



CONTACT: Terry L. Yockey,
Volunteer Coordinator,
Goodhue County Master
Gardeners
tlyockey@northerngardening.com



For Immediate Release: 29 March 2009

“Communities Harvesting Hope”...Plant a Row for the Hungry

This year PAR support for local community hunger relief may be even more important to local food banks.

Gardeners, this year more than ever local food banks need your help. As you plan your garden for this harvest season why not order a few extra seeds and **“Plant a Row for the Hungry.”** **Plant a Row** is a national campaign designed to help gardeners make a difference in their community by donating fresh produce to food banks and shelters.

In Red Wing, the Area Food Shelf serves almost 270 families a month. Last year the Goodhue County Master Gardeners and the Red Wing Farmers Market joined forces with the Food Shelf to implement the **Plant a Row for the Hungry** program and it was an unequivocal success. The Red Wing Farmers Market vendors donated hundreds of pounds of fruits and vegetables and fresh produce donations were also made by home gardeners, church youth groups, Red Wing Community Gardeners and Master Gardeners who maintained a demo garden at the Community Garden.

Red Wing Food Shelf board member Craig Anderson reports that over 100 pounds of fresh produce per week was received during the 2008 harvest season which was a hundredfold increase over previous years. Over half of the hungry that visit food shelves are children so that meant more children than ever before were offered the nutritious fruits and vegetables that are essential for normal growth and development.

This year the Goodhue County Master Gardeners would like to take **Plant a Row** a step further by encouraging clubs, scout troops, and church and service groups to organize “gleaning” outings. A gleaning outing is one where a group goes into a field or orchard and picks all the left-over crops.

Last year one gardener had a gleaning crew come late in the season and harvest all the vegetables he didn’t have time to pick before the first frost. Instead of rotting and going into the compost pile, those fresh fruits and vegetables were available to families that otherwise couldn’t afford to feed their children fresh produce.

Donating your own fresh fruits and vegetables is easy. The Red Wing Area Food Shelf is located at the First Lutheran Church at 615 West 5th St in Red Wing. The Food Shelf entrance is on the West Avenue side and there is a canopy above the stairway that has “FOOD SHELF” written on it.

The Food Shelf is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4 to 6 p.m. and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. During those hours there will be volunteers there to accept the produce. If you would like to

donate during off-hours, please leave your fresh produce in the box at the bottom of the steps and then leave a message at either of these numbers: Craig 388-5985 or Mary 388-2698.

For more information on donating your fresh produce, offering your garden or fruit trees for gleaning or volunteering your group as a gleaning crew, please call the above numbers or email tlyockey@northerngardening.com. If you live outside the Red Wing area, you can find your nearest Minnesota food shelf at www.hungersolutions.org/find. ###