

OHIO ASSOCIATION OF SECOND HARVEST FOODBANKS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 4, 2012

174 AmeriCorps VISTA Members Deployed to Fight Childhood Hunger

National service critical as Feeding America reports more than 1 in 4 Ohio children are food insecure

GROVE CITY, Ohio – For the fifth year, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks and the Corporation for National and Community Service are partnering to help fight childhood hunger through national service. Mary Strasser, national director of AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America), attended a swearing-in ceremony at the Mid-Ohio Foodbank today and administered the oath of service to the 174 AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Associates who will spend the next eight weeks in service across Ohio.

“Children who aren't hungry learn better, behave better and feel better, yet many children in Ohio are not getting the nutrition they need to learn, play and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school,” said Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, executive director of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks. “In fact, according to the [Map the Meal Gap: Child Food Insecurity](#) report released today by Feeding America, more than one in four children in Ohio don't always know where their next meal is going to come from.”

The AmeriCorps VISTA members will devote their summers to boosting participation in Summer Food Service Programs and other programs that provide free meals to children in low-income areas. Not only will they work to increase participation and serve more meals, but they will also assist with recruiting volunteers, leading educational and recreational programming, providing nutrition education, fundraising and more.

“This public-private partnership between our association, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Ohio Department of Education and 41 faith-based and community organizations will go a long way in supporting our collective mission to keep those children healthy and engaged throughout the summer,” said Hamler-Fugitt.

Other major partners in attendance included the Ohio Department of Education, ServeOhio, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and representatives from the Ohio House, including Rep. Ted Celeste and Rep. Michael Stinziano. The national service members also viewed a video message from Senator Sherrod Brown thanking them for their commitment to Ohio's communities.

Parents and families looking for a Summer Food Service Program site nearby can contact the Ohio Department of Education at 1-855-570-7377. To view the interactive *Map the Meal Gap* report, visit the Feeding America website at www.feedingamerica.org/mapthegap.

About the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks (OASHF)

OASHF is Ohio's largest charitable response to hunger, representing Ohio's 12 Feeding America foodbanks and 3,300 member charities including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters. In SFY 2011, OASHF and its member foodbanks were

able to acquire and distribute over 150 million pounds of food and grocery items. Follow [@OASHF](#) on Twitter, stay connected on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OASHF, and visit OASHF on the web at www.oashf.org.

About the Summer Food Service Program

The Summer Food Service Program is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture and is administered in Ohio by the Ohio Department of Education. The program is designed to fill the nutritional gap that children who receive free- and reduced-priced meals during the school year may face during the summer months, ensuring children get the nutritious meals they need. To locate a Summer Food Service Program site within your community call 1-855-570-7377 (1-855-570-SFSP) and ask about summer food.

About the AmeriCorps VISTA Program

AmeriCorps VISTA is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The program is designed to fight poverty in America through full-time national service. OASHF has partnered with the Corporation for National and Community Service since its first AmeriCorps VISTA project in 2006. Since then, more than 500 AmeriCorps members have served hunger- and poverty-relief initiatives through OASHF. To learn more about the AmeriCorps VISTA program and other national service programs, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

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Contact: Dustin Speakman, Director of Community Services for the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks at 614-221-4336 ext. 243 or 614-493-7502 (cell)

OR

Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, Executive Director for the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks at 614-221-4336 ext. 222 or 614-271-4803 (cell)

Participating Organizations

Alliance City Schools <i>Alliance (6 members)</i>	Center for Families and Children <i>Cleveland (1 member)</i>	Oaks Family Care Center <i>Lodi (6 members)</i>
Salvation Army- Kroc Center <i>Ashland (1 member)</i>	Cleveland Foodbank <i>Cleveland (1 member)</i>	Second Harvest Food Bank of North Central Ohio <i>Lorain (4 members)</i>
Ashtabula County Children Services <i>Ashtabula (1 member)</i>	Big Brothers Big Sisters Central Ohio <i>Columbus (2 members)</i>	Washington Morgan Community Action <i>Marietta (2 members)</i>
Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development <i>Athens (4 members)</i>	Clintonville-Beechwold CRC <i>Columbus (3 members)</i>	Family Services of Middletown <i>Middletown (5 members)</i>
OU Kids on Campus <i>Athens (9 members)</i>	E.L. Hardy Center <i>Columbus (18 members)</i>	CAC Pike County <i>Piketon (1 member)</i>
City of Bedford Heights <i>Bedford Heights (1 member)</i>	YMCA of Greater Dayton <i>Dayton (8 members)</i>	Shawnee State <i>Portsmouth (6 members)</i>
Camp Chabad <i>Beachwood (6 members)</i>	Defiance Area YMCA <i>Defiance (1 member)</i>	CAC Portage County <i>Ravenna (2 members)</i>
Baldwin-Wallace College	Northwestern Ohio Community Action Commission	

<i>Berea (1 member)</i>	<i>Defiance (3 members)</i>	CAC of Belmont County <i>St. Clairsville (1 member)</i>
Neighborhood Ministries <i>Campbell (3 members)</i>	Andrew's House, Inc. <i>Delaware (1 member)</i>	Feed Lucas County Children <i>Toledo (16 members)</i>
Canton Calvary Mission <i>Canton (1 member)</i> Faces Without Places <i>Cincinnati (4 members)</i>	EUM Church <i>Greenville (1 member)</i> Hamilton Living Water Ministry <i>Hamilton (5 members)</i>	YMCA/JCC Greater Toledo <i>Toledo (7 members)</i>
Freestore Foodbank <i>Cincinnati (1 member)</i>	Lindenwald United Methodist Church <i>Hamilton (2 members)</i>	Vineyard Church <i>Westerville (2 members)</i>
Washington United Church of Christ <i>Cincinnati (4 members)</i>	SON Ministries <i>Hilliard (8 members)</i>	Westerville Area Resource Ministry <i>Westerville (6 members)</i>
Whole Again International <i>Cincinnati (13 members)</i>	Highland County Community Action Organization <i>Hillsboro (1 member)</i>	The Salvation Army- Williard Unit <i>Williard (6 members)</i>