



NEWS RELEASE

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GREAT PLAINS FOOD BANK TEAMS UP WITH LAKES & PRAIRIES COMMUNITY ACTION TO FEED FAMILIES IN CLAY COUNTY

Mobile Food Pantry rolls into Barnesville, Glyndon and Ulen delivering food baskets to those in need

Fargo, ND – May 16, 2011 - The Great Plains Food Bank, a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, and Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership, Inc. have joined forces to feed families in need throughout Clay County.

For the first time, the Mobile Food Pantry, operated by the Great Plains Food Bank will deliver much needed food supplies to families living with, or at risk of hunger in the communities of Barnesville, Glyndon and Ulen. Along with the food support, Lakes & Prairies Community Action team members will be providing clients with help and assistance regarding other programs or services they may be eligible for to achieve their goals of self-sufficiency.

Today, two Great Plains Food Bank semis filled with hundreds of pre-packed food boxes are scheduled to arrive in Ulen at 10:00AM, Glyndon at 11:30AM and Barnesville at 1:00PM. Individuals and families in need who qualify for the Mobile Food Pantry program will be given a food box filled with enough perishable and self-stable food for a week – helping to ease their tightly-stretched food budgets.

“We know there are folks in Clay County who are struggling to make ends meet. Many have to drive quite a distance to their nearest food pantry,” says Melissa Sobolik, director of member and client services for the Great Plains Food Bank. “Today we’re so excited to bring this food directly to them, in their hometowns. And we know it’s going to take innovative programs like the Mobile Food Pantry, and collaborations like this with Lakes & Prairies Community Action to ensure we continue to meet the needs of our hungry neighbors.”

According to the latest statistics from the Great Plains Food Bank, both services and need for emergency food assistance reached all time highs in 2010, with food for 5.7 million meals provided to more than 66,000 individuals struggling with hunger. In Clay County alone, food for 654,615 meals was provided. Great Plains Food Bank partner agencies reported food shelf visits were up 8.4% and emergency meals served by more than 9% over 2009.

The latest Job Vacancy Survey from the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development shows that in Northwest Minnesota there are 21,000 unemployed workers competing for 3,000 unfilled jobs.

“Lakes & Prairies currently receives on average 30 requests for emergency assistance each week - a number of which are from people who never sought help before, but due to the current economic climate feel they must,” says Joe Pederson, executive director for Lakes & Prairies Community Action. “Unfortunately we only have resources to meet the needs for 8 to 10 families. But, by partnering with the Great Plains Food Bank, and reaching out into communities identified as needing services, we hope to ease the burden for many more.”

The Great Plains Food Bank is prepared to distribute 1,500 food baskets as part of this first – time Mobile Food Pantry effort in Clay County. This service is offered in communities that don’t have a traditional food pantry, or in communities that have been identified as having additional need. Lakes & Prairies Community Action team members are prepared to provide all in attendance with information about, and referrals to other programs and services available to them throughout Clay County.

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About the Great Plains Food Bank

The Great Plains Food Bank strives for a hunger-free North Dakota and western Minnesota by recovering and distributing surplus food and grocery product, engaging in community partnerships and advocating for social change. In 2010, the Great Plains Food Bank distributed a record 7.5 million pounds of food, valued at nearly \$12 million, touching the lives of more than 66,000 individuals – nearly 40% being children. As the state’s largest hunger-relief provider, their partner network includes 270 charitable feeding programs operating in 94 communities. The [Great Plains Food Bank](#) is a program of Lutheran Social Services of North Dakota, a nonprofit social service agency serving one in nine North Dakotans annually from offices in five cities with 19 programs that strengthen individuals, families and communities.

About Lakes & Prairies Community Action Partnership, Inc.

Lakes & Prairies Community Acton Partnership has been working with and for low-income children, families and seniors to improve the quality of life in communities for 45 years. Their mission: Eliminate Poverty. Empower Families. Engage Communities. Helping individuals in their goals to achieve self-sufficiency is a commitment to empowering individuals. Whether it is providing information on child care, a workshop on financial literacy, information on tax benefits, parenting classes, information on the latest laws regarding Medicare or prescription drug cards, assistance to prevent homelessness, or other services... they work to help people move from struggling to thriving. [Lakes & Prairies Community Action](#) provides the following services: Child Care Resource and Referral, Head Start, Clay County Seniors, Family & Community Services and the Rainbow Bridge safe exchange center.