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Food Bank of Delaware to participate in week-long SNAP Challenge

Newark, Del. (Sept. 12, 2013) – As part of Hunger Action Month and to better understand the daily struggles of low-income Americans, Food Bank of Delaware staff and supporters, including State Representative Ed Osienski and Senator Bryan Townsend, will participate in a week-long Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) challenge starting tomorrow.

Throughout the week participants are required to live off a daily food budget of \$4.50. This value represents an approximation of the national average SNAP benefit per person per week.

“Senator Townsend and I went shopping last night for our week of the SNAP challenge,” said Osienski. “What I found different from how I have shopped before is; when limited to \$31.50 a week you really need to plan your meals carefully. When at the store you have to try to keep a running tally of what you’re putting in your cart or you’ll be embarrassed like I was when I went over the \$31.50 and had to decide what I was willing to go without.”

Even though SNAP benefits are intended to supplement an existing food budget, behind the SNAP Challenge is the practical reality that many recipients do not have additional money for food. In Delaware, the average benefit is actually closer to \$4.25 per person per day.

“The amazing work of the Food Bank of Delaware helps to combat the hunger that many Delawareans experience every day throughout our state,” said Townsend. “Policymakers can and should do more to support the food bank’s efforts. Accepting Representative Osienski’s invitation to join him in the SNAP Challenge will give me a better, first-hand understanding of what it is like to live and work with this kind of hunger.”

During the week, the food bank will host nutrition education sessions and cooking demonstrations to teach participants how to stretch their dollar. In addition, participants are required to keep journals to track both their food intake and feelings.

“For millions of Americans and thousands of Delawareans, every day is a struggle to make ends meet,” said Food Bank of Delaware President and CEO Patricia Beebe. “Even though our grocery budget has been predetermined, we will still have gas in our vehicles and lights on in our homes. Many households who receive SNAP benefits are forced to choose between eating three healthy meals each day and paying their bills, rent or covering the cost of prescriptions and other medical expenses.”

In addition to helping to fill the pantries of our country’s most-vulnerable individuals, including seniors and children, SNAP benefits stimulate economic activity. The Economic Research Service of the United States Department of Agriculture estimates that each five dollars of new SNAP benefits issued can stimulate up to nine dollars of economic activity

In the 2012 fiscal year, approximately \$223 million dollars of SNAP benefits were awarded to Delaware residents, estimated to generate a total economic impact of approximately \$400 million dollars.

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The Food Bank of Delaware distributes millions of pounds of food and grocery products each year through its network of 477 hunger-relief program partners throughout the state and also provides thousands of meals a month for children through the After-School Nutrition Program, the Summer Food Service Program and the Backpack Program. The Food Bank's hunger-relief programs directly provide for 241,600 Delawareans at risk of going without meals each year. For more information about the Food Bank of Delaware, visit www.fbd.org or call (302) 292-1305.