

There's a well-kept secret in our community: 1 in 4 children (1 in 6 including adults) struggle with hunger every day. Most of us wonder **what** we'll be eating at our next meal, not **if** we will eat.

Hunger is a challenge. Are you up for it? Accept the **United Way Hunger Challenge** and in the process bring attention to the reality of hunger in our own community.

Can you feed yourself for only \$3.85 a day or \$27 a week? This is the average weekly amount that Jennings Co. food stamp (now called SNAP) recipients have to spend on food. The \$27 limit includes any food and drink consumed inside or outside of your home, staples and condiments you have on hand (salt, pepper and tap water are "free").

September is Hunger Action Month. **September 25 – Oct 1, 2011**, is **United Way Hunger Challenge Week**.

This challenge is an exercise of empathy—to live in someone else's shoes for one week and learn about poverty in our community. Remember every household that receives food stamps has a different situation—some are able to purchase additional food, others use food pantries or receive meals from friends or family, some people have time to cook meals while others don't have a place to cook at all. And when you talk to family and friends and share your experiences with others, you'll help them understand why it's important for all of us to help support the families who can't feed themselves on a food stamp budget alone.

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For more information: visit www.jcunitedway.com, "Like" **United Way Hunger Challenge** post on our facebook page if you accept the challenge or want to follow the participants.

Hunger Challenge rules:

- Eat breakfast, lunch and dinner spending only \$3.85 a day or \$27 for the week.
- Students- school breakfast & lunch doesn't count. (These students are in the free lunch program)
- Don't use food you already own. Salt and pepper don't count but all other seasonings, cooking oils, condiments, snacks, drinks, and everything else do.
- Do not accept any free food from family, friends or at work (even coffee!!).
- Try to include fresh produce and healthy protein each day. If you have a garden, please price-out produce from your garden based on grocery or farmers market prices and include that cost in your \$27 total. (Most poor do not have land or time for gardening— many work two or more jobs.)
- Keep track of expenses, food choices, and recipes and share your experiences on our Facebook page. "Like" the page if you accept the Hunger Challenge.

Consider the following:

- Can you feed yourself for only \$3.85 a day?
- If you had to make a choice between buying groceries and paying your rent, how would you choose?
- What compromises will you need to make?
- Will you be able to provide much variety or will you need to eat the same thing all week?
- What if you don't have access to a kitchen? What types of meals could you have?

2011 HUNGER CHALLENGE FAQ's

Q: Is food at school "free?" for students accepting the hunger challenge?

A: Students food and milk or juice at school— both school breakfast & lunch doesn't count towards your total. (These students participate in the free lunch program, sometimes the only time they do eat is at school.)

Q: Is food I grow in my garden "free?"

A: If you have a garden, please price-out any produce you source from your garden based on supermarket or farmers market prices in your area and include that cost in your \$27 total. Most poor do not have access to land for gardening, or time to cultivate a garden — many work two or more jobs.

Q: What if someone offers to take me out for a meal? Can I go?

A: Not if you want to play fair. A person on food stamps probably wouldn't have that opportunity.

Q: What if food is brought into my office (for example, someone puts out snacks or lunch is served at a meeting)? What about free coffee at my work place?

A: Sorry! A person on food stamps likely wouldn't have those opportunities (they might have a job emptying wastebaskets containing discarded food from office lunch meetings). If people see you eating a lunch you packed from home, it's a great opportunity to talk about the Hunger Challenge with them.

Q: If I only spend \$2 one day, can I spend more the next day — or does it have to be \$3.85 per day?

A: You don't have to spend the same amount every day — it just needs to total \$27 per person per week.

Q: What is SNAP?

A: SNAP is the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly Food Stamps). SNAP helps low-income people and families buy the food they need for good health. You apply for benefits by completing a State application form. Benefits are provided on an electronic card that is used like an ATM card and accepted at most grocery stores.

Q: Are SNAP benefits considered welfare?

A: No. SNAP is a nutrition assistance program. It helps low income people buy nutritious food. It is not welfare.