



Press release for Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. For immediate release.

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VOLUNTEERS BRAVE SCORCHING HEAT TO HELP FIGHT HUNGER

LITTLE ROCK, AR (August 10, 2015)—More than 50 volunteers gathered on Saturday morning at Scott Melons and More to help glean watermelon during the Arkansas Gleaning Project’s fifth annual Watermelon Crawl. As temperatures approached 100 degrees, volunteers went into the tall grass to harvest the last of this year’s crop. When the event was called to a close early because of extreme heat, volunteers had gleaned 17, 260 pounds of melons. The watermelon will be distributed by the Arkansas Foodbank to food pantries, shelter, soup kitchens and other hunger relief agencies in the state.

“We are so grateful to the volunteers and sponsors who consistently answer the call to help us get food to the Arkansans who need it most,” said Kathy Webb, Alliance executive director. “With Arkansas ranking among the very highest in household, child and senior food insecurity, making sure less fortunate Arkansans have access to fresh fruits and vegetables is critical. The Arkansas Gleaning Project is making that happen thanks to the growers and others who provide their extra produce, and the volunteers who help harvest it.”

A highlight of the shortened event was the presentation of a check from Walmart for \$150,000 to the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance to help support the Arkansas Gleaning Project, Cooking Matters and other programs that increase access to nutritious food for low-income Arkansans. Without the generosity of donors like Walmart, it would make the work of the Alliance more difficult and the impact less meaningful.

Each year for the past five, the Chapman family, owners of Scott Melons and More, has donated the last of their watermelon crop to help feed the hungry. The 2015 Watermelon Crawl event, sponsored by Bank of the Ozarks, included live music by Southwind, hotdogs and sausage sandwiches from Performance Foodservice, loads of cold water from Sam’s Club and Stallion Transportation Group loaded and trucked the watermelon for distribution. Truly a winning team in the effort to end hunger in Arkansas.

The Arkansas Gleaning Project is a program of the Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance. In 2014 the Project gleaned 1.5 million pounds of fresh produce for distribution through our member food banks, pantries and other hunger agencies. The average program cost is less than 3 cents per pound.

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About The Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance

Arkansas Hunger Relief Alliance, lead partner in Arkansas for the No Kid Hungry campaign, is a non-profit collaborative network of more than 480 hunger relief organizations across Arkansas. Our founding members include the Arkansas Foodbank in Little Rock, the Food Bank of Northeast Arkansas in Jonesboro, Harvest Texarkana Regional Food Bank in Texarkana, Food Bank of North Central Arkansas in Norfolk, Northwest Arkansas Food Bank in Bethel Heights and River Valley Regional Food Bank in Fort Smith. The Alliance is dedicated to reducing hunger through direct relief, education and advocacy. We invite you to visit www.ARhungeralliance.org for details on hunger relief programs, donor and volunteer opportunities.