

TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2009

We will soon be starting the sixth school year of our Food 4 Kids Backpack program. It has been an amazing journey from ground zero five years ago to a widespread effort that ended the last school semester sending backpacks of weekend food home with almost 5,000 needful Kansas kids from 272 elementary and middle schools.

Getting the task accomplished every Friday for 30 weeks of the last school year required 150,000 packets containing about 600,000 pounds of food—enough to supply a total of 120 pounds of food for each of the almost 5,000 children. For them it meant the difference between having enough to eat or going hungry over all the weekends of the school year. And now, as the days of summer are almost over, we are preparing for another school year—perhaps the most challenging one yet.

At a time when all nonprofits are caught in the squeeze of increased demand for services and decreased contributions to pay for them, we are more determined than ever to do whatever we can to limit the hurtful consequences of early childhood hunger. In addition to our mainstream Backpack program efforts, our new Development Director Polly Basore has played a central role in convening a Summit Meeting of social service and community leaders and activists to unleash their ideas for workable plans and actions to curb the growing challenges of children's hunger in the Greater Wichita area.

Thus far, the Summit Meeting has produced a two-week program of sack lunches for 90 children caught in the gap between two federal lunch programs and added an interactive map to our KFB website to point out the locations for HungerCare across the city.

I believe the Summit will also add interest and involvement of the public in relieving childhood hunger. It's a good start. Thanks to all.

—Brian Walker, President/CEO

GOOD PEOPLE DOING GOOD THINGS... for a very good cause. Some of the nicest people we get to write about are those who bring a letter and check from Children's Mercy Family Health Partners in support of the Backpack program. This year a \$10,000 check from their organization was presented by Kathy Gann, senior community relations representative, and her colleague, Tamara Welty, bilingual community relations representative.



The Food Bank's Brian Walker accepts a check from Kathy Gann and Tamara Welty (Children's Mercy Family Health Partners).

While being interviewed for Second Helpings, the two ladies were friendly and relaxed and very interested in how our Food 4 Kids program was doing. Their responses were on track with the statement of their CEO Bob Finuf in his transmittal letter in which he wrote, "Everyone at Children's Mercy Family Health Partners believes in the mission that the Food 4 Kids program provides. He also wished us a great summer. And our best wishes right back to an organization of good people doing good things, once again, with our profound gratitude.

A TEARY-EYED STORY... about how to grow a good onion was deservedly given major feature length attention in a recent Home & Garden Section of The Wichita Eagle. The story about Bradley Hawthorne, a Plant-A-Row practitioner and friend of the Food Bank was well told by Annie Calovich in her regular "A bit of earth" column. The essence of the story was about the 440 pounds of onions hauled to the Food Bank in Bradley's 1932 vintage Model B Ford pickup truck. For anyone who might have sampled one, raw and unaccompanied by any other food, it could have been a teary-eyed moment.

The rest of the story provides fascinating details of Bradley's summertime preoccupation with raising an annual crop of about 6,000 to 10,000 onions. Annie concludes her story, "Growing food for those in need, working the earth and relaxing at the same time—now that's how to grow a good onion." We agree, with our thanks to Annie for her fine coverage.

PUTTING ON A GREAT SHOW is something that the SouthCentral Kansas Mustang Club really knows how to do. Every year they show off Mustangs and other Ford models at a money-raising event to benefit the charity of their choice. Fortunately, that's us. This year the event displayed 120 cars representing stock models as well as restored and customized ones.

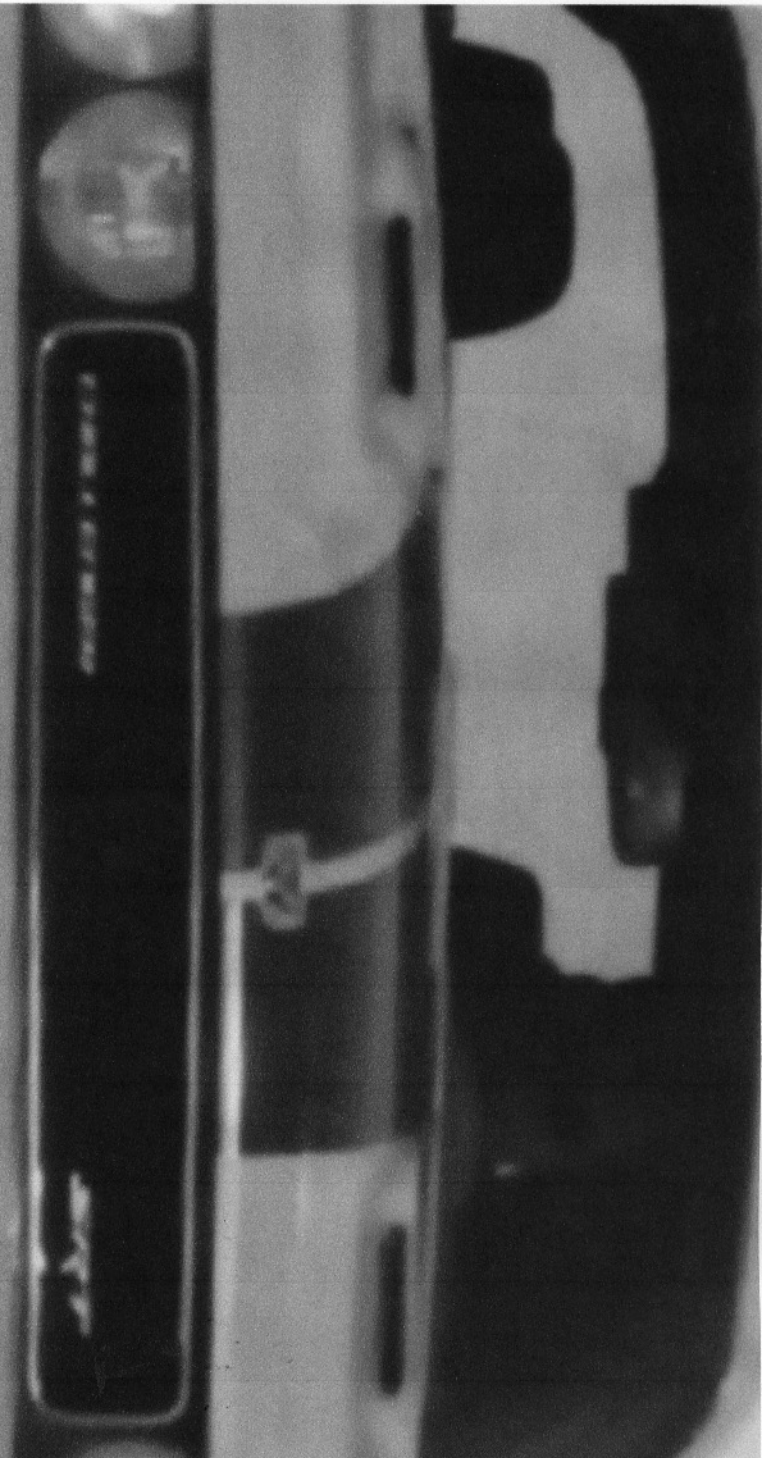
According to Steve Younger, club president, an estimated 750 people attended the event at Sedgwick County Park. In presenting show proceeds of \$1,250 to the Food Bank, Steve commented that members like the way we can multiply the value of their gift by the work we do. That's why, he said, that they keep coming back to us year after year. What great friends they are!

MORE ABOUT PLANT A ROW... whether it's the Intermediate Day onions harvested and hauled to the Food Bank by Bradley Hawthorne or the great harvest of 12,700 pounds of fresh corn shared by an anonymous planter, the total Plant-A-Row contributions have soared to a current total of almost 19,000 pounds...and we hope we're right when we say, "You ain't seen nuthin' yet!"

KANSAS food bank
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AUGUST 11, 2009, EDITION #49
If you're new, we welcome you!

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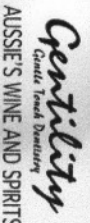
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