

January 4th, 2006

HUNGER UP IN BROWARD COUNTY IN 2005

The cold numbers tell the story that no-one wants to hear. There were more hungry people in Broward County in 2005 than in the past.

For The Cooperative Feeding Program, a leading voice in the struggle against hunger and homelessness in Broward County, 2005 was their busiest year yet in the two decades since the agency was founded. The number of both hot meals and emergency food boxes distributed by the agency was up 24% in 2005 as compared to 2004.

The Cooperative Feeding Program served a total of 1,212,484 meals to 73,355 people who benefited from the charity in the past 12 months, cramped into a small two-story building on the corner of Broward Boulevard and NW 33rd Terrace in unincorporated Fort Lauderdale.

Hurricanes, mergers and layoffs, mental health and medical emergency issues as well as an augment in simple poverty were the main causes for the most recent 24% increase, according to Marti Forman, Chief Executive Officer of The Cooperative Feeding Program and a 10 year veteran in the continual struggle to eradicate hunger from southern Florida.

“The increase in the number of hungry people has come from all over the county, not just from the traditional areas of poverty,” illustrated Forman with statistics of hungry people the agency has served from Sunrise, Plantation, Davie, Hollywood and Coral Springs.

The 24% increase in meals served by The Cooperative Feeding Program in 2005 comes on top of a 30% increase in meals served between 2003 and 2004, illustrating a disturbing trend in the significant growth in the numbers of people with food emergencies in Broward County.

“Part of the increase in the numbers of people served by our agency reflects the decrease in services to the poor as some food pantries have been forced to close due to lack of funding,” reflects Forman. “But it is no coincidence that our numbers increased at almost the same proportion as the increase in the cost of housing in Broward. When you are on minimum wage, there is no such thing as affordable housing here anymore.”

So in order to be able to pay the rent, people cut down on what they can spend on food. A direct result of this is that one in seven children in Broward County lives below the poverty line, according to the Planning Services Division of Broward County.

And neither is it coincidence that The Cooperative Feeding Program is located in zip code 33311, which has the highest rate of poverty (30.6%) and lowest median household income (\$ 25,557) of all zip codes within Broward County.

Number of people served by The Cooperative Feeding Program's Emergency Pantry program in 2005:

Ft. Lauderdale	45,219
Lauderhill	5,559
Lauderdale Lakes	3,174
Hollywood	3,051
Pompano Beach	1,947
Sunrise	1,892
Plantation	1,416
Oakland Park	1,272
Dania Beach	1,068
Davie	779
Tamarac	767
Coral Springs	742
North Lauderdale	702
Deerfield Beach	573
Miramar	426
Margate	382
Hallandale	329
Pembroke Pines	237
Wilton Manors	231
Coconut Creek	124
Other	3,465

For more information, please contact Marti Forman at (954) 792-2328 or visit www.FeedingBroward.org