

# BREAKING NEWS

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **ST. MARY'S FOOD BANK JOINS IN OBAMA'S NATIONAL DAY OF SERVICE AS PART OF "RENEW AMERICA TOGETHER" *"Skip a Meal - Feed Arizona" asks community to donate cost of day's lunch***

Phoenix, Ariz. – At the invitation of the Presidential Inaugural Committee, St. Mary's Food Bank is holding a "Skip a Meal – Feed Arizona" donation event in support of President-elect Obama's call for all Americans to join forces on Monday for a "Renewing America Together" national day of service in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Arizonans are asked to go online to [www.firstfoodbank.org](http://www.firstfoodbank.org) and donate what they would have spent on lunch that day. Both Michelle and Barack Obama have asked the nation to especially support local food banks as the economy continues to struggle.

Calling attention now to the state's hunger crisis couldn't be better timed, said Terry Shannon, President and CEO of St. Mary's Food Bank Alliance. The food bank is dealing with 64% increase in community demand for food.

"We are depending on neighbors helping neighbors," Shannon said. "While the community continues to support the Food Bank, overall, financial support is not keeping pace with the skyrocketing demand for food."

Daily volunteer opportunities are also available by calling 602-242-FOOD. More information is available at [www.firstfoodbank.org/volunteer.html](http://www.firstfoodbank.org/volunteer.html) for times and locations.

“By being a part of the Renew America Together initiative, you help to honor the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. and others who lived in service of others. Meeting the challenges we face as a nation begins in our own communities,” said Kevin Puleo, Field Director for the Renew America Together effort.

St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance distributed more than 50,000 Emergency Food Boxes in November and December – a 36% increase over last year. Overall, St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance distributed 10 million pounds of food out into the community in November and December, supplying about 200,000 meals every day, and is on track to distribute more than 50 million pounds of food to its partner agencies across the state this fiscal year.

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**ABOUT THE FOOD BANK:** St. Mary’s Food Bank Alliance, the world’s first food bank, is a non-sectarian, nonprofit organization that alleviates hunger by efficiently gathering and distributing food to 534 sites that serve the hungry. Serving 13 of Arizona’s 15 counties, the organization is a member of Feeding America, the national network of food banks, and is committed to volunteerism, building community relationships, and improving the quality of life for Arizonans in need. During Fiscal Year 2007-2008, the Food Bank distributed 43.4 million pounds of food to families and individuals, provided enough food for 200,000 meals every day, and garnered more than 230,000 volunteer service hours. Web site: [www.FirstFoodBank.org](http://www.FirstFoodBank.org) Phone: 602-242-FOOD.

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