

FEBRUARY 3, 2015

Market joins local groups to put food on the table

HIGHLIGHTS

Weaver Street Market is teaming up with four local nonprofit food groups this year to feed more hungry children and their families.



PORCH co-founder and director Christine Cotton hands out bags filled with non-perishable goods, fresh vegetables, eggs and milk to Carrboro residents at Kingswood Apartments in this Monday, Jan. 25, 2015, photo. The nonprofit group PORCH, based in Carrboro, is pairing with Weaver Street Market – Feb. 18 through March 3 – to raise awareness of hunger in Orange County and increase the money and food that

the community has donated to the program so far. Weaver Street will work with three other groups – TABLE, Orange Congregations in Mission and the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services – throughout the year. | Submitted

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Weaver Street Market is teaming up with four local nonprofit food groups this year to feed more hungry children and their families.

The Community Food Project, Food for Families, Food for Pantries and Food for Schools are all local nonprofits offering relief for Chapel Hill-Carrboro homes. Non-perishable foods and money donated to the program through March 3 will be used to support three PORCH programs:

- Food for Families, which delivers food each month to 262 families identified by school social workers as being especially at risk of hunger.
- Food for Pantries, which serves nine Orange County food pantries.
- Food for Schools, which started in October, providing \$500 worth of healthy snacks twice a year to all 19 Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools.

Weaver Street Market’s other partners are TABLE, Orange Congregations in Mission (OCIM) and the Inter-Faith Council for Social Services. A different group will be featured each quarter at all three Weaver Street Market stores – Carrboro, Southern Village and Hillsborough – said Brenda Camp, owner services coordinator.

“We’re hoping that this also makes the community connection,” she said.

It’s not just about making people aware of the community’s hunger gap and the groups working to fill it, Camp said, but also encouraging customers and market owners to volunteer with those nonprofits and donate food or money.

Weaver Street will provide customers with a shopping list of deeply discounted, shelf-stable food items based on each group’s needs, she said, although any non-perishable goods are accepted. They’re trying to focus on healthy, organic and low-sugar food, she said.

After shopping and paying for their items, customers can place them in specially decorated bins near the checkout. The stores also will offer cash donation tickets in varying amounts that customers can buy at the checkout. The money collected over each two-week campaign will buy fresh food, including milk and eggs, for the nonprofit programs.

“We want it to be easy and meaningful for our shoppers and customers,” Camp said.

One in three children in Chapel Hill and Carrboro receive free and reduced-price lunches at school, a common indicator of poverty, said PORCH co-founder Susan Romaine, and one in five families are at risk of not having enough food.

Nearly 40 percent of Orange County Schools students receive free or reduced-price lunches, according to school data.

Many of those families survive on minimum-wage jobs, Romaine said, and often are left with making a tough choice between providing healthy but more expensive food for their families and paying for other necessities.

Children face the most serious risk of going hungry on the weekend and over holidays and summer break, she said. Some 6,100 Orange County children get what might be their only meal at school each day, officials said.

Community Food Partnerships events will be planned to coincide with each group’s time of biggest need, Camp said. The spring event for Carrboro-based TABLE, for instance, will happen when the group is preparing for its schools summer break program.

Weaver Street Market and Orange County’s nonprofits share the same goal of providing more healthy foods, Romaine said.

“We all are doing the best we can,” she said. “If we get enough organizations (addressing) hunger relief, we are forming a stronger safety net.”

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