



Fighting Senior Hunger

Kansas Food Bank – Bob Box Program Press Kit September 14, 2012

For More Information, Contact Debi Kreutzman
debikreutzman@kansasfoodbank.org
(316) 265-FOOD

Brian Walker, President & CEO, Comments

Good morning everyone, my name is Brian Walker, I am the President and CEO of the Kansas Food Bank. On behalf of our Board of Directors and Staff, I would like to welcome you here today as we announce our newest program geared towards senior hunger.

As many of you know, the Kansas Food Bank serves 85 counties. Basically all of our state except the upper NE corner, a total of 73 thousand square miles. We do this through a variety of programs: food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, mobile pantries and our Food 4 Kids schools. In all, we help provide a meal to over 32,600 Kansans every week.

By serving such a large area, we spend a lot of time on the road traveling to our hunger care partners. It is on those road trips that we have a lot of time to think about what we do, how we do it, and time to dream up different models of delivery. Some of our ideas are pretty far out there, and some of them are right on target.

Last year on one of our trips thoughts came to mind about Kansas seniors who struggle with hunger.

The critical need is evident when you observe that:

6.51 percent of Kansans older than 50 years are considered food insecure, meaning they do not always know where their next meal will come from.

And Kansas' poverty rate is at 12.4 percent, with 7.81 percent of Kansas' senior population living below the poverty level.

Reaching seniors has always been a struggle. All too often a senior will not ask for help and when they finally do, they are embarrassed because they are asking for assistance. I remember when we helped an elderly lady with her food stamp application. When we finished we gave her a box of food and tears came to her eyes. She said she never expected to have to be one to ask for help, that she wasn't raised that way. Our seniors should not have to feel that way. They have given all of their lives for us, we must do something in return to make their golden years just that.

So on that road trip home, the wheels started turning. How do we reach our seniors, especially those in rural Kansas? Who do seniors trust? And the answer was obvious, Senator Bob Dole.

What if we created a box geared towards seniors and called it the Bob Box?

We wondered would Senator Dole like this idea? Would he support it? Would he let us use his name? Do we call him? How do we get our dream across?

Obviously, he said YES! I am thrilled to be able to announce the Bob Box program to you today.

Bob Box is designed with the needs of seniors in mind, and incorporates a new model delivery system that respects their character and dignity, while making access easier.



Fighting Senior Hunger

Kansas Food Bank – Bob Box Program Press Kit September 14, 2012

For More Information, Contact Debi Kreutzman
debikreutzman@kansasfoodbank.org
(316) 265-FOOD

Our goal is to start distribution of Bob Boxes in 24 Northwest Kansas Counties by the end of this year. Bob Boxes will be strategically placed in Health Departments, VFW's and other locations where seniors can easily access them. There will be no restrictions on receiving a box, the senior will simply be asked how many people are in their household. We want this to be as barrier free as possible.

The program will roll out across the state in a five year plan to encompass our entire service area.

We are committed to reaching food insecure seniors and believe we can do so with Senator Dole's endorsement.

I would like to introduce Larry Steckline, a long time friend of the Senator's. Larry is the "Voice of Kansas Agriculture" and Steckline AgReport Commentator.

I would like to share a story with you about Senator Dole.

The story has almost become legend by now: how the people of Russell chipped in a dollar here, thirty cents there, to fill a cigar box at Dawson's Drug store with \$1,800 to pay Bob Dole's hospital bills. They kept track of the donations on slips of paper. Bob Dole still keeps the cigar box and the receipts in his office desk as a permanent reminder of the generosity and love of the people of Kansas.

Senator Dole's commitment to the state of Kansas is remarkable.

When we built this building, he was an honorary chair for our capital campaign. For the Bob Box program he has committed a quarter of a million dollars over five years to ensure our seniors who suffer from food insecurity have meals to put on their tables.

And his giving is meant to inspire others. As a lead donor for the Bob Box program, he is challenging others to join him in providing funds to reach the seniors that need the most help.

Today we will begin building the first round of many Bob Boxes to reach Kansas seniors.

For the past five years the Kansas Food Bank has provided Senior Boxes to Senior Service of Wichita to reach seniors in need in our community. Last year thru AARP's Drive to End Hunger, we were awarded \$10,000 to support the Wichita program. AARP has committed to assist us with marketing the Bob Box as it kicks off in Northwest Kansas.

We would like to Thank our Board of Directors for allowing us to commit resources to make this dream come to reality.

A few weeks ago, one on our Board Members, Dana Knott and I traveled to Washington DC to meet Senator Dole. This trip was one of the highlights of my career. Senator Dole was so welcoming and appreciative of all the work we have done to feed hungry Kansans.