



2006
Honorary Chairs

Tom Wilson
&
Karen Davidson

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Leaders Step Up to Fight Hunger in Michigan As 16th Annual Michigan Harvest Gathering Kicks Off

Tom Wilson and Karen Davidson serving as Honorary Chairs

LANSING, Mich. — The 16th annual Michigan Harvest Gathering (MHG) campaign kicked off today to raise food and money to help feed the state's hungry. Regional events were held to urge corporations, organizations and individuals to contribute food, funds and volunteer time to the mission of ending hunger in Michigan. The MHA has been the primary sponsor of the MHG since 1998 and MHA-member hospitals hosted all four of the kickoff events. Nearly 120 hospitals, along with their partners from the Michigan Association of Healthcare Advocates, are set to hold food- and fundraising events between now and November.

"Michigan is a generous state and hospital employees really look forward to this annual campaign," said MHA President Spencer Johnson. "Our efforts to support Michigan Harvest Gathering are a continuation of hospitals' commitments to their communities. These efforts are helping people outside hospital walls in our own communities to remain healthy."

Tom Wilson, CEO of Palace Sports and Entertainment and Karen Davidson are serving as honorary chairs this year.

"When so many of us are so fortunate to have so much, no Michigan child or family should go hungry, but unfortunately they do," said Wilson. "Karen and I are looking forward to helping the kind and generous people of the Harvest Gathering campaign and the state's food banks achieve their 2006 campaign goals."

Wilson added that Detroit Piston Rip Hamilton will appear in public service announcements and on 100 promotional billboards statewide donated by the Outdoor Advertising Association of Michigan.

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At a kickoff event at Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, First Gentleman Dan Mulhern said, “The 16th annual Michigan Harvest Gathering is a great opportunity for people across Michigan to work together and help people who are struggling.” Mulhern added that Michigan Harvest Gathering “keeps the pantries and food banks around the entire state stocked, to help our citizens in need and to secure nutritious meals for all of these Michigan families.”

At the event at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land said that Secretary of State offices throughout Michigan are accepting donations of canned and non-perishable foods through November 22. The Department of State is among the many state agencies which, along with the State Employees of Michigan, have supported Michigan Harvest Gathering since its inception 16 years ago.

“Michigan Harvest Gathering is a great opportunity for people statewide to pitch in and help those who are facing emergencies or struggling to make ends meet,” Land said.

Kickoff events were also held at the Kalamazoo Loaves and Fishes office with Bronson Methodist Hospital and in Flint where the three area hospitals — Genesys Health System, McLaren Regional Medical Center and Hurley Medical Center — hosted an event in conjunction with the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

Executive Director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan Jane Marshall explained that the Michigan Harvest Gathering campaign has become a major source of food and funds for the state’s nine regional food banks.

“One in ten people in our state will use a food bank this year,” Marshall said. “The need is greater than ever, and every dollar and volunteer make a difference in our mission of feeding hungry people.”

Michigan Harvest Gathering was founded by Cynthia and Bill Schuette in 1991. The 2006 campaign goal is to raise \$350,000 and 500,000 pounds of food. Individuals can help by donating food, funds or volunteering at a local food bank. For more information about the Michigan Harvest Gathering campaign, visit www.FeedMichigan.org.

Since 1998, the MHA and its members have contributed nearly \$435,000, and almost 2 million pounds of groceries to help feed the hungry in their local communities.

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