



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact: Jane Marshall
(517) 485-1202**

November 10, 2004

2004 Michigan Harvest Gathering Raises More Than \$260,000 and 460,000 Pounds of Food

Help goes to Food Banks as they struggle to keep their shelves stocked

LANSING, Mich. — The 2004 Michigan Harvest Gathering campaign raised more than \$260,000 and 460,000 pounds of food to help feed hungry people across the state. The announcement was made by Jane Marshall, Executive Director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan and Cynthia Schuette, a founder of the Michigan Harvest Gathering at a Lansing reception.

Jane Marshall said the annual Harvest Gathering Campaign — now in its 14th year — has become critical to helping the state’s network of food banks in their never-ending mission to feed hungry children and families - about a million people will use Michigan food banks in 2004.

“Every year, so many people join together to aid Michigan’s food banks with the Harvest Gathering Campaign,” Marshall said. “The campaign has become enormously successful. We have revolutionized hunger relief in Michigan.”

Cynthia Schuette described this year’s Harvest Gathering as a testimony to the inner strength and generosity of the people of Michigan. She stated, “During a time when many are struggling we see an even stronger resolve to help, from our hospitals, businesses, state employees and citizens.”

Marshall said the Harvest Gathering helps Michigan food banks feed about 750,000 people a year. In 14 years, the campaign has raised more than \$4.3 million and 6.5 million pounds of food.

Despite a slow economy, Michigan citizens continue to give generously to the Harvest Gathering and food banks statewide.

State Employees also make significant contributions to the Michigan Harvest Gathering.

“It is incredible to see the enthusiasm and commitment that workers in state government have for the Michigan Harvest Gathering,” said Dan Wyant, Director of the

*Food Bank Council
of Michigan
501 N. Walnut
Lansing, MI 48933
(800) 552-4483*

-more-

2004 Harvest Gathering

Page 2 of 2

Michigan Department of Agriculture. “Hundreds of people, one by one, give a little and it resulted in a tremendous amount of resources for the food banks.” This year state employees raised more than \$15,000 and 80,000 pounds of food at work sites across Michigan and more is still coming in.

Since 1998, the Michigan Health & Hospital Association (MHA) has been a lead sponsor of the Harvest Gathering. In October and November this year, more than 130 non-profit hospitals and their volunteers participated, contributing almost 250,000 pounds of food and over \$44,000. MHA continues to recognize the important link between nutrition and health. “Undernourishment not only contributes to poor health, it keeps people — especially children — from reaching their full potential in life,” said MHA President Spencer Johnson. “Giving to the Michigan Harvest Gathering is a natural endeavor for our hospitals, whose mission is to improve the health status of their communities.”

Schuette expressed her appreciation to Karole White, CEO of the Michigan Association of Broadcasters for MAB’s contribution to the Michigan Harvest Gathering. Schuette stated “Over the years radio and television stations have graciously aired public service announcements to encourage people to give to their local food bank. They help share our message of help and hope throughout Michigan.”

In each of the campaign’s 14 years, the Outdoor Advertising Association of Michigan has donated at least 100 billboards across the state to boost awareness of the Michigan Harvest Gathering and to publicize the campaign’s hot line.

Augie Fernandes, Board Chairman for the Food Bank Council of Michigan, also thanked the Schuettes, the Michigan Health and Hospital Association, the Michigan Association of Broadcasters, the Outdoor Advertisers and State Employees for their long-standing commitment to the Harvest Gathering.

“With Thanksgiving less than two weeks away, many of us are turning to thoughts of a wonderful holiday feast. But there are others in our community for whom such thoughts are mere fantasies. For them, a "feast" would be a square meal for their family,” Fernandes said. “All the food banks in Michigan are facing real challenges as they work to keep their warehouses stocked this year. We are so very grateful for this outpouring of support from everyone who supports Michigan Harvest Gathering”.

For more information or to make a contribution, please call 800-552-GIVE (4483) or visit www.feedmichigan.org.

- ### -