

Sioux City Area Hunger Thought Leader Meeting – 2/28/2014

Findings from the Iowa Hunger Survey were presented:

www.aarp.org/politics-society/advocacy/info-09-2013/iowa-hunger-survey.html

Topic One: Telling the stories of hunger in Iowa

- Statewide numbers and statistics are important, but what really matters are the stories of hungry Iowans that go with them
 - Food Bank of Siouxland: we distributed 1.8 million pounds of food last year, four of the annual records for distribution are within the past 5 years
 - Food Bank of Siouxland: awareness of hunger has increased, but people still don't fully understand that hunger is in our own backyard
 - More people need to know about why Iowans become hungry, communicating reasons for why people become hungry increases support for hunger relief among general public
 - IFBA brought plates with pictures and stories of hungry Iowans to the statehouse last session – these were important, they “changed the focus of the conversation in a good way”
- Hunger should be talked about, and solutions should become more visible
 - Community Action Agency: we should emphasize the juxtaposition between Iowa feeding the world and the fact that so many here are hungry
 - Increasing volunteer participation in roles where they interact with hungry people is important
 - RSVP is an agency in Siouxland that helps connect volunteers with opportunities
 - Allowing people to “plant another row” on vacant city land would help feed hungry people in a visible way, and would also connect kids with their food
 - Urban and rural people should be able to have conversations at the shop about hunger
 - Idea: maybe partner with Syngenta or another farming corporation that gives out hats every year – why not put the food bank logo on the back of the hats?
 - Idea: share stories of hunger at community events – screening videos at Sioux City events is one possibility

Topic Two: Existing and new collaborations to alleviate hunger in Iowa

- Partnerships with businesses are a source of volunteers and funds, but more could be done in this area
 - Tyson: been involved with food banks nationally since 2000, only recently working in collaboration on a local level
 - donated 90 million pounds of food nationally
 - have jeans days as a fundraiser at plant in Sioux City, now donate proceeds of every 5th or 6th jeans day to the backpack buddies program at the food bank
 - need to raise profile of local Sioux City efforts – they aren't on the radar as much as the national efforts are
 - Partnering with businesses to involve employees as volunteers also raises awareness of hunger by involving people who might not otherwise be reached (even those who don't volunteer themselves will hear about it)
- Local governments – county and city level, can be valuable partners in alleviating hunger
 - The county has hundreds of properties which they own because of nonpayment of taxes, usually 12 by 200 feet – would be great for a garden, organizations should bring proposals to the county board of supervisors for permission
 - Local or county governments could consider property tax credits for gardens that feed the hungry

Topic Three: Existing and new opportunities for engaging Iowans on hunger issues

- Gardens as a model of multi-stakeholder collaboration to engage more people
 - AARP: there has been success in other states with multi-generational gardens near schools where grandparents and kids / grandkids garden together to feed hungry people
 - Harvest Inc has a garden on a property on the NW corner of town, St. Thomas also has a garden model which could be replicated
- Estate planning is a way for people in the Siouxland area to support hunger relief – especially pertinent for older farmers whose kids won't want to farm after them
- It's important to have conversations about how to both feed hungry people now and provide opportunities for people at risk of hunger to move towards self sufficiency
 - Complicated issues: role of outside funding versus community support, how to do the most good now and sustain the impact into the future, etc.
 - Collaboration and ongoing conversations are important for moving forward on this

Resources and Next Steps:

- Food Bank of Siouxland's Linda Scheid will serve as the point person for future Sioux City area thought leader conversations
- The Iowa Food Bank Association is planning a "Faces of Hunger" exhibit at the Iowa capitol with pictures and stories of hungry Iowans – they want to travel the state after the legislative session, opportunity to partner on an event in your area
- AARP has additional copies of and information about the AARP Hunger Survey
- AARP would appreciate opportunities to engage AARP's network of volunteers
- AARP and Iowa Food Bank Association have a Virtual Food Drive website: www.iowafooddrive.com – please contact them with ideas for improvement
- www.createthegood.org – opportunity to attract volunteers
- www.iowahungerdirectory.org – opportunity to network with other organizations fighting hunger across Iowa

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- World Food Prize (Hunger Directory): Mr. Stephen Lauer, Program Coordinator; slauer@worldfoodprize.org or 515-245-3730