



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Rebecca Egsieker

770-842-2046

regsieker@thedairyalliance.com

Community Foodbank of Central Alabama Working to Close the Hunger Gap with New Partnership

The Milk2MyPlate Program brings nutrient-rich milk to the food insecure

BIRMINGHAM (November 8, 2019) — The Dairy Alliance Chief Strategy Officer, Debbie McKenzie, and Community Food Bank of Central Alabama Director of Partnerships, Elizabeth Wix, are making a big impact locally with the announcement of the *Milk2MyPlate* program launch today. This milk purchasing program is the first of its kind in Birmingham to benefit food insecure families. Through this initiative, the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama will receive 60 gallons of fresh milk a week over the next year to distribute to families in need across its 12 county service area.

“One in six people are food insecure in Central Alabama, that’s over 230,000 of our neighbors who are at risk of hunger,” said Elizabeth Wix, Community Food Bank of Central Alabama Director of Partnerships. “It is important for our food bank to provide our community with healthy foods, and we are thankful to The Dairy Alliance for helping arm us with the support we need to ensure that people who struggle with hunger have access to nutrient-rich milk.”

According to Feeding America’s ‘Map the Meal Gap’ report, almost 800,000 Alabamians, including one in five children, experience food insecurity, which means they struggle to afford enough food at any point throughout the year. Food banks, and the pantries with which they partner, are vital resources for these families.

“On behalf of the dairy farm families of Alabama and the Southeast, The Dairy Alliance is proud to partner in the implementation of the *Milk2MyPlate* program, helping to ensure that hungry families in Alabama have better access to nutrient-rich, wholesome milk,” stated Debbie McKenzie, Chief Strategy Officer of The Dairy Alliance.

The 2014 Hunger Study, the most comprehensive survey of food pantry clients, found that 40 percent of respondents said they would like access to more dairy products in their local pantries. Due to lack of cold storage, providing milk through the food bank networks in Alabama has been an underlying issue.

The Dairy Alliance answered the need with a \$35,000 grant to purchase new refrigeration units for the mobile Corner Market, a program launched by the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama to serve low-income families, disabled people and senior citizens living in neighborhoods without full-service grocery store.

“Alabama’s dairy farmers are proud to partner with the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama, ensuring nutrient-rich milk is accessible for *all* the families of Alabama,” said Will Gilmer, a third-generation dairy farmer from Shiloh.

The *Milk2MyPlate* program was created by Northern Illinois Food Bank and Prairie Farms Dairy Inc. in 2012. This model has created opportunities for food banks, processors and dairy farmers across the country to replicate and better serve their communities.

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About The Dairy Alliance

On behalf of dairy farm families, The Dairy Alliance, a non-profit, works with schools, health professionals, retailers, dairy processors and the public to promote dairy foods. For more information, visit thedairyalliance.com.

About the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama

The Community Food Bank of Central Alabama’s mission is to feed people in need today and foster collaborative solutions to end hunger tomorrow. We accomplish this mission by supplying 12 million meals a year to over 230 food pantries, shelters, and children’s programs in 12 counties of Central Alabama. We also create healthy food access by feeding children at risk of hunger during school breaks, delivering fresh produce and other staples to residents living in isolated communities, and providing food to under-nourished mothers of critically ill infants through on-site hospital food pantries. Each month the Community Food Bank feeds over 70,000 children, seniors, veterans, and neighbors at risk of hunger. Learn more at www.feedingal.org