

PRESS RELEASE

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CONAGRA FOODS FOUNDATION PRESENTED 2009 ANTI-HUNGER CHAMPION AWARD

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Lincoln, NE: As a part of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week, the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest recognized the ConAgra Foods Foundation as the 2009 Anti-Hunger Champion in a press conference today at the LaFern Williams YMCA “Kid’s Café” in Omaha, NE.

“We are eager partners in the effort to address childhood hunger nationwide and in our own backyard,” states Kori Reed, Director of the ConAgra Foods Foundation. “We are pleased to accept this award and continue our work to ensure that children have access to the nutritious foods they need to grow and thrive.”

Previous winners include Senator Ben Nelson, State Senator Amanda McGill, and State Senator Gail Kopplin.

The ConAgra Foods Foundation has partnered with Feeding America (formerly America’s Second Harvest) and the Food Bank of the Heartland to provide child nutrition grants for local food bank programming needs. Grants go to several different endeavors including the School Backpack program, Summer Food Service programs, and Kids Café programs.

The ConAgra Foods Foundation’s efforts are a significant contribution to the national effort to end childhood hunger by 2015.

The awards ceremony is a part of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week (November 15-21), a national endeavor to promote education, action, and awareness about hunger and homelessness. Governor Heineman will also participate in the week by signing a proclamation on November 18 in Lincoln.

“Initiatives to address hunger are vital now, as the need is increasing due to the economic downturn,” states Rebecca Gould, Executive Director of the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest “participation in the SNAP program (formerly called Food Stamps) has increased over 20% in the last year in Nebraska – a clear indicator of the growing need for anti-hunger efforts.”

The number of people struggling with hunger in Nebraska has not improved in recent years, according to new data released by the United States Department of Agriculture. Nebraska’s rate of food insecurity was, on average, 10.5% from 2003-2005 and 10.4% from 2006-2008.

“This data represents conditions in Nebraska early in the recession. Indicators, particularly from emergency food providers, tell us that a survey taken today would show far higher numbers of people struggling to put food on the table. This makes the work of the Con Agra Foods Foundation – and community awareness overall – more important than ever,” states Kate Bolz, Community Educator with the Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest.

Nebraska Appleseed, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public interest law project, is a national leader in addressing social problems facing vulnerable children without loving and permanent homes, low-income families working hard to make ends meet, and new immigrants seeking a better life. Nebraska Appleseed's current year action plan and description of its five program areas, significant litigation and policy reform successes, and broad-based accomplishments can be found at neappleseed.org.

Nebraska Appleseed is a part of the Appleseed network of independent state-based public interest law centers working to identify and address social injustices. The Appleseed network seeks to build a just society through education, legal advocacy, community activism and policy expertise by addressing root causes and producing practical, systemic solutions with broad implication. For more information visit appleseednetwork.org.

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