



For Immediate Release

Foodbank of Santa Barbara County

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Answer Michelle Obama's call to Action to Help Fight Hunger by Donating Through the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County's Virtual Food Drive!

Santa Barbara, CA – Michelle Obama, along with President-elect Obama, is asking all Americans to join them on January 19th, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, in a day of service to honor the work of the Dr. King and to participate in their “Renew America Today” Initiative. To be part of this momentous day, week and event, the future First Lady is asking for everyone to commit to a day of service and to help those in need. One of the easiest ways to support the Foodbank is to donate through our Virtual Food Drive by going to our website at www.foodbanksbc.org.

“It is a great and tremendously easy way to stretch your dollar and help a lot of people,” said Foodbank Executive Director Erik Talkin. “It is as simple as clicking on the laptop icon on our home page and there you can buy food or donate money.” Talkin continued, “In honor of Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and since it is a national holiday, people who are surfing the internet at home can take a few minutes and make a contribution that can help many people.”

Michelle Obama sent out a message on January 12, 2009 through the USA Service website, USASERVICE.ORG saying, “Whatever service activity you organize or take part in -- cleaning up a park, giving blood, volunteering at a homeless shelter, or mentoring an at-risk youth -- you can help start this important journey. But this is about more than just a single day of service; it's the beginning of an ongoing commitment to your community.”

Prior to this message, on December 24, she encouraged all Americans to support their local food banks anyway they can and asked people to make a donation of money or time. Michelle Obama and

President-elect Obama continue to support food banks across the nation in partnership with Feeding America, the national network of food banks, and are committed to his campaign pledge to fight hunger in America and to end child hunger by 2015.

More than 43 percent of the people served by the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County are children. In 2008, our 220 member agencies worked daily to distribute nearly 8 million pounds of food, of which more than 2 million pounds was fresh and nutritious produce.

Join the thousands of volunteers across America who will be supporting their local food bank on January 19 and on inauguration day by donating to the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County through our Virtual Food Drive. Please take action and help renew our county and country by donating food and funds with the click of a key. For every dollar the Foodbank receives we can distribute \$7 of food. During this economic crisis and food shortage the Foodbank, as all food banks, is trying to keep up with the growing demand. Our member agencies are seeing an increase in need of 25 to 30 percent and the numbers will continue to grow.

Please help the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County, Michelle Obama, along with President-elect Obama, Feeding America, and thousands of volunteers, employees, businesses, churches, service organization, schools, and the millions of Americans continue to fight hunger and donate your money, food or time. For more information on supporting the Foodbank of Santa Barbara County and our Virtual Food Drive please visit our website at www.Foodbanksbc.org. For more information on hunger please visit www.feedingamerica.org and to see Michelle Obama's recorded message go to www.USASERVICE.ORG.

The Foodbank, celebrating 26 years of moving people from hunger to harvest, provides a vital link between the multi-faceted food industry and people in need of food. With warehouses in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria the Foodbank serves over 220 social service organizations and churches. More than 43 percent of those served are youths under the age of 18. In 2008, the Foodbank distributed nearly 8 million pounds of food of which more than 2 million pounds was fresh produce to more than 125,000 people in need throughout Santa Barbara County. The Foodbank is committed to making fresh fruits and vegetables available to those in need as the best means of combating poverty-related health issues like diabetes and chronic overweight.

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