

FOOD, NUTRITION AND CHILD HUNGER

HEARING
BEFORE A
SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
UNITED STATES SENATE
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH CONGRESS
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MARCH 16, 2000—GREEN BAY, WI

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THURSDAY, MARCH 16, 2000

U.S. SENATE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL
DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES,
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,
Green Bay, WI.

The subcommittee met at 12 noon, in the library of Nicolet Elementary School, Green Bay, WI, Hon. Herbert Kohl, presiding.
Present: Senator Kohl.

STATEMENT OF TOM JOYNT, SUPERINTENDENT, NICOLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, GREEN BAY, WI

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. HERBERT KOHL

Senator KOHL. Well, we thank you all for coming to this meeting here today. And as we get started, I would like to ask Superintendent Tom Joynt to offer his welcome and say a few words. Tom?

Mr. JOYNT. Well, thank you. Thank you all for coming. We never realized the lunch program at Nicolet was so popular.

And some of us who ate with the kids, we do understand that the Pizza Hut pizzas are a high demand. I won't tell you some of the other comments, but Pizza Hut pizzas are right on.

I would just like to introduce a couple of people here, and Jean Marsh and Judy DeCleene are two of our board members.

One of the things, in addition to having a good lunch program, we have wonderful schools, and I think those of you who are in the area know how generous our community is in supporting schools of high quality. So this school was recently remodeled and expanded with a city park site added and we're very proud of it. We're also very proud of the fact—and just putting in a little political plug—that the Green Bay community passed the third highest referendum in the history of the state, had the largest plurality, and I share that with you because that shows you that our community really cares a lot about our youth and about education. So we have the Packers, but we have our public schools and we're very proud of them.

So the other thing I just wanted to share and we—the Senator is a very big advocate of education and we're happy about that. We also—just the whole idea of nutrition and giving an educator a chance to talk and you have to throw out names, but one of them I would just share with you is there's a very famous philosopher/educator, his name is Abraham Maslow and what he talks about is that if you're going to have people learn, you have to start off

with their basic needs. And among those basic needs are sleeping and a secure place to be, and the other is food. So we may say well, the lunch program, what is—it's just an add-on. Really, nutrition for all students is a key because we can't expect that students would learn without having proper nutrition. And so this is a very appropriate topic to talk about in a school.

So again, welcome all of you, and again, we're very happy that you can be in Green Bay schools because we have some of the best. Thank you.

Senator KOHL. Thanks, Tom. And welcome to all of you and we thank you for coming here today, particularly here in Green Bay, which is a perfect place to hold a hearing on the anomaly of hunger in an increasingly wealthy America.

We're here today in one of the most beautiful and livable cities in our country, located in one of the most prosperous and successful states in the nation. In Wisconsin, the economy is booming, unemployment is at historic lows, welfare and food stamp rolls are dropping; and yet we will hear today that area food banks, community kitchens, schools, shelters and churches are seeing an unprecedented increase in hungry people, especially hungry children. We're not here just to talk; as one poet said, "The belly has no ears, nor is it to be filled with just fair words." We won't feed one child with all of our fair words here today.

And I and you would be disappointed and ill-served if today's event was just a chance for some of us to give a speech. Instead I want to tell you briefly what we are going to do to address the concerns that you have come today to raise.

We are committing to you today to complete this year a Wisconsin Focus Square Meal Agenda. It is a plan designed to bring to communities like Green Bay more food and resources to feed the hungry and to bring children everywhere more opportunities to get a decent meal, therefore principles to our plan:

Number 1, we will work to pass legislation to increase the participation in the programs that provide hot lunches to low-income small children in childcare centers and family daycare homes.

Number 2, we will work to pass legislation to authorize and provide funding for a program giving incentives to schools to start a school breakfast program. Wisconsin unfortunately is last in the nation in provision of a healthy breakfast to its hungry students and we are going to turn that figure around.

Number 3, we will work to expand our current after-school feeding programs by encouraging sponsors to serve snacks for children between the ages of 13 and 18, and provide authorization to provide meals for that age group as well.

And number 4, current law keeps Wisconsin from participating in the Commodity Supplemental Food Program which is a program that provides supplemental food to women, infants, children and the elderly. We will work to change that law, bring Wisconsin into the program, and fight for more resources to get this surplus food into our communities.

So we thank all of you from Green Bay, other parts of Wisconsin and Washington who have come here to talk about hunger today.

I promise to keep our meeting here brief so we can all get back to the work we do and need to do to make sure every child in Wisconsin starts the day well fed and ready to learn.

STATEMENT OF ANN LAUNDRIE, TEACHER, NICOLET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Senator KOHL. We have a panel here to start today, and on that panel we have Renee Beauchamp who is a school food representative from the School Food Service Association; Anne Laundrie, who's a teacher here at Nicolet; Jim Hogensen, from the Cornerstone Family Church; and Karen Early who's a Brown County Task Force on Hunger member.

Anne, would you like to start?

Ms. EARLY. Where do you want me?

Ms. LAUNDRIE. Well, first of all, I feel that the food that we feed our children should be nourishing; I think it should be good for their bodies and the only real foods I feel are whole foods or natural foods or foods are to be minimally processed. And by feeding our kids junk foods, I don't think we are really helping the problem. That children eat is important, but what they are eating I think can greatly affect how they behave in school, how they learn, how they process information, how they retain information, and I have noticed in my classroom over the years that the children seem to be basically, you know, eating; they are coming to school having had a breakfast, but it's not always the best food. A lot of children have hyperactive tendencies because of the high sugar content in their food, high fat content, white sugar, white flour, and I think a lot of the teachers, too, are coming to school that way. So what I really would like to stress is that the more people—the more food people eat is not necessarily the better, that all the starchy and fatty foods, in an educational institution especially, is just not warranted. And using the cheapest ingredients, as those that I mentioned, is economical, but it's not advantageous to the health of our children.

And I'm wondering, too, if the quality of the breakfast that we are now receiving and the lunch foods that we are now receiving are going to improve in quality.

I know I speak for many teachers at this school that do not look favorably on the quality of the foods their—that we are feeding to our children, and I think we must use wisdom and work together to provide foods that are not made from refined surplus foods or from manufactured items and prepackaged.

As noble as our intentions may be, I also would hesitate to interfere with parental authority and responsibility in feeding our children. And I know our parents do a very good job, although, you know, a lot of people are not nutritionally educated, as I was not when I first started teaching; I came to school eating Pop Tarts. And so for the last 20 some years, I have really done a lot of educational nutritional research; I'm a very big advocate of educating our parents and our children as to proper foods, and if we do have a breakfast and lunch program at our school, I would like to see it improved in quality.

Senator KOHL. Thank you. All right. Let's continue with Renee who's a School Food Service representative.

STATEMENT OF RENEE BEAUCHAMP, SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE ASSOCIATION

Ms. BEAUCHAMP. Good afternoon. My name is Renee Schlaughten Beauchamp and I am the president of the Wisconsin School Service Association. I'm also the director of School Nutrition Programs at Sun Prairie Area School District.

Thank you for the opportunity to be here today. Today I'd like to address the five—the four top barriers child nutritional professionals see in preventing childhood hunger in Wisconsin.

Nearly 70,000 children under age 12 are hungry. Another 184,000 Wisconsin children are at risk for not having enough food to eat.

While hunger in Wisconsin is not as visible as it is in third world countries, hunger does exist. State statistics show that 36 percent of children in Wisconsin served school lunches qualify for free or reduced lunches. The importance of child nutrition and its effect on educational performance is becoming well documented through increasing scientific evidence.

In 1998, Massachusetts General Hospital and Harvard Medical School released results of a study confirming the benefits of breakfast. Among the benefits are: A significant increase in mathematic grades, behavior, better behavior, less anxiety, decrease in tardiness and disciplinary incidents and less visits to the school nurse.

Studies have found similar results for the school lunch program which is more widely incorporated into our schools compared to the breakfast program.

The first barrier is lack of breakfast programs. Child nutritional professionals see hungry children coming to school every day. During testing weeks, we are often asked to provide breakfast for students in an effort to increase test scores as many students are coming to school without breakfast. Clearly the education professionals are aware of the importance of breakfast, but are concerned that in Wisconsin our breakfast programs are losing two cents for every meal we serve. Breakfast is not viewed as or included in the educational day. Many people consider it a service just to parents; the perception that the breakfast program is a welfare program and is just for needy children; also that breakfast programs possibly interfere with bus and school schedules.

The second barrier is non-nutritive foods. In Wisconsin, our children are consuming twice as much soda as milk. Imagine, even in Wisconsin this is happening. Even though the national school breakfast and lunch programs require milk to be offered every day, milk consumption has decreased. Many school districts have experienced the soda wars that compromise the nutritional integrity of our program. School districts are offering rewards—are offered rewards such as scoreboards, athletic uniforms and just plain cash to exchange for a vending machine to be positioned in their school.

In Holman, Wisconsin the high school was asked to discontinue the breakfast program so that a student organization could sell concessions to raise money.

Our schools should be setting the example, not encouraging unhealthy lifestyles. Therefore, we believe the Secretary of Agriculture should have the authority to regulate the sale of all foods throughout the entire school until the end of the school day.

The third barrier that we see is eligibility categories. The new Welfare Reform Laws in Wisconsin have had a great impact on those families eligible for free and reduced meals. As these families find low-paying jobs, they become ineligible for school meals. We feel these are the families that need these meals the most. These families can no longer afford to participate in our programs and are embarrassed about applying for the meal benefits. They are becoming more and more dependent on emergency food supplies and are sending their children to school with little or no food.

A recent OIG study shows that many parents are lying on their applications about their income. During verification, we find that many people make more money than they say. Processing and verifying the applications for meal benefits is a paperwork nightmare. The continued use of the three-tiered eligibility category compounds this problem. Monies used to process and verify applications would be better spent in providing nutritious meals to students.

The fourth barrier we see is lack of nutrition education. Childhood hunger doesn't only mean hungry children, it can refer to under-nutrition or poor nutrition; it means they are not getting the proper nutrients for proper growth and development.

Our children are exposed daily to non-nutritive foods that compromise their health. Parents are looking for the quick snack to appease their children during their hectic schedules, and nutrition is not always a top concern.

Right now the lunch period has been cut so drastically in schools that children are choosing not to eat in order to get out to recess faster. We feel that child nutrition programs need to be considered part of a child's learning day. We believe schools should take the lead and set the example. Breakfast and lunch programs are great learning tools for teaching good nutrition; however, regulations have become increasingly complex and unrealistic. Federal funds that could be used at the State level for nutrition education are being utilized to enforce these complex regulations.

State agency consultants are spending valuable time in schools, reviewing food labels, determining the sodium content of such items as ketchup, rather than providing schools with technical assistance.

We realize there needs to be program accountability, but there should be more realistic balance between compliance and nutrition services to children. Regulations should enhance child nutrition, not impair it.

Since 1976 there has been a decline in nutrition education funding. School districts are lacking an educational environment in which nutrition education is a priority or is available to students in classroom instruction.

Teachers are disinclined to have classroom presentations due to overextended curriculum, lack of interest in the topic, lack of updated materials and lack of respect for the food service program.

What these schools don't understand is that school food programs can support and expand nutritional education by providing a learning laboratory where students observe and practice good eating habits.

Adequate funding for nutrition education at the local level would allow school districts to incorporate nutrition throughout the day.

USDA's team nutrition information has provided districts with a great deal of information; however, without funding at the local level, these resources tend to sit on shelves unused due to limited resources of time and money.

In closing, the Wisconsin School Food Service Association believes that it's imperative that our school food service programs keep pace with societal, cultural and educational trends. With today's lifestyles, school lunch and school breakfast programs play an increasingly vital role. Good nutrition helps children get the most out of their education. We believe the nutrition component should go hand in hand with the education component. Thank you.

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Renee. When we finish the statements from the panelists, we're going to open this up to questions and thoughts and comments from you all.

STATEMENT OF JIM HOGENSEN, CORNERSTONE FAMILY CHURCH

Senator KOHL. We now have Jim Hogensen who is from the Cornerstone Family Church.

Mr. HOGENSEN. I'd like to thank my wife for being here. She was supposed to be the panelist and she had an appointment that she couldn't get out of. So thank you, Linda.

My wife and I started a ministry that we call Manna for Life, and we started it approximately 4 years ago, which is about a half a year before I retired. I was a jail inspector for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections for 21 of my 36 years that I worked for the state. And during that period of time, I got to meet many people in and out of jail, I served on many different committees that would—probably had nothing to do with jail inspection, and I got to see a need that there were a lot of needy people out there, there were poor people, there were homeless people. And it—just something was placed upon my heart that when I retired, instead of building decks and remodeling homes and going to Florida in the wintertime, that perhaps something could be done. So my wife and I started the ministry and we started very small just by collecting blankets and food and things like that within our home. And shortly after we did that, we started to attend Cornerstone Family Church and we spoke to our pastors about our heart and what we wanted to do and so we partnered with them and we used their tax exempt status and we also fall under their insurance program.

Within a very short period of time we were told that our ministry had become self-supporting, and so we started a thrift store, which in turn the profits from the thrift store go into our food pantry. Within 1 year period of time, we grew so fast that the very small building we were in on Bodart Street in Green Bay, we just outgrew, we rented a little warehouse space, we outgrew that; and the good Lord just sent to us a building that was close by right across from Camera Corner in Green Bay that we have approximately 8,000 or 9,000 square feet there. And we're now out of room and probably looking for a bigger building.

But we were able to expand our food pantry, which was one of our biggest concerns. We provide clothing for people at a very reasonable rate and also provide food for those that are in need. We

buy all our food at Second Harvest in Omro or Milwaukee where we can purchase food for 14 cents a pound.

A good example of what we buy is if you purchase a large box of Post Raisin Nut Bran cereal in the store, it's close to \$4, and we pay 42 cents per unit for that.

We buy all kinds of food through them: We buy meat, turkeys, hams, hamburger, pizzas and other frozen type foods; commodities, we get cheese, we get canned foods, we get soup, and we provide this free of charge to people that come to our store.

We have not yet set any geographic location. We originally went to the downtown area to serve the downtown people and the people in the near north side of Green Bay. That's where the vast majority of our people come from. There is a high-rise low-income place close by. We have a boarding house that has 19 men and they have no way of cooking in there except for microwaves; they have very small, I guess, college-dorm type refrigerators. And so what we do is we kind of specialize in the kinds of foods that we can deal with that's easy for them.

We have about 21 homeless people that come into our food pantry. Anyone that comes, that signs up for our food pantry that meets the eligibility, they can come twice a month. We have food pantry four times a month, they are allowed to come twice a month.

And I believe June of 1999 we served 42 families; February of 2000 we are serving 185 families; we are getting new applicants at the rate of approximately 12 to 15 new families a month. Now, family could be two persons. I think the largest family that we serve is 10.

We chose to do this on our own; Linda and I get nothing out of it. We have to—I have a pickup truck. We had to purchase a second pickup truck in order to pick up food; the ministry supplies us with gas money. There are no wages involved to anyone. Most of the people that work for us are volunteers, however we do get some people out of the Community Corrections Employment Program and they are paid minimal wage by them. And we also get one person out of the Bay Area Agency on Aging.

We have a number of volunteers that come to us and they generally stay for short periods of time because it's a whole lot of work for nothing.

My wife is our—my cherished volunteer and she has the strongest work ethic of any human being I've ever known in my life, and I don't even try and keep up to her; I just do what is my portion of the job. I go out and I talk to people. For example, I'm dealing with WG&R right now to see if they have—get any used furniture in trade. Our building expenses have gotten much larger since we moved to a new place, and if we had larger furniture and stuff like that, we would get more money.

Virtually all of our profits, after we pay for our expenses, go into our food program. And our program is just—it's getting larger all the time. And I mentioned earlier we have an independent board of directors, and I'm sure that there are going to be some geographic locations that we're going to have to adhere to, however, when you start to help people and people find out about your agency, they come to you. We don't doublecheck with any other agencies

to see if they are going there as well unless we have reason to believe that. For example, we found someone that was selling food for alcohol. We feel that that is not our job to judge; however we just don't wish to give the people that are double dipping and so we—whenever we do have questions about that, we do look into it.

We firmly believe that we are doing what is the right thing to do. We hope that many other people would consider doing the same thing, whether they connect with their church, they do it independently. In the 36 years I worked for the State, I am firmly convinced that government cannot meet everyone's needs.

I feel that there are people that have made a lot of money in their lifetime and if they would choose to share some of that with agencies such as ours or their church or other places, that we could take care of the needs of the people. Thank you.

Senator KOHL. Thank you very much, Jim. Before we hear from Karen, I'd like to ask our three students to step up and speak to us. We have Carl Metz, Sally Paul and Kevin Francis. So why don't—Sally, why don't you speak first. You can speak into the microphone and say anything you wish. After that we'll ask for Carl and then Kevin.

Go ahead, Sally.

STATEMENTS OF:

CARL METZ, STUDENT

SALLY PAUL, STUDENT

KEVIN FRANCIS, STUDENT

Ms. PAUL. I'd like as—I think it's important to have a good breakfast because it is important that you get it and you can learn better. Because if you take your test or something, you're more concentrating on it and if you're hungry, you can't concentrate on the test. So if you take a test and—it's very important that—to eat breakfast first so get a more steady on your test than you are on how hungry you are. Thank you.

Senator KOHL. That's a good statement.

Mr. METZ. I think it's important to eat breakfast because that whenever you go to school, sometimes you'll go "Oh, my stomach hurts because I didn't eat this morning." Then you'll go down to the nurse's office and say, "Oh, I don't feel very good." So then you should eat breakfast. And that—I think that helps.

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Carl.

Mr. FRANCIS. I say you should—I say you should eat breakfast because it's very important for your body. And whenever you go to school, you have to learn well, and if you don't pass a test, you're probably won't get—might not pass your test—your grade. So if you eat junk food, then you act more hyperactive. That's what I have to say.

Senator KOHL. That's very good. So you think everybody should eat a good breakfast, huh?

Mr. METZ. And lunch.

Senator KOHL. And do you get your breakfast at school or at home or where?

Mr. FRANCIS. School.

Mr. METZ. Home.

Senator KOHL. And what about you, Sally?

Ms. PAUL. I eat it at home.

Senator KOHL. You eat at home?

Mr. METZ. I get it at home.

Senator KOHL. Do you get some snacks at school?

STUDENTS. Yes.

Senator KOHL. And lunch do you get at school?

STUDENTS. Yeah.

Senator KOHL. Is this a good school?

STUDENTS. Yes.

Senator KOHL. Do you like this school?

STUDENTS. Yes.

Senator KOHL. What do you like about school, Sally? Do you like your teachers?

Ms. PAUL. Yeah. And I like all my friends.

Senator KOHL. You like your friends here too? Enjoy coming to school every day?

Ms. PAUL. Yeah.

Senator KOHL. Kevin?

Mr. FRANCIS. (Nodding head).

Senator KOHL. Do you like school?

Mr. FRANCIS. A lot.

Senator KOHL. A lot. Enjoy coming to school every day, Carl?

Mr. METZ. I like school and I love it because I want to learn and I want to grow up to be a teacher.

Senator KOHL. You want to be a teacher. All right. Well, you've all done a great job here today. We really thank you for coming. You were outstanding. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF KAREN EARLY, NUTRITION COORDINATOR, BROWN COUNTY EXTENSION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN

Senator KOHL. Karen Early, who's University of Wisconsin Extension Service Food and Nutrition Division. Karen?

Ms. EARLY. Thank you, Senator Kohl, for your commitment to addressing hunger in America and nutrition programs in particular. I also want to thank all of our partners from the University of Wisconsin system and the Food and Hunger Network, Green Bay schools, city and county governments and member and collaborator agencies.

I wanted to appear before you today to tell you about food insecurity in Green Bay. The role of the University of Wisconsin Extension includes a focus on developing partnerships, conducting applied research and carrying out educational programs to address local needs.

In response to comments, some such as what you've heard today, and also the changes in our welfare and family support programs and comments from our nutrition educators from cooperative extension, we became—began a food security initiative in 1995 in Brown County.

What is food security? Food security is access by all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life. Conversely, food insecurity is the limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods or limited ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.

Some of these overheads might be a little difficult to see when they're colored, but when the color goes away, you'll see them fine.

When people are food insecure, they worry and stretch limited resources and reduce the quality of food eaten. When people are hungry or food insecure with hunger, it means that adults and then children have to reduce their intake because there wasn't enough money to buy food. A national USDA Food Security Survey in 1998 showed that 10½ million U.S. households were food insecure, meaning they didn't have access to enough food to fully meet their basic needs. Another 3½ percent were food insecure with hunger, meaning that adults and then children had to reduce their food intake.

The survey tool asked questions like this: The food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have enough money to get more:

Was this often, sometimes or never true for you in the last 12 months?

In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of your meals or skip meals because there wasn't enough food?

And in the last 12 months did you ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food?

In response to this USDA data and local observations of struggling families, Brown County wanted to examine food security at a local level to better understand the—not only the extent of hunger but how to address it locally.

We first did the survey in 1998 and again in 1999 in partnership with the University of Wisconsin Green Bay Social Work Department who conducted the research with us. We used the USDA survey tool to measure respondents' food security status. It was modified to include questions pertaining to household size, age and employment status. In addition, respondents were asked the reasons for their food insecurity and were asked to identify what initiatives might help them gain better access to food.

This is what we found: First of all, levels of food security in 1999 were very similar to 1998. More than half the respondents were food insecure to varying degrees.

Overall 56 percent of at-risk households were food insecure, and you can see the three smaller pie components there were the food insecure households. This is a survey of at-risk households in Green Bay, not the total population.

Twenty-two percent of respondents were food insecure with hunger. Ten different sites all serving households at risk for food insecurity were included in the evaluation, six for food pantries, two were WIC sites and two were meal sites. The total asked to participate was 760. We had 566 responses, which was a 74 percent response rate.

We asked—or of those households who are food insecure, 77 percent were households with children.

We asked which of the following hunger events occurred in the last year because there wasn't enough money to buy food, and of those households who were food insecure with severe hunger, 8 percent of children did not eat for a whole day; 18 percent of children skipped a meal; one-quarter cut the size of the adult—of the child's meal; 41 percent of adults did not eat for a whole day; and 87 percent of adults skipped or cut the size of a meal.

This is important because research has confirmed that inadequate nutrition, even for short periods of time, influences a child's

behavior and ability to concentrate and is capable of producing impairments that can remain throughout life. Temporary food shortages can also modify the relationship between children and their families affecting parenting methods and the social behavior of adults.

The degree of hunger did vary by the type of site that we surveyed people. Households receiving WIC food assistance were substantially more food secure than those using food pantries or meal sites. WIC is also known as a prevention program, a model worth noting when developing solutions to hunger.

Approximately half of WIC respondents reported they were food insecure compared to 90 percent at food pantries, and 80 percent at meal sites.

The employment status of food insecure households is well worth noting. Virtually all food insecure respondents were unable to acquire food because of lack of money despite having employment income. Half the respondents who didn't have enough food were employed. The median wage of people using food assistance was \$7.50 an hour. 60 percent of respondents earning this wage or less were food insecure to the same extent as those who were unemployed.

Minority groups earn less than Caucasians and females earned less than males and were more likely to be unemployed.

We also gathered information on the kinds of food assistance used by households. Interestingly, individuals who began seeking food assistance at pantries during the last year tended to be more educated and were more likely to be employed and earning \$7.50 or less an hour. One-third of respondents were a new user of pantries for the first time within the last year, and I might add that one of the reasons that we did the research was because we kept hearing from pantries there was a growing use of food pantries among households and they were having a hard time keeping enough food available.

Single parent households were more likely to be new users of pantries. Only one-quarter of respondents reported receiving food stamps during the last year while many more than this were eligible because there was confusion as to whether they were still eligible for food stamps with the welfare changes. And substantial numbers of people knew someone who needed assistance but were unable to get it.

These are the reasons cited for why 22 percent—why the 22 percent of food insecure households didn't have enough food. Over 90 percent reported they didn't have enough money for food. More than half reported it's too hard to get food and they don't have a car. One-third had difficulty getting food because of childcare, because of the work schedule, because they couldn't get to a food pantry during open hours. Approximately a quarter had difficulty getting food because they don't know how to prepare the foods that are available and it's too hard to get food because there's no grocery store in the area. Another 20 percent said a variety of good-quality food isn't available.

Those who were food insecure with severe hunger cited additional reasons for not having enough. One-quarter had no working refrigerator and had difficulty transporting food on city buses. An-

other third couldn't cook or eat due to health problems and had no grocery store in their area.

When we asked which initiative would help them get food, the following initiatives were cited: A grocery store downtown, traveling grocery store, a traveling food pantry, community gardens, different pantry hours and improved transportation. All these issues you can see affect access to food.

So despite the strengths—strength of the U.S. economy, the nation's Nutrition Safety Net and local grass roots efforts to reduce hunger, national and local research has documented that many Americans and Wisconsin families and individuals still struggle to meet basic needs. Wisconsin is the 9th most food secure state in the union. If hunger exists here, it exists to a larger degree in most other places. Green Bay is just looking at the issue and chooses to decide that it's not going to happen here.

The results of 1998 and 1999 research are being used to plan effective projects and address policy issues which could result in local solutions to food insecurity. Our local plans follow the USDA Action Plan for Food Security. Specific strategies are detailed in our summary report.

In addition to having nutrition safety net programs in place such as the plan that Senator Kohl has outlined today, food security needs to address systems, job retention and advancement, a living wage, effective transportation systems, ready access to grocery store, profit/nonprofit partnerships, community gardens, and culturally sensitive education to develop food budgeting and food preparation skills. These are all part of addressing food security holistically.

This approach is complex because it addresses societal issues systematically. However, if we address hunger holistically, we address a host of other important issues at the same time because as we all know, food security is really about moving out of poverty and about economic justice.

Thank you for your time and your interest.

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Karen. And now we open it to the first panel questions or comments from anybody in the audience.

Thank you very much. Appreciate your being here today. You've been very helpful.

PANEL. Thank you.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF KAREN EARLY

My name is Karen Early. I am the nutrition coordinator at Brown County Extension, which is part of the division of Cooperative Extension, in the University of Wisconsin-Extension.

My comments today will be in two parts. First I will describe the Extension education response to community issues. Then I will tell you about my Extension work with the Brown County Food Security Initiative.

It is my pleasure to appear before you today to tell you how UW-Extension applies the research, knowledge and resources of the University of Wisconsin System to local problems such as food security for at-risk households. We do this through a unique partnership of counties, the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the University of Wisconsin System. In addition, local agencies and organizations collaborate to support and carry out educational programs in Wisconsin's counties and Indian reservations.

I would like to briefly describe the components of this work—coalition building and community planning, applied research, community education, and shaping public policy based on research and available resources.

Coalition Building and Community Planning.—Extension faculty and staff excel in building local coalitions, which plan comprehensive community actions. This leadership can involve resources and partnerships with local agencies, government and other interest groups to work together to develop comprehensive food security efforts. The work I will describe in detail is an example of the work of a community coalition.

Applied Research.—University of Wisconsin-Extension is strategically visible in every county of the state and is available to conduct applied research. Community based faculty work with community partnerships and campus research faculty, to engage the community finding answers to local problems. For instance, in 1999, Judi Bartfeld, an Extension specialist and assistant professor at UW-Madison, conducted research at food pantries in 27 counties to learn more about the food needs of low income people across the state. My research, done in collaboration with Anne Kok, Extension specialist at UW-Green Bay, gathered valuable data on food security in this community.

Community Education.—Educational responses take many forms. Examples are: teaching low-income families to make choices about low cost, nutritious foods; collaborating with financial professionals to teach people to manage money; conducting parent education workshops; developing parent support networks; teaching volunteers to maximize their efforts; and producing publications that are targeted to those who can benefit from information.

Shaping Public Policy.—Extension promotes a family perspective in policymaking by offering research-based Family Impact Seminars in counties throughout the state. These seminars are educational programs designed to provide local decision-makers with reliable, unbiased information on current family issues. Seminar topics have included competent parenting, strengthening family and community partnerships, juvenile crime, welfare reform, poverty and fatherhood.

BROWN COUNTY FOOD SECURITY INITIATIVE

The program that I will tell you about today is an example of the leadership UW-Extension provides to solve community problems. More specifically, this work was carried out as part of the UW-Extension Nutrition Education Program.

Nutrition Education.—The University of Wisconsin Extension, Nutrition Education Program (WNEP) responds to the needs and resources of the economically poor by implementing community-based nutrition education programs. WNEP is a ten year partnership between the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD), and the University of Wisconsin Extension (UWEX), which represents the ongoing support of 55 locally-elected county boards. WNEP educators teach youth and adults work with communities to improve food security.

One of the components of the food security effort here is Brown County is community gardens. UW-Extension provides leadership for community gardens throughout Wisconsin.

Community Gardening.—Extension collaborations with communities have created community gardens. Through volunteer participation and education, these gardens enable youth and families to grow vegetables in their community. These gardens also raise awareness of the issue of hunger in the community.

UW-Extension is proud to bring University research, knowledge and resources to improve food security for at risk families of Brown County. We stand willing to continue and expand our efforts here and in other Wisconsin communities.

Thank you for your interest and past support of our efforts. I will answer any questions you may have.

STATEMENT OF SHIRLEY WATKINS, UNDER SECRETARY FOR FOOD, NUTRITION, AND CONSUMER SERVICES, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY, DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

INTRODUCTION OF WITNESSES

Senator KOHL. We have a second panel. On the phone we're going to have Shirley Watkins who's in USDA, the United States Department of Agriculture. She's the Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services. We have Richard Mortenson,

from the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction, Nancy Bicoy, Brown County Community Foundation, and Nancy Armbrust, Director of Government Affairs, Schreiber Foods. Would you all like to come up here, please.

OPENING STATEMENT

Ms. WATKINS. Senator Kohl.

Senator KOHL. Yes, Shirley.

Ms. WATKINS. Well, hello to everyone, I am so sorry that I am not able to be there with you in person, but because of some problems with airlines last night, I was not able to get there. I ended up staying on the airplane for about 7 or 8 hours before I was able to get back to Washington. So, I really am sorry that I'm not able to join you there in person.

But I want to thank you, Senator Kohl, for giving me an opportunity to talk about the crucial issues of hunger and nutrition for children.

I've been immensely pleased to listen to the first panel and their interest and concerns, as well as, the superintendent who made the welcoming remarks. One of the reasons I really hate that I wasn't there is because I didn't get a chance to eat lunch with you and enjoy the wonderful lunch with the children as well.

I want to thank you publicly, Senator Kohl, for your steadfast, enthusiastic and sincere commitment to solving those problems of hunger in our communities and around the country. You've been a true friend of the programs on the Hill, especially for the school breakfast program. We are so grateful for your ongoing support, and I look forward to continuing to work with you as we work on the 2001 budget.

The last time I was in Wisconsin, I was there to present the Dan Glickman Pyramid of Excellence Awards to the Milwaukee Hunger Task Force for the outstanding work that they do on behalf of needy families and children. Although you were not able to join us that day, you sent a lot of your staff to show just how important it was and to recognize the successful community organizations who are working tirelessly in Wisconsin to eliminate hunger.

Well, the method you have today is just another clear example of your strong commitment and the concern that you have about the welfare of children in this country. Senator, I want to thank you for that.

The Department of Agriculture's Nutritional Assistance Programs are designed to create and sustain a network of caring for those most at risk in this country. At the heart of our commitment is the nutritional welfare of America's children. We have 15 programs in USDA that work together helping to ensure that the children in this country will not go hungry. I know most of you are familiar with these programs, but I want to take just a second to talk about each one of them very briefly and let you know what they are. Some people don't know that these programs are administered by the Department of Agriculture.

NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

Our centerpiece program for food security is the Food Stamp Program. Another very important program to us is the Women, Infants

and Children Supplemental Nutrition Program that we call WIC. We also have the National School Lunch and School Breakfast Programs. Our newest program for schools is the After School Snacks Program. We are also responsible for; The Child and Adult Care Food Program, the Summer Food Service Program, the Food Distribution Programs, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Now that's just a few of the 15 programs, but these are the Programs that are at the core of our support for families and children in this country. Each one of these programs has nutrition at its core, and they each deliver a consistent message about the importance of healthy eating at every age, so that we can ensure a healthy life. We also work very aggressively with the Seniors Meals Program.

MISSION AND PURPOSE

One thing that we work very hard on in our mission area at USDA is to ensure that we have a clear vision of what we are supposed to do as a team. We are a group of people working on behalf of families and children in this country. Our mission is to reduce hunger and food insecurity in partnership with cooperating organizations. We have formed a very close bond with community groups across the country to help us achieve this common goal.

It's estimated, as you've already heard several of the speakers on the first panel mention, that there are 13 million children in this country who are hungry or suffer from food insecurity. That's an astonishing statistic, especially during this time of economic prosperity in this country.

Our programs are an effective solution to the problem of hunger. Although some communities don't understand that these programs are available or they don't know how to access the programs. Oftentimes there are barriers to accessing these programs. We want to make certain that there are no longer barriers, and that's why we think it's so important to work with the various community groups across the country.

Our programs address the nutritional welfare of our children at school, after school, during the summer, and they help families achieve real economic self sufficiency. This is, after all, what we want for everyone in this country. Our nutrition assistance programs are a big part of the answer. As I mentioned, access to these programs is one of our key priorities. We would like to provide information now available for better health to families and children to end the hunger problem.

BUDGET PROPOSAL

The approval of our proposed fiscal year 2001 budget of \$36.3 billion is of the utmost importance if we are to continue to maintain and support the vital nutritional needs facing America's families and children.

For the record, Senator Kohl, I want to submit my approved testimony that outlines the specifics of the budget request. I want to share with the people of Wisconsin some of the things that we're asking for in the Food Stamp budget so you will know what those issues are.

FOOD STAMP PROGRAM

We're requesting \$22.2 billion for the Food Stamp Program, and that's a slight increase over our fiscal year 2000 budget. We have a few policy initiatives, one is to deal with the issue of eligibility of certain legal aliens. We propose to restore Food Stamp eligibility to aliens who legally resided in the United States on August the 22nd of 1996 who have subsequently reached age 65. We want to correct the inequity of treating some elderly legal aliens differently from others solely on the basis of a birthdate.

The other proposal we want is to restore Food Stamp eligibility to legal immigrant adults who legally resided in the United States on August 22, 1996, and who live with eligible children effective April 1st, 2001. This proposal would also eliminate an inequity and would improve the well-being of children by increasing the Food Stamp benefits to their low income-households. You've already heard someone mention transportation in the working poor families. We're proposing to make some changes to better serve the working poor by allowing States the option of making the regulations to allow States to use the TANF vehicle allowance for food stamps. We want the State to be able to use that same vehicle allowance so that people leaving welfare to go to work can qualify for Food Stamps without being stigmatized because of the value of their vehicles. The stringent limit currently in place is a barrier to participation by low-income people, and many of them are faced too often with the choice between buying food and reliable transportation. We want to make certain that we can eliminate that.

CHILD NUTRITION PROGRAMS

One of the other issues that we have included in our budget proposal is a modest request of \$2 million for nutrition education and training. Someone has mentioned that we have wonderful team nutrition materials, but we don't have money for local school districts and the states to provide for the training. So we are requesting a very modest amount of \$2 million. You might want to know that for the last 2 years we've had no funds allocated in our budget for nutrition education and training.

The other piece I know Senator Kohl is extremely concerned about, is ensuring that we are able to complete our work on the Breakfast Research Pilots. We are going to announce the six selected school sites in the month of April. We did get funds in the amount of \$7 million in the fiscal year 2000 budget, and we have requested the additional \$6 million so we will be able to finalize the breakfast pilots.

Also, we have two pieces of material that we have developed at USDA. One is "Together We Can," a what, why and how handbook for working to end hunger in your community; the second is "the National Nutrition Safety Net; the Tools for Community Food Security." These are going to be provided for the record to Senator Kohl, and we can make those available in Wisconsin and for you to distribute however you would like.

[CLERK'S NOTE.—The publications are being retained in the subcommittee files.]

Ms. WATKINS. I certainly want to thank you for allowing me this opportunity, and because of the technology that we have, even though I couldn't be there in person, this does allow us an opportunity to communicate with you and to thank you. Also to let all of the people in Wisconsin know that we are here to work with them and to serve them. We are the people's department.

Thank you very much for this opportunity, and I look forward to being able to answer any questions that you may have on any of the programs or on any of the budget issues.

[The statement follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SHIRLEY R. WATKINS

Good afternoon, and thank you for inviting me to be here today. I welcome any opportunity to talk about the crucial issues of hunger and nutrition for children, and I am especially glad to have this chance to publicly thank Senator Kohl for his steadfast, enthusiastic, and sincere commitment to solving these problems. You have been a true friend to our programs on the Hill—especially for the school breakfast program—and we are grateful for your ongoing support.

The last time I was in Wisconsin, I came to present the Dan Glickman Pyramid of Excellence Award to the Milwaukee Hunger Task Force for its outstanding work on behalf of needy families and children. Senator Kohl was unable to be with us that day, but many of his staff came in to show us how important it is to recognize successful community organizations who work tirelessly to eliminate hunger. This event, today, is another clear example of how deeply you share our concern about the welfare of children in America. Thank you, Senator!

The Department of Agriculture's nutrition assistance programs are designed to create and sustain a network of caring for those most at risk in this country. At the heart of our commitment is the nutritional welfare of America's children, and our 15 programs work together to help ensure that no child goes hungry. Most of you are familiar with these programs—Food Stamps, Women, Infants and Children or WIC, National School Lunch and School Breakfast, and our newest program—After School Snacks. We are also responsible for the Child and Adult Care Feeding Program (CACFP), the Summer Food Service Program, and the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations. Each one of these initiatives has nutrition at its core, and each delivers a consistent message about the importance of healthy eating, at every age, to ensure a healthy life.

Our mission statement is a pledge to reduce hunger and food insecurity in partnership with cooperating organizations, and we have formed close bonds with many community groups across the country to help achieve our common goals. It is estimated that 13 million children in this country are hungry or suffer food insecurity—that is an astonishing statistic especially during this time of economic prosperity. Our programs are an effective solution to the problem of hunger. They address the nutritional welfare of our children at school, after school, and during the summer, and they help families achieve real economic self-sufficiency. This is, after all, what we want for everyone in this country—our nutrition assistance programs are a big part of the answer. Access to these programs is one of our key priorities—access and information about the help that is available. The approval of our proposed fiscal year 2001 budget of \$36.3 billion is of the utmost importance if we are to continue to maintain and support the vital nutrition safety net for America's families and children. For the record, I would like to submit my approved testimony outlining the specifics of the 2001 budget request.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to meet with all of you and promote our nutrition assistance programs.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF SHIRLEY WATKINS

Nominated by President Clinton to serve as Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services, Shirley Watkins was confirmed by the Senate in July 1997. In this position, she oversees the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion (CNPP) with a total annual budget in excess of \$35 billion. The 15 nutrition assistance programs administered by FNS, which account for over two-thirds of the USDA budget, include the Food Stamp Program, the Women, Infants and Children Supplemental Feeding Program (WIC), the National School Lunch, School Breakfast, and After School Programs, and the Food Distribu-

tion Program on Indian Reservations. Under her leadership, each of these crucial elements of the nation's nutrition safety net have experienced significant improvement and expansion.

Mrs. Watkins is also the first person to be named FNCS Under Secretary who brings direct management experience in nutrition assistance programs to the position, having served as the director of Nutrition Services for the Memphis (Tennessee) City Schools for 17 years where she made significant improvements in the quality and nutritional content of school meals. Mrs. Watkins has also worked as a food service supervisor, a fourth grade and junior high school home economics teacher, and a home demonstration agent for the USDA Extension Service where she directed programs to help improve the lives of farm families and children.

Prior to her current appointment, Mrs. Watkins was the USDA Deputy Assistant Secretary for Marketing and Regulatory Programs from 1995 to 1997, and had responsibility for over 80 domestic programs and 8,000 employees charged with protecting U.S. agricultural interests around the world. From 1993 to 1995, she served as FNCS Deputy Under Secretary, tasked with the reinvention of its nutrition assistance programs and the improvement of consumer outreach activities.

A native of Hope, Arkansas, Under Secretary Watkins received her bachelor of science degree from the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and her master of education in administration and supervision at the University of Memphis. She has pursued additional graduate studies in instructional design, and has completed the Senior Executive Leadership Program at USDA and Leadership America. Mrs. Watkins served as President of the 65,000 member American School Food Service Association, underscoring the role of that organization as a powerful advocate for children and child nutrition. Her outstanding leadership has earned her recognition from the American Dietetic Association, the International Food Service Manufacturer's Association, the Food Research and Action Council, and numerous other professional organizations. She brings a broad knowledge of education, nutrition and business through her association with governmental agencies, local, state and federal legislators, professional and social organizations, academic institutions, industry, and health practitioners, and is a strong and highly effective leader and innovator.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Food and Nutrition Service administers the nation's nutrition assistance programs. FNS's goals are to provide needy people with access to a more nutritious diet, to improve the eating habits of the nation's children and to stabilize farm prices through the distribution of surplus foods.

Food Stamp Program

The cornerstone of USDA's nutrition assistance programs, the Food Stamp Program issues monthly allotments of coupons that are redeemable at retail food stores, or provides benefits electronically in the form of a debit card. Eligibility and allotments are based on household size, income, assets and other factors.

WIC—the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children

WIC's goal is to improve the health of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding and nonbreastfeeding postpartum women, and infants and children up to 5 years old. WIC provides supplemental foods, nutrition education and access to health services. Participants receive vouchers that can be redeemed at retail food stores for specific foods that are rich sources of the nutrients frequently lacking in the diet of low-income mothers and children.

National School Lunch Program

The NSLP provides cash reimbursements and commodity foods to help support non-profit food services in elementary and secondary schools, and in residential child care institutions. Every school day, more than 26 million children in 94,000 schools eat lunch provided through this program. More than half receive the meal free or at a reduced price.

School Breakfast Program

The SBP provides a healthy breakfast for students in participating schools. As with the School Lunch Program, low-income children may qualify to receive school breakfast free or at a reduced price, and states are reimbursed according to the number of meals served.

Summer Food Service Program

Through the SFSP, low-income children receive meals during the school vacation periods. All meals are served free, and the federal government reimburses local sponsoring organizations for meals served. FNS is always seeking new sponsors.

The Emergency Food Assistance Program (TEFAP)

TEFAP was originally designed in 1981 to reduce inventories and storage costs of surplus commodities by distributing the commodities to needy households. While some surplus food is still distributed through TEFAP, since 1989 Congress has appropriated funds to purchase additional commodities for households.

Child and Adult Care Food Program

The CACFP provides cash reimbursements and commodity foods for meals served in child and adult care centers, and family and group day care homes for children.

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The FMNP provides WIC participants with increased access to fresh produce by providing them coupons to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at authorized local farmers markets.

Commodity Supplemental Food Program

A direct food distribution program with a population similar to WIC (see above), CSFP also serves the elderly. The food packages are tailored to the nutritional needs of participants.

Special Milk Program

Children in schools, summer camps and child care institutions that have no federally-supported meal program receive milk through the Special Milk Program.

Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations

The FDPIR provides commodity foods to Native American families who live on or near Indian reservations.

Nutrition Program for the Elderly

The NPE provides cash and commodity foods to states for meals served to senior citizens. The food is served in senior citizen centers or delivered by meals-on-wheels programs.

Commodity Distribution to Charitable Institutions and to Soup Kitchens and Food Banks

Commodities from USDA surplus stocks are provided as available to non-profit charitable institutions that regularly serve meals to needy persons. The variety and dollar value of the foods donated varies according to market conditions.

Homeless Children Nutrition Program

The HCNP reimburses providers for nutritious meals served to homeless pre-school-age children in emergency shelters.

Nutrition Education and Training Program

NET supports nutrition education in the nutrition assistance programs for children.

 USDA NUTRITION PROGRAM FACTS

SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

Question. What is the School Breakfast Program?

Answer. Some 7.2 million children in more than 70,000 schools start their day with the School Breakfast Program, a Federal program that provides States with cash assistance for nonprofit breakfast programs in schools and residential child care institutions.

Teachers have reported that their students are more alert and perform better in class if they eat breakfast. Studies support that notion. Most recently, a 1998 Tufts University statement on the link between nutrition and cognitive development in children cited new findings: "Children who participated in the School Breakfast Program were shown to have significantly higher standardized achievement test scores than eligible nonparticipants. Children getting school breakfast also had significantly reduced absence and tardiness rates."

Two other recent studies, by the State of Minnesota and by Harvard Medical/Massachusetts General Hospital, found that students who ate school breakfast had im-

proved math grades, reduced hyperactivity, decreased absences and tardy rates, and improved psycho-social behaviors. A 1989 study published in the American Journal of Diseases of Children found that “participation in the School Breakfast Program is associated with significant improvements in academic functioning among low-income elementary school children.”

The School Breakfast Program began as a pilot project in 1966, and was made permanent in 1975. The program is administered at the Federal level by the U.S. Department of Agriculture through its Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), formerly the Food and Consumer Service (FCS). State education agencies and local school food authorities administer the program at the local level.

Recognizing the importance of a nutritious breakfast, USDA has actively promoted the School Breakfast Program, and at the same time has made a commitment to improve the nutritional quality of all school meals. Regulations now require that all school meals meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans. In addition, breakfasts must provide one-fourth of the daily recommended levels for protein, calcium, iron, Vitamin A, Vitamin C and calories.

USDA continues to work with state and local school food authorities through its Nutrition Education and Training Program and Team Nutrition initiative to teach and motivate children to make healthy food choices, and to provide school food service professional staffs with technical training and support.

Question. What schools and institutions can participate?

Answer. Public schools or non-profit private schools of high school grade or under, and residential child care institutions are eligible to participate in the School Breakfast Program. Participating schools and institutions must serve breakfasts that meet Federal nutrition standards, and must provide free and reduced-price breakfasts to eligible children.

Question. Who gets free or reduced-price breakfasts?

Answer. Any child at a participating school may purchase a meal through the School Breakfast Program. However, children whose families meet income criteria may receive free or reduced-price breakfasts. Children from families with incomes at or below 130 percent of the poverty level (currently \$21,385 for a family of four) are eligible for free meals. Those between 130 percent and 185 percent of the poverty level (currently \$30,433 for a family of four) are eligible for reduced-price meals. Children from families over 185 percent of poverty pay a full price, though their meals are still subsidized to some extent.

Question. How do schools get reimbursed for meals?

Answer. The Federal government reimburses the schools for each meal that meets program nutritional requirements. Schools submit a claim to their State agency for meals served. USDA reimburses the State, which in turn reimburses the local school food authority. For school year 1998–1999, the Federal Government reimburses schools at the following rates:

- \$1.0725 per meal for free breakfasts.
- 77.25 cents for reduced-price breakfasts.
- 20 cents for paid breakfasts.

Schools may qualify for higher “severe-need” reimbursements if a specified percentage of their meals are served free or at a reduced price. Severe-need payments are up to 20 cents higher than the normal reimbursements for free and reduced-price breakfasts. More than 70 percent of the breakfasts served in the School Breakfast Program receive the severe-need subsidy. Reimbursement payments for all meals are higher in Alaska and Hawaii.

Schools may charge no more than 30 cents for a reduced-price breakfast. Schools set their own prices for breakfasts served to students who pay the full meal price.

Question. How many children participate? At what cost?

Answer. For fiscal year 1999, Congress appropriated \$1.4 billion for the School Breakfast Program, up from \$1.3 billion in fiscal year 1998.

In fiscal year 1998, an average of 7.1 million children participated every day. Of those, 6.1 million received their meals free or at a reduced price.

By comparison, participation and cost in previous years:

- 1995: 6.3 million children at a cost of \$1.05 billion
- 1990: 4.1 million children at a cost of \$596.2 million
- 1985: 3.4 million children at a cost of \$379.3 million
- 1980: 3.6 million children at a cost of \$287.8 million
- 1975: 1.8 million children at a cost of \$86.1 million
- 1970: 500,000 children at a cost of \$10.8 million

For more information:

The Food and Nutrition Service was formerly known as the Food and Consumer Service. Information on FNS programs is also available on the World Wide Web at www.usda.gov/fcs, and will be available soon on a new web site: www.usda.gov/fns.

THE FACTS

Question. How many kids eat breakfast at school?

Answer. About 7 million children each day eat school breakfast. (About 25 million children eat school lunch).

Question. How large is the School Breakfast Program?

Answer. About 69,000 schools nationwide offer breakfast at school. (Over 94,000 schools offer school lunch).

Question. Compared to school lunch, how many children eat school breakfast?

Answer. Compared to eating school lunch every day, only about 1 in 4 children eat school breakfast.

—Not every child who eats lunch has an opportunity to eat breakfast at school.

—Breakfast is available in far fewer schools than is lunch. In fiscal year 1997, 68,718 schools offered school breakfast as opposed to 94,714 that offered school lunch.

—The great majority of children who currently participate in the breakfast program (86 percent, as opposed to 57 percent in the lunch program) receive their meals free or at a reduced price. As a result, school breakfast has come to be thought of in many places as a program for low-income children.

—The School Breakfast Program started out as a two-year pilot program under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 and was made permanent in October 1975.

—The School Breakfast Program is available to the same schools and institutions as the National School Lunch Program.

—Over the last 10 years the School Breakfast Program has nearly doubled in participation.

—In 1997, school breakfast was served in 68,718 schools and institutions, providing a total of 1,187,674,480 breakfasts.

—So far, in 1998, the average daily number of breakfasts served in schools and institutions is 6,776,154.

THE RESEARCH

A recent State of Minnesota Breakfast Study found that students who ate breakfast before starting school had a general increase in math grades and reading scores, increased student attention, reduced nurse visits, and improved student behaviors. (December, 1997)

Researchers at Harvard Medical/Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston found that hungry children are more likely to have behavioral and academic problems than children who get enough to eat. At school, hungry children had more problems with irritability, anxiety and aggression, as well as more absences and tardiness. (Pediatrics, January, 1998; Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, February, 1998)

The recent Tufts University Statement 1998 on The Link Between Nutrition and Cognitive Development in Children cites new findings: "Recent research provides compelling evidence that undernutrition impacts the behavior of children, their school performance, and their overall cognitive development."

The School Breakfast Scorecard, October, 1997, produced by the Food Research and Action Center (FRAC) contains data and explanations to assist in evaluating efforts in the 50 states and the District of Columbia to ensure availability of breakfasts in schools to children who might otherwise go without a meal. The scorecard covers the 1996–97 school year.

USDA's School Nutrition Dietary Assessment Study (1993) showed that School Breakfast Program meals are nutritionally superior to other breakfasts, including breakfasts at home, on many key nutrients.

A 1989 study published in the American Journal of Diseases of Children found that "participation in the School Breakfast Program is associated with significant improvements in academic functioning among low-income elementary school children."

AFTERSCHOOL SNACKS IN THE CHILD AND ADULT CARE FOOD PROGRAM

Question. What are "Afterschool Snacks?"

Answer. The Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) now offers cash reimbursement to help organizations serve free snacks to children in afterschool care programs. Afterschool snacks give children a nutritional boost and draw them into supervised activities that are safe, fun and filled with learning opportunities.

Question. How can children benefit from the snack service?

Answer. Afterschool snacks help ensure that children receive the nutrition they need to learn, play and grow. Organized, structured, and supervised programs that provide snacks allow children to think and behave better, and help them make the grade!

Question. Is my afterschool care program eligible?

Answer. In order for a site to participate, your program must be "area eligible" (go to Question 6). Additionally, your afterschool care program must provide children with regularly scheduled educational or enrichment activities in a supervised environment. Contact your State agency for further information regarding program eligibility.

Question. What type of snacks must be served in my program?

Answer. In order to be reimbursed, the snacks must contain at least two different components, out of the following four: a serving of fluid milk; a serving of meat or meat alternate; a serving of vegetable(s) or fruit(s) or full strength vegetable or fruit juice; a serving of whole grain or enriched bread and/or cereal.

Question. How much money will my organization get for serving snacks?

Answer. For the period of July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2000, the reimbursement rate is \$0.54 for free snacks. Please note that these rates are higher in Alaska and Hawaii. Reimbursement rates are adjusted annually, every July 1.

Question. How is "area eligible" defined?

Answer. An afterschool care program site is "area eligible" if it is located in the attendance area of a school where at least 50 percent of the enrolled children are eligible for free or reduced price meals. Afterschool care programs can use free and reduced price meal data from elementary, middle, and high schools to document a site as "area eligible".

Question. How do I apply for afterschool snacks?

Answer. Contact your CACFP State agency to participate. In most cases, the CACFP State agency will be your State Department of Education.

Question. When do the reimbursements begin?

Answer. As soon as the State agency approves your application, reimbursement will be earned for the snacks you serve to eligible children and youth, through the age of 18.

Question. What records must be maintained?

Answer. Your State agency will provide you with specific information on the reporting and recordkeeping requirements. You will need to maintain a roster or sign-in sheet for participating children. Additionally, you must record and report the total number of snacks you serve each day, and document compliance with the meal pattern for CACFP. Your State agency will be able to provide you with a copy of the CACFP meal pattern.

Question. Can I receive reimbursement during the summer months?

Answer. You may only receive reimbursement for afterschool snacks served in CACFP during times of the year when school is in session. However, your program may be able to participate in our Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) during the summer months, and receive reimbursement for providing nutritious meals and snacks to children and youth in your program. Your State agency can also provide you with information on participating in the SFSP this summer.

Question. Who administers the program?

Answer. The CACFP is administered on the Federal level by USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. Within individual States, the Program is administered by a State agency, in most cases through offices in the State Department of Education. At the local level, the program is administered by participating institutions or organizations.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD MORTENSON, WISCONSIN STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Senator KOHL. We thank you very much, Shirley, for your testimony and your comments and they will be very helpful to us as we proceed. We thank you so much.

Our next speaker will be Richard Mortenson from the Wisconsin State Department of Public Instruction.

Mr. MORTENSON. Thank you, Senator, for allowing us to be here today and to testify in support of S. 1958. The legislation you introduced will provide an essential incentive for schools to implement the School Breakfast Program. Breakfast is an important component in addressing hunger and essential to promoting the health of our children, and academic children.

Understanding this, we are very concerned with Wisconsin's low participation in the school breakfast program. Based on participation figures from 1992–93 school year compared to 1998–99, we have made a lot of accomplishments. We've basically doubled our food service sites in the State of Wisconsin, and we've doubled the participation, but this is not enough, we have a lot more to do.

On the national level, 23 States have mandated that certain schools participate in the breakfast program. Wisconsin does not have a mandate. To support local discretion, our State legislature authorized a school breakfast startup grant in 1994–95 with an annual appropriation of \$150,000.

Through the 1999–2000 school year, we granted \$900,000 resulting in implementation of breakfast programs in 113 schools reaching an estimated 11,000 children. The breakfast startup legislation is deleted after the 1999–2000 school year, and beginning in 2000–2001, a 10 cent per breakfast reimbursement will be provided for each breakfast served under the School Breakfast Program. The appropriation of 2000–2001 is approximately \$900,000 as requested in our department's biannual budget request, and strongly supported by the Wisconsin School Food Service Association and other allied organizations as a means to help schools sustain existing breakfast programs.

This was excellent legislation and an increased financial commitment by our State. Senator Kohl, your startup grant legislation will allow us to continue offering the financial incentive to initiate breakfast programs.

In 1999–2000, we were unable to fund nine schools serving approximately 2,500 children because of insufficient funds. Insufficient funds must not be the barrier that blocks access to breakfast programs for Wisconsin children.

In an effort to eliminate financial barriers, our legislature has introduced Senate Bill 399. The bill provides that school district's revenue limit is increased by an amount—by an amount equal to the cost incurred by a school district to establish a school breakfast or a school lunch program.

The bill also directs each school district that has neither a lunch or a breakfast program to annually submit an evaluation of how well nourished pupils are in the district.

Your bill, Senator Kohl, would be a perfect one with the State legislation.

As I listened to the testimony of the social workers and others last week on Senate Bill 399, many of the truths and findings of the Tufts University School nutrition were brought to mind. Testimony focused on the impact of undernutrition on the behavior of children and school performance. Undernourished children are more susceptible to illness and are more likely to be absent from

school; hungry children have diminished attention spans and are unable to perform tasks as well as their nourished peers. Particularly alarming to me in this testimony was a social worker who believed she observed increased aggression and violence in hungry children. Obviously we must expand access to nutrition programs to help insure children are prepared to learn.

Realizing that public awareness and education are also critical to breakfast expansion, we began a campaign entitled Good Breakfast for Good Learning. This initiative began in 1966 with the focus on schools to relate the importance of breakfast for students relative to learning and behavior, and to actively promote good nutrition and breakfast for all students.

In 1998, the initiative was expanded to parents and other community organizations. Basically 20-minute presentations are offered to teachers, principals, administrators, school nutrition staff and school board members and parents to discuss the nutritional impact of breakfast and how to access a variety of resources.

Special thanks need to be given to the Maternal and Child Health Education and Training Institute of the University of Wisconsin, the Milwaukee Hunger Task Force, and the Wisconsin Division of Health for their commitment to this initiative.

USDA's pilot on universal breakfast will help us move closer to the objective of meeting the nutritional needs of children. The nutrition, education and training program would also help us meet this objective and is critical to maintaining a national infrastructure for the training of school food personnel and instructing teachers in nutrition, education and teaching children about the relationship of nutrition to health.

However, I believe that the \$2 million requested by USDA is not adequate. To promote a national infrastructure, \$5 million is probably the minimal amount necessary. In Wisconsin, an adequately funded Net program would help us focus on nutrition issues and overcome attitudinal barriers through awareness initiatives such as the Good Breakfast for Good Learning initiative just discussed.

Some of the attitudes that Net helps us to overcome are breakfast is a responsibility of the home, not the school; the program will lose money which the general funds cannot support; children can purchase from vending machines.

In addition to financial issues, we need to focus attention on the administrative and paperwork burdens faced by schools and States. Regulatory changes can be made to allow nutrition professionals more time for nutrition, and nutrition education activities while maintaining program accountability.

An example is the application process for free and reduced priced meals. The process is confusing and time intensive for parents and schools. One possible solution discussed for years is linking to the IRS database which contains the same family size income data on the application form—as on the application form. The time savings would be significant and possibly would improve accountability of program benefits provided.

Another example of potential regulatory change is the computer analysis required by Federal regulations of 1 week of menus on the school lunch program. The time expended calculating the nutrient

data would be better spent on more global approaches to nutrition and nutrition education.

Now Senator, I'd like to thank you for the opportunity.

STATEMENT OF BRETT BICOY, BROWN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Senator KOHL. Thank you very much, Richard. We'd like to ask Brett Bicoy from Brown County Community Foundation to make a statement.

Mr. BICOY. Good afternoon, Senator Kohl and the many others who have gathered here today. I am pleased and honored to have this opportunity to share with you some of the impressive partnerships we have built in Green Bay to address the issue of hunger in our community.

Our downtown elementary schools, like the one we're sitting in today, have become major centers of community activity, both after school and during the summer months. The Green Bay Area Public School District has been an exceptional host opening these facilities to a wide range of nonprofit organizations. On any given afternoon in a downtown Green Bay school, you might find the YMCA staff offering recreational activities, the 4H program providing extended learning opportunities, the Catholic Diocese celebrating Hmong culture and the technical college and the literacy council offering literacy programs for the whole family.

Senator, the plan you outline today will have a direct impact on the effectiveness of many of these after-school efforts. These programs try, as much as possible, to widely vary the ages of children that participate. We want younger children to be involved with older children in positive activities. The rationale is a simple one: The young kids are going to mimic the behavior of their older counterparts, whether that behavior is constructive or destructive. We want those older brothers and sisters to be modeling positive and constructive behavior.

What this has meant in practical terms is that the wonderful after-school feeding programs often go unused by some of these programs. For instance, some of the extended learning opportunities partner high schoolers with elementary students right in the classroom after school. Rather than offer a snack to only those children who qualify and not the others, these programs simply choose not to utilize the public schools after-school feeding program. This is at the same time the school offers their quality meal program to participants in a different program exclusively for young children that may be going on in the very next room in the same building. Your plan, Senator, would immediately solve this problem and we thank you for your effort.

The way this problem developed, however, I think is indicative of the changing manner in which we provide positive activities for children during nonschool hours. Due in part to the efforts of former Congressman Jay Johnson, Green Bay was privileged to receive a 21st Century Learning Center Grant a few years ago. When a group of us wrote that grant, we envisioned a myriad of after school activities targeted at elementary school children and largely coordinated and offered by the public schools themselves.

While the schools have used these monies to offer value education—valuable educational opportunities, we never foresaw the incredible degree to which nonprofit organizations would be offering the programs. Consequently, we didn't recognize the wide range of ages these—of children these agencies served, and thus we never anticipated the issues that arose with the age limitations on children who participate in after school meal programs.

If there was a lesson to be learned here, it's to recognize the importance of incorporating a certain level of flexibility into these funding programs.

My role at the greater Green Bay Community Foundation is to direct the organization's granting operations. In essence, I oversee the distribution of our charitable dollars, many of which support the before and after school programs and the summer activities that utilize these school meal programs.

With each and every grant that the community foundation makes, we face the continual struggle to balance our need for basic standards of performance while still offering the grantees a level of flexibility that allows them to respond to changes and take advantage of new opportunities to improve their programs. The simple fact of the matter is as much as I like to think I know everything, my wife is always quick to point out that I do not.

The lesson that I learned, and I would like to convey to everyone involved in the development of these important programs, is to be sure to incorporate a sufficient level of flexibility into the rules.

For instance, more and more, many of our local programs are targeting whole families instead of just the children alone. We need the flexibility to explore ways to juggle the Federal Summer Food Service Program money for children in the context of serving the entire family.

We also have the problem of children not going to meal sites during the summer because their parents don't want them to cross at major streets or major intersections. Remember, there are no crossing guards during the summer. We need to explore—we need the flexibility to explore nontraditional meal sites and to explore the delivery of meals to children who are home alone.

We all recognize the need for hard and fast rules to ensure the quality and safety of meal programs, that's not in question. But we also recognize that without sufficient flexibility in these programs, innovation will be stifled and the children will pay the consequences.

If I could, Senator, I'd like to make one last comment before I get off my soapbox for the day.

These programs are of critical importance to our community. The fact that we can enjoy this level of prosperity and still experience food insecurity is almost unbelievable. But as you heard from the earlier panel, food insecurity is a real problem. The study shows that over half the food insecurity occurs among working families in our community. These programs alleviate the problems of hunger in Green Bay, but they do not eliminate it.

We agree with the USDA Community Food Security Initiative as it outlines a number of steps that can be taken to overcome this problem, but perhaps the most significant of all their recommendations is increase in economic and job security.

The study that was conducted shows that an unskilled worker who makes \$7.50 an hour often cannot adequately feed his or her two children. The problems that we are talking about today are of critical importance because they alleviate the problem of feeding those children today. But for that family, perhaps an investment in job skills education, of budget training or health insurance or childcare subsidies will not just alleviate the problem of hunger, but eliminate it once and for all.

Senator, on behalf of all of us in Green Bay—in this Green Bay area who deal with these issues, please accept our deep and sincere thanks for coming here today. Sometimes we get a little worked up here in Green Bay, and every time we recognize that something has changed for the better, we point out two other things that are wrong with what goes on in our community. Please know, however, that we all recognize and appreciate the important work you are doing in Washington on behalf of the less fortunate children and families in our community.

Senator KOHL. Thank you very much, Brett. Our last speaker for today is Nancy Armbrust who's director of government affairs for Schreiber Foods. Nancy?

STATEMENT OF NANCY ARMBRUST, DIRECTOR, GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS, SCHREIBER FOODS

Ms. ARMBRUST. Thank you. Good afternoon. Brett Bicoy and I were asked here today to talk a little bit about the exciting partnerships that exist in this community and the results that we're seeing, especially as they impact children and hunger, children and nutrition.

I've been asked—Brett and I decided that I would share with you a few moments of why I think it's important that companies like ours, Schreiber Foods, get involved in this activity. And I want to thank you, Senator, for inviting me here today to share with you these comments, and I also want to acknowledge the wide number of partnership members that exist in the audience today. I appreciate the opportunity to represent you, and I'm sure you'll tell me if I haven't represented you well.

But I hope you were able to picture in your mind, from what Brett commented, on the many positive ways our community is working together to support children and their families in obtaining the resources, skills and knowledge to create and sustain a healthy quality of life.

These results have been achieved through the development of several public/private partnerships, too many to name today, but there are three I'd like to discuss or at least mention: Partners in Education, which represents business and all 10 area school districts; Community Partners, which is sponsored by United Way and the University of Wisconsin Extension of Brown County, whose focus is on positive youth development; and the Mayor's Neighborhood Resources Board that has provided innumerable help to neighborhood and neighborhood organizations in our community.

Each of these organizations have, as part of their focus, to insure that all the children of Brown County come to school ready to learn and stay actively engaged in the learning process through high school graduation and beyond.

As partners in these several initiatives, we've looked beyond the normal classroom walls for solutions as Brett described earlier.

While, as companies, we may have provided donations of dollars, space and food—and I don't want to underestimate those donations because they are important—I believe the most valued resource has come from our employee volunteers. These individuals—and again, not only in our company but numerous companies throughout this community who are supported by organizations—have provided leadership, they've shared their unique skills and knowledge while serving as mentors, not only to our youth, but to the neighborhood organizations as well.

An example is during the past 2 years, we have significantly expanded the number of children utilizing both the after school and summer food programs as a result of volunteers. Individuals have facilitated the coming together of various agencies and provided ongoing support in the implementation of these initiatives. Again, many of those people are in the room today.

If I tried to describe that type of meeting and the discussions that go on and so you could really see the value of these volunteers, it would probably take me the next hour, hour and a half. But having volunteers that can provide the continuity and the consistency and the resources to help bring people together, identify the barriers that exist; we can't do that because we don't have space; we can't do that because we only deliver to these schools, we don't deliver to these schools; or we can't do that because we only operate our programs these weeks versus these weeks. When we got these people together and as the group of volunteers worked together, we were able to identify ways to overcome those barriers and to supplement the holes that were missing in terms of providing continuity of service to children in these programs.

Now I'll get on my soapbox. Why are we involved? This is really simple. Even if we weren't a food company, we would understand this and many of our organizations do in this community. Investment in the elimination of hunger today is a good business decision. If we fail to make this investment, it is doubtful that we can sustain the healthy economic growth that we have experienced in recent years.

The information that we heard earlier today from Karen Early's report is alarming to us. Parents who are hungry, who are worried about feeding their children are distracted at work, they have higher levels of absenteeism and experience increased health care claims which significantly impacts our ability as an organization to meet our customer requirements.

As companies, we understand the research that tells us how poor nutrition impacts the behavior of children, their school performance and their overall cognitive development. Poor performance early in school is a major risk factor for dropping out of school in later years.

Also, information and research from the Tufts University Study that was mentioned earlier, there is good news. While there is a clear link to the intellectual development of children who do not receive adequate nutrition, in many cases this damage can be reversed and may not be permanent if action is taken.

The children of today make up the workforce of Brown County and America. By companies such as ours not aggressively taking steps to end childhood hunger today, we are not only compromising their futures, but ours as well.

So what else can we do? We sincerely applaud your efforts and the efforts of this committee and others to expand and enrich the programs that have been outlined earlier today for all the reasons that everybody has talked about.

If you look across the street outside of Nicolet School, you will see the Rosebush Childcare Center. This center, one of several operated by Encompass Childcare in our community, was built primarily through the donations of private companies and individuals. This center, working in partnership with Nicolet School and Headstart programs, provides wrap-around childcare for Headstart students. Providing additional resources for hot lunches to low-income children at centers like these will have an immediate impact on the overall quality of their nutrition.

As I was walking in the door this afternoon, one of the staff members stopped me and mentioned that of the seven centers that serve hot lunch programs throughout Green Bay, 40 percent of the children served received free or reduced lunch.

Also introduction of incentives to expand the School Breakfast Program and allow after-school programs to serve teens up to 18 years will add important resources to our current efforts in Green Bay as Brett has discussed.

As Karen Early stated in her comments, the Brown County study showed that 50 percent of those individuals who are food insecure are working. That's amazing to me. I was not aware of that until I looked at the survey, and it leaves me somewhat dumfounded.

In addition to everything that we have talked about earlier, all the other efforts, I believe that we're missing an opportunity here, and that's one that we need to increase the awareness of employers, like our company, of the role that they can play in assuring that their employees have the information and access to these programs.

We have a captive audience and I believe it's an opportunity that we're missing both in partnering with yourself and the public, as well as taking a look at how we can provide these resources to our employees.

Thank you very much for your time and thank you very much for coming to Green Bay.

Senator KOHL. Thank you, Nancy. And ladies and gentlemen, do you have any comments, suggestions, thoughts to express to our panelists today? Yes.

STATEMENT OF DONNA FREEMAN, COFOUNDER AND RESOURCE DEVELOPER, FORT HOWARD/JEFFERSON RESOURCE CENTER

Ms. FREEMAN. I'd just like to talk a little bit about what Brett touched on on the inflexibility of the programs and the concern that we have. I'm sorry. Donna Freeman.

Last summer—I'm a cofounder and resource developer of the Fort Howard/Jefferson Resource Center, and last summer we did the—tried to do something very innovative with the summer breakfast feeding program. Again, for many of the reasons that Brett

pointed out as far as children not being able to cross the streets or, you know, parents going to work and not, you know, having the—being able to get the children up and that sort of thing. And so we created a—what we thought was a very good program of also wanting to incorporate some sort of learning because we know that learning needs to go on during the summer as well, not just during the school year. And so we developed a program. We got some of the neighborhood residents in different parts of the neighborhood to donate their front porches and their lawns and we took out breakfast and books, reading books to children while they ate their breakfast. And we served 162 children.

During the last week of that program—it was a 6-week program—we were paid a visit by some officials who informed us we can't do that. And so what we had to do was, you know, then stop that program. So the balance of that week those children didn't get their breakfasts or that—they still were able to get the reading because we still went out, but we couldn't take the food out to them any more because of the regulations that said they had to come into the school building and the workers had to place it in their hands. And, you know, everything we were already doing, but doing it in a more flexible way.

And those are types of things, when we become innovative in trying to touch those children and give them that food during the summer months, which we feel is just as important, like I said, during the school year. It's the flexibility that we're missing in order to better serve the children in our district.

Senator KOHL. Thank you. Yes.

STATEMENT OF PEGGY WEST, OSHKOSH SCHOOL DISTRICT

Ms. WEST. I'm Peggy West, and I'm from the Oshkosh School District and I just want to make a comment and thank you for your efforts here.

We have three breakfast programs in Oshkosh, one started all of three consecutive years now. Two out of the three are in serious jeopardy of—we're basically going to lose them because we can't get the kids there to participate, so the program loses a tremendous amount of money.

In order to keep them, I'm seriously thinking about trying to work that into the school day and offering all kids a free breakfast. Then we don't have to worry about the free and reduced and the full-paying kids. And if we could do that, we might get some kids to participate.

There's a lot of reasons why we just—we probably put the program out there and then the kids just don't come for whatever reason. They're responsible a lot of times to just get themselves to school. If we can get them there, once we get them there, then we can feed them, I think we're going to be on the right track. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF CATHY HUNTOWSKI, BROWN COUNTY FOOD AND HUNGER NETWORK

Senator KOHL. Thank you. Yes.

Ms. HUNTOWSKI. Yes, my name is Cathy Huntowski and I'm representing the Brown County Food and Hunger Network. And I'd like to thank—take the opportunity to thank you and Under Sec-

retary Watkins for coming to Green Bay in your own ways and listening to our concerns surrounding hunger and food security.

The Brown County Food and Hunger Network has been working to eliminate hunger and address issues related to the food security since 1983. Our members represent local pantries, emergency food providers, faith community members, government, social service agencies and private citizens. In recent years we've sponsored a wide range of food-security related projects and used the results of UW Extension Food Security Research to target our efforts. The Summer Breakfast Program was one that our organization piloted with the help of Extension, Schreiber Foods and other organizations. Extension has provided a great deal of education, leadership and guidance in focusing our efforts and understanding the broad range of issues related to creating a food secure community.

There are many faces to hunger, and certainly children and families forced to choose between food and shelter or heat deserve our attention. But in a moving economic climate, there certainly should be resources to feed all families in this nation. What we need to create is a sensible safety net that insures all families the basic resources to maintain healthy and productive lives. They are working and they're working full-time, and full-time work requires childcare providers that offer a safe environment and healthy nutritionally sound meals.

Working full-time requires reliable safe transportation to and from work sites, childcare, food and social service resources.

Working requires access to safe, affordable food and time management and food preparation skills to insure healthy nutritious meals.

Working full-time requires access to affordable health care for all family members and requires education and training opportunities so that advancement into higher pay is possible.

Working requires access to financial education to manage resource and appropriate financial services needed to be available to those families.

Working requires access to a wide range of safe, affordable housing and the opportunity to own a home.

Working requires social and family networks that provide support and encouragement, and it requires a wage structure that can support all those things and more that families and individuals need to survive and thrive. That should be our goal, to provide appropriate assistance that will allow all our citizens to survive and thrive.

Thank you for your time and attention to these vital issues and be assured that our organization stands ready to support any and all efforts on your behalf to make the vision of a food secure society a reality.

Senator KOHL. Thank you. Yes.

STATEMENT OF PAUL VANRYZEN, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION

Mr. VANRYZEN. I'd like to thank you all for coming and I'd like to introduce myself and offer a different solution to addressing the issue of food security. My name is Paul VanRyzen. I am with UW Extension.

I'm the urban gardening coordinator for the county and the urban counties in northeastern Wisconsin. And through the work of the nutrition program here in Brown County with Extension, we've developed some community gardens, and from research that I have seen, a typical community garden plot of about 500 square feet will provide about \$500 worth of fruits and vegetables for a family in one growing season, so that's one great way a family can actively take part in providing for the family. Even if they are busy, even if they have to work long hours, they can go home and do some gardening at home with their kids in one of our community gardens.

So I'd like to encourage you all to just keep in mind that there are some other solutions instead of just giving people—or in addition, I should say, to just giving people, you know, opportunities for food through the school program, for example, that they can also provide food for themselves with the garden program.

And I would like to mention, too, that we're going to be starting a youth garden right outside the doors, so as you're walking out, take a look toward the park, we're going to have a youth garden there. And that will provide gardening instruction for kids and also families in the neighborhood so they can learn how to grow their own vegetables. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF JOHN PINKART, NUTRITION COORDINATOR, OCONTO AND MARINETTE COUNTIES

Senator KOHL. Yes, sir.

Mr. PINKART. My name's John Pinkart, and I am Karen's counterpart in Oconto and Marinette Counties, and we too conducted a food security survey on a smaller scale, but we found in our survey of 316 Food Stamp eligible program participants, that 62 percent of our respondents said yes to our survey question which asked whether they ran out of food or money to buy food for themselves or for their families at sometime during any given month of the year. And so I believe that the potential for food insecurity exists in our rural areas as well as our urban areas of northeastern Wisconsin.

STATEMENT OF YVONNE ROULHAC HORTON, COOPERATIVE EXTENSION, UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION

Senator KOHL. Thank you, sir. Yes, ma'am.

Ms. HORTON. Yvonne Roulhac Horton, Cooperative Extension, University of Wisconsin Extension.

You've had an opportunity to hear from a number of our staff members that are passionate about this issue, but I also wanted to give a perspective statewide of how Co-op expansion has responded and has continued to respond to some of the food security issues.

You especially learned the coalition-building that Karen has done; Nancy mentioned that as well as Brett, and the kinds of things that we're doing, the community gardening issue; the applied research, that's one of the activities in terms of the food and security research that has been done. This is something that can be replicated throughout the state; in Oconto County as John mentioned, it has been done.

Community education. That's one issue that probably we have not spoken enough about. That is how we are working with low-

income families to help them make choices about what food costs, nutritious foods and helping them to collaborate with other professionals so they can stretch their food dollars and working with volunteers in that capacity.

In shaping public policy, we're working with families and policy makers by offering research-based family impact seminars in counties throughout the State.

So as we look at solutions, please consider Extension as a resource, and we look forward to continuing our working relationship.

Senator KOHL. Thank you. Anybody else want to offer any comments or thoughts?

Well, it's been a very good panel here today. I think we've all learned quite a bit about the problems of food and nutrition and hunger, how they affect our society, and all the work that yet needs to be done to be sure that people who are hungry are taken care of and that young people, in particular, who grow up without sufficient food and nutrition receive our attention.

I think we'll all redouble our efforts. I know that we will, I will, my staff will. And I appreciate very much the comments of all of those who are on the panel today. I think that they have added considerably to our understanding of the problem and to our determination to do something about it.

CONCLUSION OF HEARING

So we thank you very much for coming, and we thank you very much for coming. And we'll see you soon. Thank you.

[Whereupon, at 1:40 p.m., Thursday, March 16, the hearing was concluded, and the subcommittee was recessed to reconvene subject to the call of the Chair.]

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