



NEWS RELEASE From Mayor Dean DePiero

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PARMA REACHES OUT TO THOSE IN NEED: IT'S CHRISTMAS IN JULY

(PARMA) – The summertime holiday spirit of giving has returned to Parma just in time for the city's annual Christmas in July food drive to benefit the Parma Hunger Center. The food collection campaign results in the donation of hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food items distributed to residents in Parma, Parma Heights, Brooklyn Heights and Seven Hills.

“We are obligated as good neighbors to help those in need in our own community,” said Parma Mayor Dean DePiero. “The surprising reality is that a growing number of suburbanites across Ohio, many considered to be economically stable, middle-class residents, are struggling to make ends meet as we continue to feel the dramatic effects of the Great Recession. Our Christmas in July campaign is the least we can do to reach out to those in need.”

Food collection boxes donated by Republic Services 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.

The fourth annual food drive officially ends during the Parma Jaycees July 4th Parade where non-perishable food items are collected along the parade route on Ridge Road. The parade begins at Snow Road at 10 a.m. and heads south to West Ridgewood Drive. Residents are encouraged to bring non-perishable canned and boxed food items to the parade that can be handed to members of CERT, the Community Emergency Response Team.

Residents can also drop-off non-perishable boxed or canned food items at the Parma Hunger Center located at 5280 Broadview Road. It is operated by an all-volunteer staff at Parma Lutheran Church. 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.

(more)

Volunteer organizers say The Parma Hunger Center's total distribution has been steadily increasing in 2011 as it does ever year. So far, demand has risen by approximately 6% when compared to the same time period in 2010. The Hunger Center expects to serve more than 37-hundred families that represent nearly 14,000 individuals.

"It may sound corny, but our work never ends because hunger never takes a vacation," said Parma Hunger Center co-director Arch Stevenson. "Traditionally, our donations drop during the summer months so the Christmas in July drive by the City of Parma comes at a time when we need it the most."

Food distributed by the Parma Hunger Center is obtained through local 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 individuals in our community.

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