

**GUEST ESSAY**

# Check Out Hunger a timely success



**THOMAS C. FERRARO**

Thomas C. Ferraro is the founder and director of [Foodlink](#).

**O**n behalf of Foodlink and the network of agencies and individuals we serve, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for making this year's Check Out Hunger campaign an overwhelming success.

Due to the hard work of our partners and the generosity of the community, an astounding \$720,000 was raised to support our efforts to fight hunger and its root causes. We are honored by the outpouring of kindness and the affirmation of the important service we provide.

In this time of increased need and economic uncertainty, these resources could not come at a more urgent point. Local emergency food providers served 20 percent more individuals in 2008 than the year prior, and the demand is continuing into 2009.

Our conservative budgeting was prepared to accommodate a potential dip in the campaign this year. Instead, this extra in-

come will allow us to purchase more food critical to sustaining our neighbors in need.

And yet while we are thrilled to have more resources to serve more in need, we are acutely aware of the need for proper stewardship of the community's generosity. We therefore remain committed to our process of ensuring that our agency partners are efficient and effective.

Our experience echoes that of other organizations and funders in demonstrating that there are too many groups to support everyone. Even if we had unlimited resources, enabling that duplication of services and efforts is not proper stewardship. And the fact is, of course, that resources are limited.

As successful as the Check Out Hunger campaign was, we still cannot guarantee all of the nutritionally appropriate food requested of us. In light of this, we encourage groups and agencies to collabo-

rate to better meet the holistic needs of our neighbors. We do not need more emergency food providers in our community- we simply need to do a better job of working together.

As we at Foodlink celebrate 30 years of service, we know the recipe for success that has sustained us through the years. Our generous corporate partners, led by Wegmans, provide the donated food we rescue and redistribute as our core of food banking.

Our network of food pantries, soup kitchens and emergency shelters are on the front lines of serving our neighbors in need.

And all of it is made possible by the support of the community at large — volunteers, donors, advocates and every individual who made the decision to add a few dollars to their grocery bill to help Check Out Hunger in our community.

