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Houston Food Bank
3811 Eastex Freeway
Houston, TX 77026
713-223-3700

www.houstonfoodbank.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Paula Murphy, 713/520-7111
paula@pattersonandmurphy.com

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STUDY ON NATIONAL CHILD FOOD INSECURITY SHOWS TEXAS LEADS THE NATION

HOUSTON...Results of a study being announced today by Feeding America, the nation's food bank network, show that Texas has the highest rate of childhood food insecurity for children under age 18 (22.1 percent). The state also has the fifth highest rate in the nation of food insecurity for children under age five (23.3%).

The report is the result of analysis of the United States Department of Agriculture's annual statistics on household food insecurity, a term used to describe those that do not know where their next meal will come from. While the USDA reports that 12.5 million children (17% percent) in America are currently food insecure, they do not provide details of food insecurity by state.

Feeding America, through the generous work of The ConAgra Foods Foundation, sought to fill this void by contracting with an esteemed researcher in the field of child hunger and its impact on children, John Cook, PhD, of the Boston Medical Center.

Data from the period 2005-2007 was analyzed to determine the state-by-state rate of food insecurity. The report also includes the first-ever analysis of the rate of food insecurity among children under the age of five during this same period.

"When children lack adequate nutrition, they are susceptible to health issues," says Brian Greene, president/CEO of Houston Food Bank. "Malnutrition also affects their ability to learn and concentrate, which puts these children at a disadvantage in school."

"We can address this problem with the ongoing support of the community and efforts by companies and organizations. This Saturday, May 9, the entire community can be involved in the solution by leaving nonperishable food by their mailboxes during the National Association of Letter Carriers Stamp Out Hunger food drive."

Among the findings:

- The national rate for childhood food insecurity is 17-percent.
- Three-point-five million children age five and under are food insecure.

FOOD INSECURITY REPORT/2

Cook points out that the impact of food insecurity in children, especially those age five and under, has a very negative and lasting impact not just on the individuals, but the community as a whole.

“Food insecurity is harmful to the brain architecture of children under five, as it is a time of rapid brain growth.” says Cook. “Children are our primary economic engine, and to the extent that we let this go, we are constraining economic growth and handicapping our own economy, among other things.”

For more information on Houston Food Bank, visit the Houston Food Bank online at www.houstonfoodbank.org.



About the Houston Food Bank

The Houston Food Bank is the largest source of free and low-cost food for hungry people in 18 southeast Texas counties. A network of 400 charities, feeding a total of 80,000 people each week, receives more than 36 million pounds of food and prepared meals annually. Fresh produce, meat and nonperishables are distributed from Herzstein Center, a 73,000 square-foot warehouse, and hot meals are prepared and distributed from Keegan Center, a 15,000 square-foot industrial kitchen. Additional community services range from nutrition education to assistance with food stamp applications and hands-on job training. Red Barrels offer a convenient way for grocery shoppers to donate nonperishables for their neighbors in need. The Houston Food Bank, founded in 1982, is a certified member of Feeding America, the nation's food bank network. The organization plans to grow to an annual distribution of 120 million pounds of food by 2018.