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**HARVEST FOR HUNGER CAMPAIGN SETS NEW RECORD**

***19,306,245 million meals announced at recognition event today!***

**CLEVELAND, June 16, 2015** (**For Release Tuesday)** – Harvest for Hunger Co-Chairs Andrea Hogben, President, Northeast Ohio Media Group, and Bernie Moreno, President, Bernie Moreno Companies, thanked donors to this year’s **Harvest for Hunger** community-wide food and funds drive at an event today. Kristin Warzocha, Food Bank President & CEO also spoke at the event to thank supporters**. The campaign set a new record, collecting over $4.7 million and 403,000 lbs. of food to provide over 19 million nutritious meals for local food pantries and soup kitchens.** Harvest for Hunger is one of the largest annual, community-wide food and funds drives in the nation covering 21-counties. Other participating food banks include the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley and Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio.

Nearly 600 companies, schools, nonprofits and governmental entities in Northeast Ohio participated by running food and fund drives this year, raising over $1.3 million.

In addition, *Check Out Hunger*, a cashier-led fundraising effort in grocery stores across the region during March raised $1,530,120. Buehler’s, Fisher Foods, Giant Eagle, Heinen’s and Dave’s collected gifts from customers at their cash registers for the Harvest for Hunger campaign.

“Hundreds of thousands of people including families and children are still struggling to put food on the table, especially during the summer months,” said Kristin Warzocha. “That is why Harvest for Hunger is so important, where every dollar donated can provide four nutritious meals. This community understands the need and has responded in a tremendous way – providing enough money and food for 19.3 million meals!”

Special awards were presented to companies and schools that went above and beyond the call of duty raised during this year’s campaign:

**The** **Bag of Hope Award,** which is given to companies that have 200 or more employees, was presented to **Lincoln Electric.** Lincoln Electric has participated in Harvest for Hunger since 1993. Thanks to Kitchen Cabinet member Christopher Mapes, and coordinator Rose Kirk, their staff raised more than $35,000. They worked hard to make fundraising easy and accessible to their 500 employees through pledge forms and payroll deduction. They also sponsored Market at the Food Bank and made a gift for the end of the campaign online match.

**The Edmond V. Worley Award**, named after the founding director of the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, is given to organizations with less than 200 employees and was presented to two deserving companies, **Van Auken Akins Architects and Family Heritage Life Insurance.** Van Auken Akins hosted various events throughout the campaign including a happy hour event, 50/50 raffle and Super Bowl Squares. In addition to fundraising, Kitchen Cabinet member Jill Akins and many members of her team volunteer regularly at the Food Bank and partner programs.

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Harvest for Hunger

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**Family Heritage** employees don’t just fundraise for a month. They host Harvest for Hunger events throughout the year. This year, they hosted a new event called a Volunteer-a-thon where staff not only volunteered but got sponsors to support them. Under the leadership of Howard Lewis, Harvest for Hunger has become a company value at Family Heritage.

**Charlie Bates**is our 2015 **Youth in Philanthropy** Award winner.This recent graduate of Shaker Heights High School was nominated by one of his teachers. Students were reading a novel entitled *The Glass Castle* and a few of the characters were homeless, so her students were inspired to help feed hungry people in the community by hosting a food drive. Charlie never had to be asked to help carry food to storage areas or to hang flyers and posters. He inspired other students in the classroom and his teacher saw him grow into a leader during this project. Charlie will be leaving for training in the Marine Reserves and, upon his return, will attend the University of Akron.

Media sponsors included Northeast Ohio Media Group, WKYC Channel 3, WOIO Channel 19, FOX 8, WEWS Channel 5, and Clear Channel Radio. Supermarket sponsors included Giant Eagle, Heinen’s Fine Foods, Dave’s Markets, Buehler’s Fresh Foods and Fishers Foods.

Harvest forHunger is an annual food and funds drive that raises resources for food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters in 21 Northeast Ohio counties. It is a combined effort of the Akron-Canton Regional Foodbank, Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Second Harvest Food Bank of the Mahoning Valley and Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio.  The drive began in 1992 and is coordinated locally by the Greater Cleveland Food Bank. For more information, please visit [www.HarvestforHunger.org](http://www.HarvestforHunger.org)

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