

**COMMUNITY ACTION**

Cayuga County agency launches two-month hunger relief campaign

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Over the last decade, the number of people receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, formerly known as food stamps, has sharply increased across the country and locally — nearly 150 percent in Cayuga County and more than 80 percent in Seneca County. Food pantries help supplement SNAP allocations and provide a safety net for families and individuals in poverty. Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency participates in the Cayuga County Food Provider Network, comprised of about a dozen local agencies working together to address this basic need of hunger in our community.

CSCAA operates two food pantries, one at 1 Brookfield Place (Site II) in Auburn, and the other located at 23 Center St. in Waterloo. Last year, CSCAA provided more than 3,000 food baskets and served more than 12,000 individuals in need through its food pantries. The Site II food pantry is co-located with CSCAA's Family Development, Head Start, Early Head Start and Universal Prekindergarten programs. Many of the families receiving food at Site II are enrolled in these programs and include children younger than 5.

On March 1, CSCAA launched its annual Hunger Relief Campaign. During the months of March and April, the agency is planning events and working with local partners to raise resources for its food pantries. To get things rolling, CSCAA partnered with The Wall 99.3/96.3, the Finger Lakes classic rock station, to cook their favorite listener recipe at the IGNITE the Winter! Festival in downtown Auburn March 1. The Wall, part of Finger Lakes Radio Group, generously donated proceeds from that event to CSCAA and the Calvary Food Pantry.

On March 11, CSCAA will partner with The Auburn Ale House to hold a give back event. All day long, including during Trivia Night from 6 to 9 p.m., the Auburn Ale House will donate 20 percent of all food sale proceeds — both in-house and takeout — to CSCAA's Hunger Relief Campaign. This is a great opportunity to support the agency in a fun, easy way. No special coupons or vouchers are needed; CSCAA gives sincere thanks to the Harvey family for its generosity!

Other events and food drives are being planned; check the agency website at www.cscaa.com for all the latest information, or find us on Facebook under Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency. Regular support for CSCAA's food pantries is provided through state and federal dollars, the Food Bank of Central New York, Panera Bread, St. Mary's Church, Holy Family Church, the Rescue Mission and many others, mainly private citizens. Recent donations have been received from Calimeri Post, ITT Gould, the Welch Allyn Final Assembly Department and the Welch Allyn Fabrications Department. CSCAA is grateful for the support and generosity of its partners and the community to help keep the food pantry shelves stocked.

CSCAA's Hunger Relief Campaign aligns with the Feinstein Challenge, a \$1 million giveaway through the Feinstein Foundation that provides matching funds to participating anti-hunger agencies nationwide. The more the agency raises during the months of March and April, the larger its share of the \$1 million! The Feinstein Challenge leverages local dollars and increases the impact of local efforts during this campaign.

Please consider supporting CSCAA's Hunger Relief Campaign. There are many ways to help. Consider donating nonperishable food items; donations can be dropped off at either food pantry site. Ask your employer to make a monetary donation or sponsor an employee food drive; CSCAA will provide bins and marketing materials to help with your efforts. Consider making a monetary donation yourself to help purchase food for families and individuals in need. Checks can be made out to the Cayuga/Seneca Community Action Agency ATTN: Hunger Relief Challenge, and sent to the agency main office at 65 State St., Auburn.

Visit CSCAA's website or find us on Facebook to keep up-to-date on all satellite donation sites and events during the months of March and April, and help spread the word! Demand for food always outpaces supply. Please give what you can, because every donation helps make a difference in the lives of those in need. Thank you for your generosity.