

# PLENTY

*"His (Christ's) will is to be daily anointed in the poor..."*  
Geneve Study Bible commentary on *"The poor you will always have with you"*  
(Statement attributed to Jesus following his anointment: Mark 14:7)



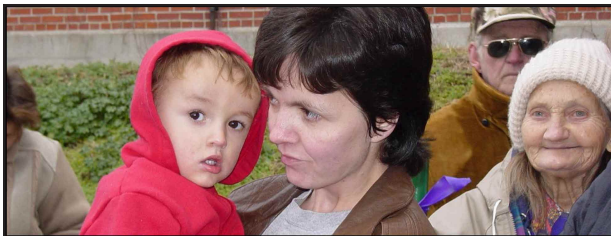
## Brain-storming poverty

**We can do better!**

Katherine Kuck's confidence is infectious. Upon learning about the mission of the Hunger Network in Ohio (to end hunger in Ohio through changing conditions causing poverty), this legislative aide to Ohio state Representative Sandra Harwood, began to radiate her own remedies. Then, as I was leaving, she shared with me a scrap of paper listing her notions about "best practices" for reducing poverty. Generated over her years working in human services, Katherine offered common-sense ideas for lessening economic miseries.

Here, beginning with her introduction, are a few:

*Ohio has a growing poverty cycle we need to stem at its roots, finding best solutions for health care, education, housing and jobs. No one program administered by any state can beat poverty and enhance quality of life, but pursuit of "best practices" would quickly yield replicable, cost-effective programs, giving Ohioans caught in this downward spiral some boot strap benefits.*



"Hunger could affect any of us; **Child Hunger in Ohio 2010**":  
Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks.

### HOUSING/RELATED NEEDS

- **People often overlook the need for furniture with housing.** Columbus has a free furniture bank that collects unwanted furniture from new furniture customers (individuals and institutions) and cycles it back to individuals in need through social service agencies. Why not ask the furniture bank group to replicate itself for all of Ohio?
- **Sharing/Trading website. Why not set up a state-sponsored trading site? People could swap or give away products.** Schools could recycle texts, tables, chairs; hospitals/cities universities could swap. No cash should trade hands.

### FOOD

**Much backyard garden produce stupidly goes to waste despite a donate-your-garden produce program. Most people need to hear how to donate.** Why not ask mayors and county commissioners across the state to create more gardens in the inner cities?

### JOBS/JOB RELATED

- **Micro lending.** Could the state operate a micro lending entity (perhaps even grants) to help families help themselves into the workforce and out of poverty?
- **State workers have had a small reward program for usable ideas to promote government efficiency.** Why not double the reward and push that program?
- **Transportation to jobs is a huge issue for the poor, so why don't we make bikes available?** Portland, Oregon makes bikes available throughout the city. You return them at coin operated stands.
- **Don't allow a person to leave prison without a job/job training.**

### EDUCATION/FAMILY SUPPORT

- **Why not pair schools which are wealthy/good performers with those which have very little?** Books, furniture, buses, teacher training, ideas can all be shared/recycled, and it would be good for both the wealthy and less affluent partner. Grade/reward the partners and share their success with other pairings.
- **Any family receiving state support or health care benefits should be linked with a child development course/family budget training.** Better informed consumer choices may help break the poverty cycle.

- **Additionally, do we ask community colleges/colleges to let the public know when they are educational slots available?** We could reach out and match needy students with course seats still open.
- **Why not have a state phone bank to communicate with Ohioans or to let them communicate ideas/complaints to the Governor about state government.** The phone bank could be administered from a high unemployment area to foster better/faster communication for all types of constituent issues/problems, and for the quick promotion of new ideas.

Beyond Katherine's notions alone, hopefully these may serve to ignite greater intolerance to poverty and will to offer more helping hands to those we call "poor."

Bob Erickson

Complete list of "Best Practices for Reducing Poverty"  
<[www.HungerNetOhio.org](http://www.HungerNetOhio.org)>

# Legislation with hunger implications

*Key legislative decisions are being addressed by the Hunger Network in Ohio on state and national levels. Each has definite hunger-related implications for persons so captured in the web of severe poverty that they require emergency food.*

## State Budget: Ominous Task

Ohio squeaked through this last fiscal year with an unobligated ending balance of \$139 million (out of \$25 + billion) and the outlook for this next year is equally precarious. In anticipation of 2012-13 budget for Ohio, a Budget Planning and Management Commission held its first session on June 29<sup>th</sup> as the first step in a 366 day (due next June 30). Legislators on the panel include Rep. Vernal Sykes and Sen. Shannon Jones (co-chairs), Representatives Jay Goyal and Ron Amstutz along with Senators Chris Widener and Dale Miller. The purpose of commission is to define pressures on revenue and spending in next budget; not write a budget. It should provide menu of options for Governor and budget makers to consider when crafting the next budget. The main challenge facing state finances for the next biennium will likely be the absence of up to \$8.4 of one time revenues, including federal stimulus funding. Medicaid spending is expected it to be a primary topic of discussion. The bipartisan legislative commission is supposed to finalize a list of recommendations in December that the governor and legislature can use when crafting the next two-year budget in 2011. This will be a long and arduous process, pushing the parameters of funding available and straining the limits of perseverance of public official as they submit a budget recommendation balanced by a combination of spending cuts and tax increases. The HNO has been meeting with members of the Commission and other legislators to appeal for reducing prospective cuts on programs designed to protect persons with least who stand to lose most. ([http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/Ohio\\_state\\_budget](http://sunshinereview.org/index.php/Ohio_state_budget)).

Two reports to the Commission from Have a Heart Ohio affiliate research organizations offer views of the budget and potential remedies: [http://www.communitysolutions.com/assets/1/AssetManager/Thinking\\_the\\_Unthinkable\\_Begala\\_WEB.pdf](http://www.communitysolutions.com/assets/1/AssetManager/Thinking_the_Unthinkable_Begala_WEB.pdf). and <http://www.policymattersohio.org/OhioBudgetPlanningAndManagementCommission2010.htm>

The Commission has set up a website so that anyone can send in potential solutions for a budget hole estimated at \$6 billion to \$8 billion. The address is [bpmc.legislature.state.oh.us](http://bpmc.legislature.state.oh.us).

## Child Nutrition: Under Nourished

The Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act authorizes all of the federal school meal and child nutrition programs. They provide funding to ensure that low-income children have access to healthy and nutritious foods. The child nutrition programs touch millions of children each day, and improve educational achievement, economic security, nutrition and health. Although the programs are permanently authorized, every five years Congress reviews these programs through the reauthorization process; the current law is set to expire at the end of September 2010. This reauthorization provides an opportunity to improve and strengthen these programs so they better meet the needs of our nation's children.

As of now, the Child Nutrition Reauthorization (CNR) bill, which would improve access to food and nutritional quality and expand programs, pilots and other initiatives, has passed in the Senate (S3307) and is pending in the House, where it likely will not be voted on until after Labor Day. Unfortunately, the Senate plan sets a poor precedent by cutting future SNAP (Food Stamps) funding by \$2.2 billion to pay for the bill. We are pressing House members to enter the fray by returning to their version of reauthorization (HR1586) and pressing for off-set for funding which do not include reductions to SNAP. <http://frac.org/> ("Latest News")

## Child Tax Credit: Still Pending

As part of the economic recovery bill in 2009, the Child Tax Credit (CTC) was expanded to help 13 million low-income children and their families. Also, the Earned Income Tax Credit. EITC lifted 6.6 million people out of poverty in 2009, half of them children. (EITC) was expanded to help large low-income families and married couples. Including these changes, the Unfortunately, these changes will expire at the end of this year. This would be devastating to low-income children and families. By allowing the CTC changes alone to expire, 600,000 children will fall into poverty. As part of our Economic Opportunity for All Campaign, Advocates urge Congress to protect these low-income tax credits by making these recent improvements permanent and expand them to help lift more people out of poverty. ([http://www.results.org/take\\_action/us\\_poverty\\_actions\\_and\\_news/august\\_2010\\_u.s.\\_poverty\\_action/](http://www.results.org/take_action/us_poverty_actions_and_news/august_2010_u.s._poverty_action/))

## Payday Lending Legislation: One more time

After passing the Ohio House of Representatives (61-37) in early May, the most recent payday lending legislation, HB 486, is currently stalled. If the Senate passes the bill and it becomes law, lenders would be barred from charging fees to cash the checks they issue. The bill also prohibits lenders from charging origination fees more than once every 90 days for loans of \$1,000 or less, and it prohibits them from skirting fee limits by acting as credit service organizations. We are contacting members of the Senate Insurance, Commerce, and Labor Committee and asking them to move this bill forward. ([http://www.cohio.org/advocacy\\_responsible\\_lending.php](http://www.cohio.org/advocacy_responsible_lending.php))

# Hunger Network in Ohio Doings and Doers

## Focus

So far this year, the Hunger Network in Ohio (HNO) has focused largely on the biennial state budget. Among the issues we advocated for were public funding for emergency food, reinstatement of county Jobs and Family Services intake positions, and underwriting Benefit Banks. Since many clients coming to food pantries suffer from medical conditions, we also worked for health care reform, as well as defense of mental health funding. Opposing exploitation of low-income persons, we pressed for greater regulation of payday lending practices. We are now focusing our energies on protecting the most vulnerable Ohioans in the next biennial budget.

## Email Alerts

To provide timely information and resources to network members across the state as well as to government officials we have distributed timely public policy e-mail alerts (HungerNetOhio) and maintained a website ([www.hungemetohio.org](http://www.hungemetohio.org)) updating our actions and archives.

## T@SH

A principal ministry for influencing public policy, "Tuesday at the Statehouse" brings advocates from across the state to build relationships with legislators and staffers to discuss particular hunger related issues before the General Assembly. We are trying to arrange for similar meetings with legislators in their home districts.

## Spiritual Development

After producing two "Advocacy Devotional Calendars"--one for last Advent and the other during Lent--we have developed a third to recognize national Hunger Awareness Month in September. This season's version of "I was hungry" (attachment) offers perspective from a variety of faith groups on overcoming hunger. This project is led by Judy Long, who serves as coordinator, in conjunction with Virginia Koucky, "Spiritual Development" overseer on the board of the Hunger Network in Ohio.

## NetWORKing

We are collaborative. HNO networks with statewide organizations including Have a Heart Ohio, the Ohio Association for Second Harvest



Tuesday at the Statehouse: Hunger Network in Ohio board members, Hilde Hildebrandt & Belinda Wing with Ohio Senator Shirley Smith, joined by Bob Erickson

Foodbanks, Children's Hunger Alliance, Coalition on Homelessness and Housing, Ohio Family (Health) Coverage Coalition, the Coalition and Campaign to Protect

Ohio's Future, Policy Matters Ohio, Center for Community Solutions, and the Ohio Council of Churches. On a national level, we are often aligned with Bread for the World, Results, Food Research and Action Center (FRAC), and the Coalition for Human Needs (CHN).

## Antipoverty Task Force Report

In 2008, an Ohio Anti-Poverty Task Force (APTF) was assembled to provide practical shorter term and longer term strategic recommend

ations to reduce poverty in Ohio. The thirty members Task Force included state agency representatives, faith-based and community nonprofit leaders, Ohioans living in poverty, business and labor leaders, and key anti-poverty stakeholders from around the state. Additionally, over three hundred Ohioans participated in the five works groups and over 1800 Ohioans, many of whom are low-income, participated in one of twenty-two Regional Conversations on Reducing Poverty. The product of their efforts are recorded in a two sets of recommendations—one shorter term and the other long term—which are available online. (<http://governor.ohio.gov/Default.aspx?tabid=689>).

Although this document contains valuable recommendations for increasing access of economically suffering Ohioans to services as well as reducing costs to the State, the Report has largely been ignored. After contributing to the overall effort, the Hunger Network in Ohio has pressed for implementation within the General Assembly. We have regularly presented legislators (most of whom were unaware of the Report) with these recommendations. Especially in anticipation of upcoming budgetary cuts, we continue to advocate for consideration of many humane and cost effective measures. We welcome others who share our mission for "ending hunger in Ohio" and use of this and other means of "changing conditions that cause poverty."

## Needed

We are currently recruiting a persons committed to our mission who will serve a wide range of roles within the organization, from helping to recruit persons committed to anti-hunger advocacy in congregations to promoting 2 cents-a-meal, from assisting with overall communications to coming together with like-minded persons within districts to work with legislators to reduce poverty in the State.

# Become a partner with the Hunger Network

*Elsewhere in this newsletter are reports about the activities of the Hunger Network during the last legislative cycle and a description of upcoming public policy decisions that will affect hunger in Ohio in the year ahead.*

*We invite you to consider two ways you can partner with us to end hunger in Ohio.*

*The first is to include ending hunger in your spiritual and prayer life. Consider the Discipline of 2-Cents-a-Meal in your family and in your congregation. At each meal remember the hungry in the table thanksgiving, and then encourage each person at the table to put two pennies in a container provided for that purpose. Periodically all the households sharing in these prayers and gifts bring their accumulated pennies to offer at church. The offering is equally divided between supporting a local congregational feeding ministry and the Hunger Network - thus the "2 Cents", one penny to feed the hungry now and one penny to work for policies to eliminate hunger in the future. Prayers are linked with concrete actions. 2-Cents-a-Meal start up kits are available through our website (below). Please consider 2-Cents-a-Meal for yourself and encourage your church to participate.*

*The second way of partnering is by making a contribution to support the educational and advocacy work of the Network. HNO is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your contribution is deductible to the extent provided under the law. These direct contributions are an essential supplement to our main support through 2-Cents-a-Meal. Contributions may be sent to the address in this newsletter.*

## Finances

**Income:** Our \$35,000 annual budget is based on three forms of support: 2-Cents-a-Meal, a family and congregation based discipline of prayer and giving to sustain local hunger ministries and stateWide advocacy; Contributions: Including memorial gifts; and Grants: largely from denominational sources

**Expenses:** Program Staff represents a part time Executive Director who researches public policy issues, prepares e-mail alerts and other educational materials, represents the Network in our collaborative efforts, and organizes Statehouse and district visits. The administration budget includes printing, postage, telephone, insurance, fund raising, and other support costs.

**Become a partner in the work of the Hunger Network!**

*Rev Jim Miner, Fund Raising Chairman*

The mission of the Hunger Network in Ohio is to end hunger in Ohio and strategy to change condition which cause poverty. Sponsors include the Eastminster Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church USA, the Episcopal Church Dioceses of Ohio and Southern Ohio; Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Synods of Norhteast and Southern Ohio; United Church of Christ, Central-Southeast Association; and the United Methodist Church East and West Ohio Conference. Information about hunger issues, training for advocacy, and opportunities to work for economic justice are available. The organization is funded primarily through 2 cents-a-meal contributions and donations.

Would you like more information about hunger or ways to make a difference? Do you need help developing social justice ministries in your congregation? Have you concerns which you would like help exploring?

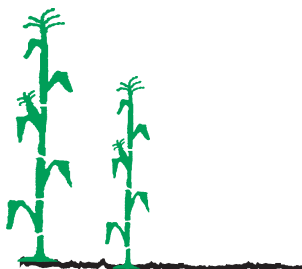
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**HUNGER NETWORK IN OHIO**

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*Creating Awareness  
Seeking Solutions*

