



NEWS RELEASE From Mayor Dean DePiero

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PARMA CELEBRATES ITS TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS IN JULY

(PARMA) – It’s that time of the year again. Parma Mayor Dean DePiero is organizing a major food drive to benefit the Parma Hunger Center. The community effort will continue from now until July 4th. The third annual program officially ends with what has now become a traditional food collection at Parma’s July 4th parade. **This year’s parade will be held on Saturday, July 3rd at 10 a.m.** Residents are being encouraged to bring nonperishable canned and boxed food items to the parade that can be handed to members of CERT, the Community Emergency Response Team.

“The reality of our tough economic times speaks for itself,” said Mayor DePiero. “We all know countless people are desperate and in need around the country, many of them right here in our own community. We’re obligated to step up and take care of our own, and this is one of the best ways we can offer to help.”

Food collection boxes donated by Welch Packaging will be placed at Parmatown Mall, Parma/Parma Heights County Library Buildings, Parma City Hall, the Parma Justice Center, the Donna Smallwood Activities Center, Parma Community General Hospital, Ridgewood YMCA on Ridge Road and the western campus of Cuyahoga Community College. A portion of food collected at Tri-C and the Parma Heights Library will be donated to the Parma Heights Food Pantry.

Residents can also drop-off non-perishable boxed or canned food items at the Parma Hunger Center, 5280 Broadview Road. It is operated by an all-volunteer staff at Parma Lutheran Church, serving residents in Parma, Parma Heights, Brooklyn Heights and Seven Hills.

“The summer food drive by the City of Parma always comes at a time when we need it the most, said Parma Hunger Center co-director Arch Stevenson. “Our donations always drop during the summer months, but our work never ends because hunger never takes a vacation.”

(more)

Organizers say The Parma Hunger Center's total distribution has been overwhelming, increasing by about 40 percent in 2009 from the previous year. So far in 2010, demand has risen by another 12%, keeping the Center on par to serve more than 35-hundred families that represent nearly 13,000 individuals.

Food distributed by the Parma Hunger Center is obtained through cash and food donations and the Cleveland Foodbank, serving more than 450 regional hunger centers a six county coverage area. Last year, the Foodbank distributed more than 20 million pounds of food. Parma residents and other northeast Ohio donors help to provide enough food to serve more than 15 million meals to hungry individuals in our community. But typically, the demand is far greater than the supply of donated food.

“What we're doing is pulling together as a community to lend a hand,” said Mayor DePiero. “Ultimately, that best defines community. This is the least we can do for our neighbors in need.”

The Parma Hunger Center has been serving the area for nearly forty years. Food is distributed on Tuesday afternoon and Friday morning. For more information on assistance criteria, call the Parma Hunger Center at 216-351-6376.

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