

UNITED WAY OF THE MIDLANDS CONTACT:

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## **United Way of the Midlands Aims to “Silence the Growl” and Decrease Summer Hunger this Omaha Gives**

On Wednesday, May 23 during Omaha Gives, a 24-hour charitable challenge in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is directing donations to programs that alleviate summer hunger.

Over 102,000 people are food insecure, and summer can be particularly difficult for them.<sup>1</sup> During the school year, 62,000 students in the metro area qualify for free or reduced lunches. During the summer, when these supports are not available, families have to find new ways to provide meals. In Nebraska, 1 in 5 children are considered food insecure.<sup>2</sup>

Summer hunger impacts the whole family, putting extra strain on families already struggling to meet their budget. Low income families spend an additional \$300 a month for groceries when children are out of school.<sup>3</sup> In the metro area, 20.4 percent of residents “often” or “sometimes” worry about running out of food before there is money to buy more.<sup>4</sup>

People struggling with food insecurity are faced with the choice of putting food on the table or paying for other basic needs such as utilities, rent or medications.<sup>5</sup> Parents and guardians may skip meals to ensure their children have enough to eat, or they may eat less nutritious food because it is less expensive, which increases the risk of diet related diseases. Children who do not have enough to eat generally have poorer health, do worse in school and have higher hospitalization rates.<sup>6</sup>

Together, we can ensure everyone has enough food throughout the summer. With the help of corporate and individual donors, UWM will continue to invest in healthy food and hunger relief programs and partner with organizations to meet food needs in the Omaha-Council Bluffs metro area. These programs are vital for our community and include emergency food pantries, healthy meal programs, community gardens, after-school and out-of-school programs that include meals for the students and meal assistance for seniors.

People can help “Silence the Growl” for those in need by donating to UWM on May 23, 2018 at [www.omahagives.org/UnitedWayoftheMidlands](http://www.omahagives.org/UnitedWayoftheMidlands).

### **About United Way of the Midlands**

Thanks to donors, volunteers and community partners, United Way of the Midlands (UWM) is not only focused on addressing our community’s human needs today; it is focused on what can be and what should be. It is building on today’s strong partnerships to create even more comprehensive human service efforts tomorrow, so our community can solve some of the root causes of poverty. UWM is community-based, community-focused. Thanks to those who share their strength, UWM is COMMUNITY STRONG. Please visit [UnitedWayMidlands.org](http://UnitedWayMidlands.org) for more information.

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<sup>1</sup><http://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2015/>

<sup>2</sup>[www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/2015-mapthemealgap-exec-summary.pdf](http://www.feedingamerica.org/research/map-the-meal-gap/2015/2015-mapthemealgap-exec-summary.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>[www.nokidhungry.org/pdfs/Fact\\_Sheet-2016.pdf](http://www.nokidhungry.org/pdfs/Fact_Sheet-2016.pdf)

<sup>4</sup>[www.douglascountyhealth.com/images/stories/2015%20PRC%20CHNA%20Report%20-%20Omaha%20Metro%20Area%20Douglas%20Sarpy%20Cass%20Pottawattamie%20Counties.pdf](http://www.douglascountyhealth.com/images/stories/2015%20PRC%20CHNA%20Report%20-%20Omaha%20Metro%20Area%20Douglas%20Sarpy%20Cass%20Pottawattamie%20Counties.pdf)

<sup>5</sup>[www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/hunger-in-america/hia-2014-executive-summary.pdf](http://www.feedingamerica.org/hunger-in-america/our-research/hunger-in-america/hia-2014-executive-summary.pdf)

<sup>6</sup>[www.sustainabletable.org/280/food-security-food-access](http://www.sustainabletable.org/280/food-security-food-access)