

News Release



The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign
24 Clover Rd
Newfoundland, NJ 07435
Telephone: AMPLE-6-9880 (267-536-9880)
Fax: 866-748-3516

Contact: **Lansing Sylvia**
news@AmpleHarvest.org
www.AmpleHarvest.org/Press.php
Tel: AMPLE-6-9880 (267-536-9880)

AMPLEHARVEST.ORG CAMPAIGN ANNOUNCES SPECIAL OUTREACH IN TORNADO RAVAGED ALABAMA

All efforts for the immediate future are being focused on helping the Alabama and surrounding area food pantries meet expected increase in need for food.

For Immediate Release

West Milford, NJ – (May 6 2011) – In response to the extraordinary damage caused by the recent tornadoes in Alabama, The AmpleHarvest.org^(SM) Campaign has announced a special program to help assure that the food pantries throughout the devastated area will be able to meet the increased need for food in the months to come.

The Ampleharvest.org Campaign was created in 2009 to help growers share their garden bounty with those in need by providing an online clearing house (www.AmpleHarvest.org) to find neighborhood food pantries accepting donations of fresh produce. In less than two years, more than 3,600 food pantries (more than 1 out of every 10 in America) spread across all fifty states have registered on the free site and more are signing up daily.

According to AmpleHarvest.org founder and CNN Hero Gary Oppenheimer, "From the very beginning, our efforts to promote the AmpleHarvest.org concept have been dispersed equally across the country – all states receiving equal attention in our efforts both to get food pantries added to the nationwide registry and to educate, encourage and enable America's 40+ million home gardeners to donate their excess garden bounty to a local food pantry. However in response to the BP oil spill last summer, we shifted our focus to the hard hit Gulf States for a period of time.

“Now in response to the devastating tornado activity that recently tore up Alabama and the surrounding states, we are once again shifting our focus to those areas most seriously impacted. Thousands of homes have been damaged or destroyed leaving families across the region dependent on the already hard pressed food pantries. AmpleHarvest.org will enable millions of gardeners to easily find a local food pantry with whom to share their garden bounty.”

“We have been working with all of the Alabama food banks, starting with the West Alabama Food Bank whose service area includes hard hit Tuscaloosa and Marion counties, to reach as many of the food pantries as possible to urge them to register themselves at www.AmpleHarvest.org/tornado. Jonah Murphy, agency relations coordinator for the West Alabama Food Bank stated “Thanks to AmpleHarvest.org, the West Alabama Food Bank will be able to help area agencies get fresh produce. This allows fresh fruits and vegetables to be distributed to disaster victims of the storm, and will help replenish the nutritionally important food that has been lost over the last few days.”

The opportunity for home gardens to help food pantries nationwide is significant said Oppenheimer. “Last August, 460 food pantries responding to a survey reported collectively receiving in excess of 700,000 pounds of locally grown garden produce, and it was only the middle of the growing season.”

In addition to garden produce donations, the AmpleHarvest.org Android and iPhone apps (both free) enable people to help the local food pantries. According to Oppenheimer, “These apps were originally intended to help gardeners find a pantry but are equally helpful to anyone in a store who suddenly finds an item on sale and want to find a food pantry in the area that needs items like it. Whether the donation is from someone’s backyard or not, the AmpleHarvest.org Campaign is an important link between the food pantry and the community around it.”

About AmpleHarvest.org, Inc.

AmpleHarvest.org, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501c3 charity which has received backing and support from the US Department of Agriculture, Google, Inc., National Gardening Association, the Garden Writers of America, Rotary International, National Council of Churches, Veterans of Foreign Wars and numerous faith groups. The AmpleHarvest.org Campaign works to diminish hunger in America by enabling gardeners to easily find a local food pantry eager to receive the excess garden bounty. For more information on the campaign, visit www.AmpleHarvest.org/press or call AMPLE-6-9880 (267-536-9880).

About the West Alabama Food Bank

The West Alabama Food Bank’s mission is to help alleviate hunger and food insecurity by distributing food donations to serve residents in a nine county service area. Incorporated in 1987 as a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, the West Alabama Food Bank has distributed more than 17 million pounds of food to households in need. The West Alabama Food Bank is a member of the Alabama Food Bank Association and an affiliate of Feeding America – the Nation’s Food Bank Network. For more information, visit www.westalabamafoodbank.org.

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