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## **Tarrant Area Food Bank receives national recognition for model development of food resources**

Award Presented at Feeding America Network Summit

FORT WORTH, Texas – Tarrant Area Food Bank, a member of the national food bank network, Feeding America, has received the 2010 Model Food Sourcing Program of the Year award for the establishment of its Food Advisory Council that helps the food bank find new sources of food and other needed resources.

Each year, Feeding America acknowledges a member food bank that finds a new or innovative approach to securing more food and grocery products for their community while utilizing a reasonable amount of funding and staff contributions. The recognized program serves as a model for other member food banks to replicate helping them feed more people in their own communities.

“The Food Advisory Council provides the necessary foundation for our relationship with the food industry,” said Bo Soderbergh, executive director of Tarrant Area Food Bank. “The continued success of the program will generate ongoing resources for us to address community needs.”

According to Jim Macphearson, Tarrant Area Food Bank’s food industry liaison, the Food Advisory Council “helps the food bank anticipate food industry changes in order to maximize effectiveness and efficiency of its food sourcing efforts.” The group is comprised of food industry partners, including USDA staff and local experts in cold storage, transportation, food safety, refrigeration equipment manufacturing, food manufacturing, grocery retailing, publishing, culinary arts and food service. “The inclusion of these diverse groups,” said Macphearson, “results in a broader perspective and a synergy that creates effective solutions and ideas for securing greater amounts of donated products.”

The most prominent benchmark reached through the council is the increase in the number of food industry partners, resulting in an increase in pounds of food and monetary donations. Other outcomes include increased food industry partners involvement at the food bank, event sponsorship, board membership and volunteering. Additionally, the food bank has increased efficiency in its operations and garnered new support and confidence from staff and its community.

“We are very grateful to our partners who participate on the Council,” Macphearson said. “They provide Tarrant Area Food Bank with expert knowledge and advice in their various areas of the food industry and offer opportunities for us to strengthen our relationships with them.”

“A food bank’s ultimate goal is to increase the amount of food it distributes to its agencies and thus onto the plates of those who need it most,” said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America, who presented the Model Food Sourcing award. “The importance placed on concentrated collaboration by the Tarrant Area Food Bank demonstrates the resourceful leadership for which our network strives in our mission to feed America’s hungry.”

TARRANT AREA FOOD BANK and its network of 300-plus hunger-relief programs, each month, distribute emergency food to more than 40,000 families and serve more than 575,000 meals and snacks on agency sites. During the past fiscal year, the amount of food distributed increased 25 percent. From July 2009 to through March 2010, the amount of food distributed to partner charities has increased from 1.5 million per month to 2 million pounds in March.

#### FEEDING AMERICA

As the nation’s leading domestic hunger-relief charity, Feeding America’s network of regional food banks supplies food to more than 37 million Americans each year, including 14 million children and 3 million seniors. Serving the entire United States, more than 200 member food banks support 61,000 agencies that address hunger in all of its forms. For more information on how you can fight hunger in your community and across the country, visit [www.feedingamerica.org](http://www.feedingamerica.org).

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