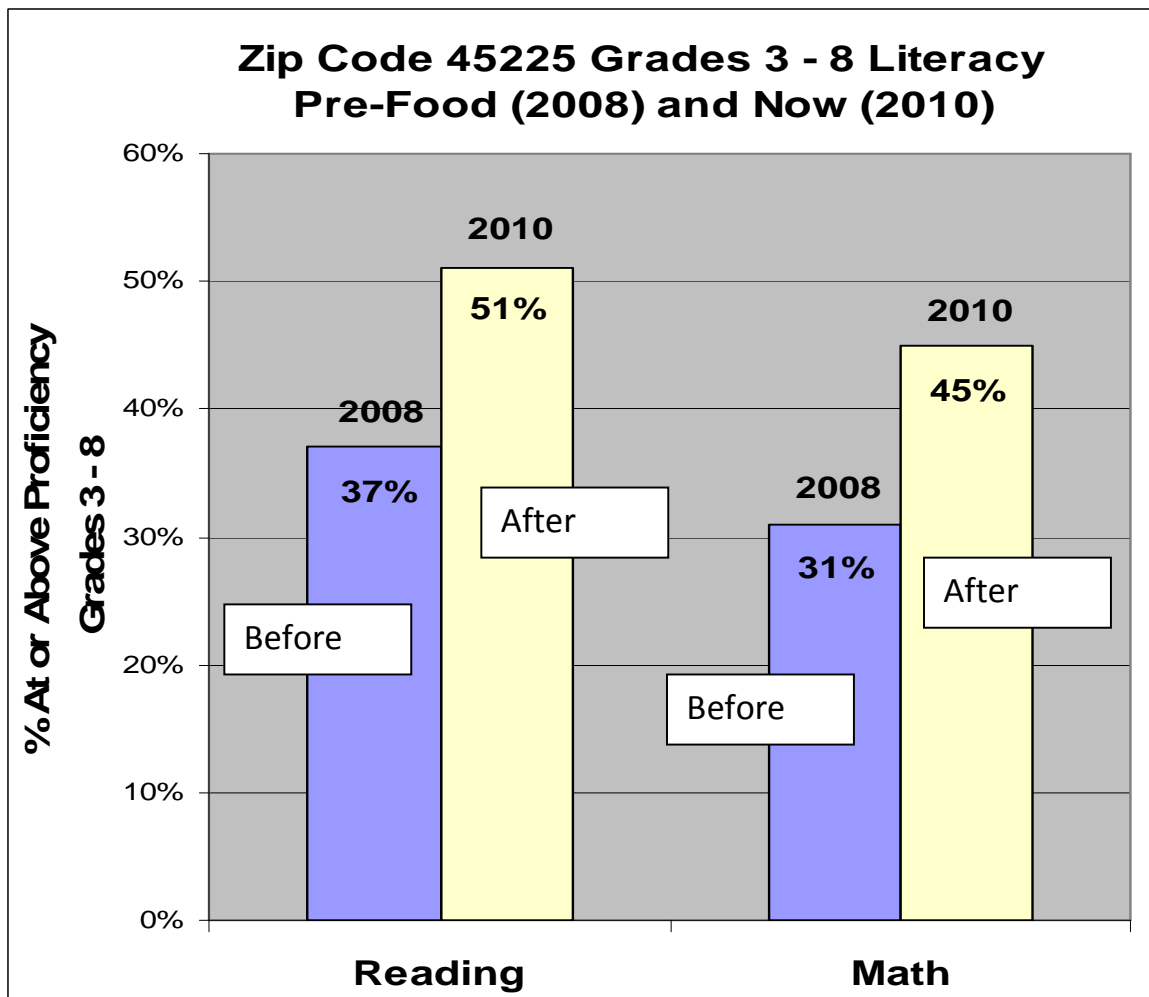
Typical Summer Food Sack					# of Students:	1,800
Item	Store	Cost per 1,000 calories	Content of Sack	Cost	Calories per Sack	Total Cost
Crispy Oats Cereal	Aldi	\$1.22	1	\$1.59	1,300	\$ 2,862.00
Honey Grahams 14 oz	Aldi	\$0.65	1	\$1.19	1,820	\$ 2,142.00
Austin Cheese Crackers	Sam's	\$0.56	4	\$0.47	840	\$ 846.00
Mac & Cheese	Aldi	\$0.47	3	\$1.05	2,250	\$ 1,890.00
Oats N Honey Nutritional Bars	Sam's	\$1.53	2	\$0.55	360	\$ 990.00
Chewy Nutritional Bars	Aldi	\$1.49	10	\$1.49	1,000	\$ 2,682.00
Maruchan Ramen Noodle Soup	Sam's	\$0.41	2	\$0.31	760	\$ 558.00
Members Mark Zoo Animal Fruit Snacks	Sam's	\$1.50	1	\$0.12	80	\$ 216.00
Kar's Sweet 'n Salty Mix	Sam's	\$1.00	1	\$0.29	290	\$ 522.00
Fruit - Donated	Green BEAN	\$0.00	1	\$0.00	100	\$ -
			26	\$7.06	8,800	\$ 12,708.00

# of Days	7
Calories/Day	1,257
Sacks	\$ 270.00
Transport	\$ 1,000.00
Driver	\$ 0.00
TOTAL COST:	\$ 13,978.00

Appendix B: Reading and Math Proficiency Results

Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the “CFS Food Safety Net” is validated by improved reading and math proficiency “Before & After” food

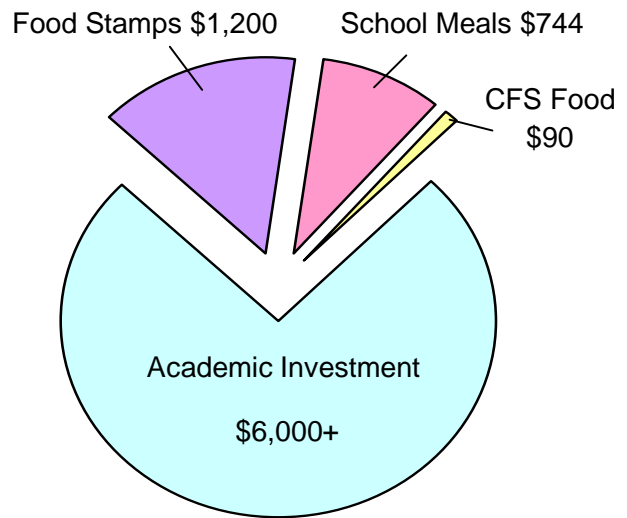


In 2009-2010, CFS could only afford to provide its food safety net for students at two schools, but these schools improved their rating from "Academic Emergency" to "Continuous Improvement" after two years of food support. CFS' food safety net was not the sole reason for this improvement, but it played a part. These results demonstrate the need for better data correlating the benefit of the food safety net program to academic performance. This is one of our short-term goals.

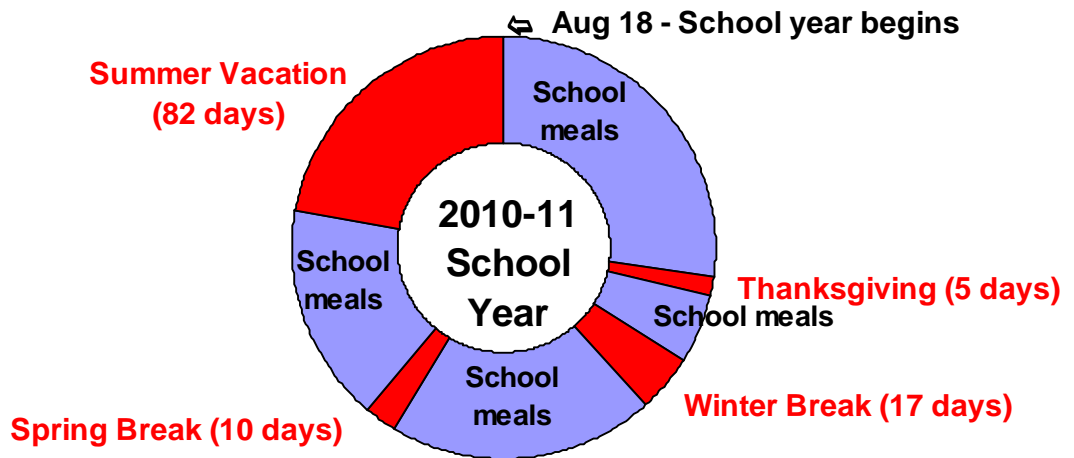
Appendix C: Why the investment makes sense

CFS Food costs only \$90.00 per Student per Year

This is a small additional investment in a low-income child:



CFS fills the significant “food gaps” when there is no school lunch:



CINCINNATI!.com

Study: Food insecurity worsens



Written by

Mark Curnutte

mcurnutte@enquirer.com

11:33 PM, Mar. 23, 2011

Almost 300,000 people in the 20-county region served by the Freestore Foodbank - about 1 in 6 - were financially forced to skip meals or didn't know where their next meal would come from in 2009.

The situation is getting worse, according to data and advocates.

The 2009 results, which will be released today, come from a five-year study of food insecurity conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics for the anti-hunger group Feeding America.

The Freestore Foodbank is one of 200 Feeding America food banks nationally.

"We've done a good job in just about doubling the amount of food we distribute (since 2006), along with providing services such as assistance with housing and acquisition of other benefits," said John Young, Freestore president and chief executive. "But these figures show that there are many more of our neighbors who

need help."

Food insecurity is defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture as a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.

Even in one year, the rate of food insecurity and the number of people experiencing it increased across the region.

Food insecurity in the 20-county Freestore service area, which does not include Butler or Warren counties, rose from a rate of 13.7 percent in 2008 to 16.4 percent in 2009. The raw number of people struggling to acquire food went up from 249,579 to 297,950 in one year.

The Freestore has about 400 affiliated nonprofit food banks in its regional network.

The study does not count the amount of food distributed by the Freestore, projected to reach 18 million pounds for

CINCINNATI.com

fiscal year 2011, which ends June 30. A meal weighs 1.25 pounds, so the Freestore is providing about 14.4 million meals. Still, according to the study, food insecurity in Greater Cincinnati and Northern Kentucky has created a "meal gap" 49.779 million meals.

"So there's still a gap of 35 million meals," said Brian MacConnell, Freestore vice president and spokesman.

The stubbornly high unemployment rate, still treading at 9.5 percent regionally, accounts for much of the misery, MacConnell said.

Even in one year, from 2008 to 2009, the rate of food insecure people in Hamilton County increased from 14.9 percent to 17 percent (126,942 to 144,580).

Food insecurity and poor nutrition cause greater problems in children.

Nearly 1 in 5 children nationally don't know where their next meal will come from, according to a study released jointly last summer by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Feeding America.

Ohio and Kentucky ranked 14th- and 16th-worst among states and the District of Columbia in terms of children at risk of hunger, according to a new report from the anti-hunger nonprofit Feeding America.

In Ohio, 20.4 percent of children lacked access at times to enough food for an active, healthy life in the three-year span from 2006 to 2008; that's an average of

567,985 of 2,784,955 total children.

In Kentucky, the rate was 20.2 percent - or 201,015 children out of an average child population of 996,340.

The implications of childhood hunger threaten children's overall health, growth and brain development, researchers say.

Appendix E: Research Evidence

Childhood Food Solutions (CFS) has not seen published research that quantifies the link between childhood hunger during a child's elementary schooling and reading and math proficiency for the child. CSF believes this link can be quantified by applying a solution (the "CFS food safety net"), which is currently showing a 41% improvement in reading and math proficiency for the elementary-age students who receive this food safety net.

We attribute our apparently unique result to our study of anecdotal evidence in zip code 45225 (focusing on N. Fairmount, Millvale and the "Fay" Apartments). With only one food pantry, no soup kitchen, rapid spending of the food-stamp benefit, and the personal experience of our board members and volunteers, there was no doubt in 2007 that children were often hungry – and there was no doubt that reading and math proficiency in 2007 was being attained by a small percentage of children.

Data from other sources:

Child Hunger is an educational problem¹²:

"Hungry children ages 0-3 years cannot learn as much, as fast, or as well because chronic under-nutrition harms their cognitive development during this critical period of rapid brain growth, actually changing the fundamental neurological architecture of the brain and central nervous system...

"Food insecurity has a continuing negative impact on the cognitive and academic development of children as they grow older. Educational achievement through the middle and secondary school years depends on students mastering basic skills and building on their knowledge over time. Food insecure children learn at a slower rate than their peers, and that fact coupled with their initial delay leaves them further and further behind as they progress through the educational system. Studies have found that elementary school students from food insecure homes have significantly lower mathematics scores and are more likely to have repeated a grade than their peers from food secure homes."¹³

¹² "Child Food Insecurity: The Economic Impact On Our Nation" (May 29, 2009). A report on research on the impacts of food insecurity and hunger on child health, growth and development commissioned by Feeding America and The ConAgra Foods Foundation
www.feedingamerica.org

¹³ PEDIATRICS Vol. 108 No. 1 July 2001, pp. 44-53
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/108/1/44>
Katherine Alaimo*, Christine M. Olson, and Edward A. Frongillo Jr
From the * School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; and the Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Food Insufficiency and American School-Aged Children's Cognitive, Academic, and Psychosocial Development¹⁴

Methods. Data from the Third National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES III) were analyzed. Children were classified as food-insufficient if the family respondent reported that his or her family sometimes or often did not get enough food to eat. Regression analyses were conducted to test for associations between food insufficiency and cognitive, academic, and psychosocial measures in general and then within lower-risk and higher-risk groups. Regression coefficients and odds ratios for food insufficiency are reported, adjusted for poverty status and other potential confounding factors.

Results. After adjusting for confounding variables, 6- to 11-year-old food-insufficient children had significantly lower arithmetic scores and were more likely to have repeated a grade, have seen a psychologist, and have had difficulty getting along with other children.

Conclusions. The results demonstrate that negative academic and psychosocial outcomes are associated with family-level food insufficiency and provide support for public health efforts to increase the food security of American families.

¹⁴ PEDIATRICS Vol. 108 No. 1 July 2001, pp. 44-53
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/108/1/44>

Katherine Alaimo*, Christine M. Olson, and Edward A. Frongillo Jr
From the * School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan; and the Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

Appendix F: Local Nonprofit targets end of child hunger...

The Cincinnati
HERALD[®]
Award Winning Newspaper
A SEH COMMUNICATIONS PUBLICATION

Local nonprofit targets end of child hunger in 45225 zip code

2011-03-26 / Section B

By Tony Fairhead Childhood Food Solutions



For many needy households, food often runs out before the next paycheck comes in. Childhood Food Solutions has targeted the end of child hunger in zip code 45225, which includes North Fairmount, Millvale and the Villages at Roll Hill (formerly the Fay Apartments).

On the way home with a bag full of nutritional food

After a combination of research and trial and error, CFS has found ways to get food to hungry children – by providing them with food sacks at school and, during summer break, by going street by street where the children live.

And the children do better in school. Studies show a 40 percent improvement in the number of children at or above the Ohio proficiency level for reading and math after two years of receiving food.

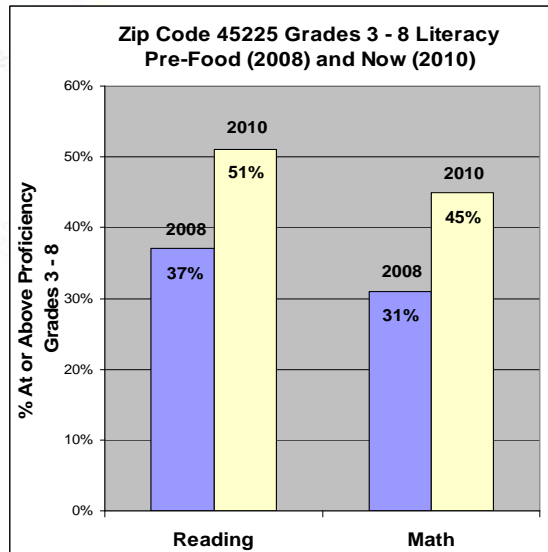
This could not happen without great teachers and administrators in the schools, but CFS believes that food is also a significant contributor to that improvement. CFS

also has great partners in the community, especially at the Villages of Roll Hill Community Center and the Millvale Recreation Center.

Childhood Food Solutions targets food for the days when child hunger is at its worst – latemonth, non-school days.

Why “non-school days?” Because free school lunch gets a child through a school day, especially if he or she receives breakfast at school.

Why late in the month? When a household depends on government assistance, which arrives early in the month, child hunger becomes a risk later in the month. Most people agree it would be hard to feed a family on a monthly food-stamp allowance. But CFS discovered that some mothers who run short of food during the month, spend 90 percent of the that month's food-stamp debit card within three days of receiving the benefit. Unfortunately, family hunger is a risk later in the month.



Spring break snacks

CFS believes that hungry children become despondent and decide to “give up on school.” It makes sense when they cannot see the connection between the long-term promise of education and their immediate need for food. Why not check out employment opportunities with a drug dealer? Or why not look for a rich boyfriend who likes your body? These are real world options.

Reading proficiency is lower in schools where more than 50 percent of the students are needy and receive free or reduced-price school lunch.

Nearly 43 percent of needy children cannot read in fourth grade. This gave CFS the idea of providing food to needy children for days when they do not receive school meals.

CFS puts food in the hands of children who are at risk of hunger. CFS works with elementary schools and other resources near the school to pack groceries into sacks and place them into the hands of low-income children.

The food consists of items that will sustain children inexpensively – mostly complex carbohydrates, including breakfast foods, which always include vitamins. CFS food requires no refrigeration and minimal use of kitchen equipment. Adult supervision is required for only a few of the food sack items, such as macaroni and cheese.

Nearly 2,000 needy children received a sack of food for winter break 2010 which included: macaroni and cheese mix, peanut butter, Ramon noodles, pancake mix, oatmeal, cheese and crackers and graham crackers. Food sacks are assembled by volunteers.

CFS food sack programs also include: "Weekend and Short- Break Sacks." Children leave school with a sack of food to carry them over the break. (The longer the break, the greater the amount of food.) For example, winter break is often a desperate time for children – with two late-month weeks of potential hunger.

CFS' Summer Food Program reaches the children where they live by taking food sacks on a school bus, street by street, honking, and stopping to allow local volunteers to jump out and hold up the sacks of food. When one child comes out to receive a sack, others, who had been watching from their homes, pour out to receive sacks of food. Those who might doubt the existence of child hunger in Cincinnati only have to witness the excited faces of children as they receive simple sacks of food. It takes hundreds of volunteers giving thousands of hours to help these food-insecure children. Recent volunteers have included second graders who held a bake sale to raise money for food, junior high students who packed 800 sacks in an afternoon, and moms and grandmothers of the children who receive the food sacks. Clark Montessori High School's multiple handicap class has packed tens of thousands of food sacks as part of their pre-vocational curriculum – a real win-win solution.

If you would like to volunteer to pack food sacks this summer, deliver food, or help with fund raising, you can contact Tony Fairhead at tony@childhoodfoodsolutions.org or visit www.kidsfed.org. Your help and ideas are welcomed.