

'Feed the Need' raises money to feed hungry children

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When most schools let out for the summer in a few weeks, thousands of North Carolina children from the Piedmont to the coast will be at risk of going hungry.

Many rely on the free and reduced-price lunches at school for at least one meal a day, said Christy Simmons, manager of public relations for the Food Bank of Eastern & Central North Carolina.

Come summer, "all of the agencies will see an increase in demand," Simmons said.

Enter the second annual "Feed the Need" food drive. The effort, sponsored by The News & Observer, aims to fill the Food Bank's larders for warm weather demand. Most food banks see a glut of donations during the winter holidays. But as spring begins, the cupboards are often bare.

The drive, which began in late March, will culminate Saturday when 300 volunteers will sell special editions of The News & Observer at area Harris Teeter grocery

stores and Bojangles' restaurants.

The papers will sell for \$1, with 75 cents from each sale going to the Food Bank.

Last year, the Food Bank used the \$76,000 in cash and 16,000 pounds of donated food to provide more than 360,000 meals.

The News & Observer partnered with the Food Bank because it wanted to work with a charitable organization that has a regional focus. "Hunger is a real issue in our region," said Felicia Gressette, vice president of marketing for the newspaper.

Feed the Need will also accept food Saturday at the Harris Teeter at 2080 Kildaire Farm Road in Cary. Nonperishable food and hygiene products are requested.

Simmons said the Food Bank prefers canned goods with pop-off lids. "We love pop-top cans," Simmons said. "We don't assume they have access to a can opener."

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