

Editorial:

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Hungry for help

Could there be any more painful indication of the tough times many families are in than to know that some will not have enough food to eat? Yet that's the reality, right here, right now in an area where the "image" for many is of prosperity and abundance.

Charities that provide food to the needy have reported that the cupboards are, if not bare, way too close to it. And that's a frightening prospect, given that demand is up. So, of course, are food prices. Thus there seems a perfect storm brewing -- supply down, demand up, prices high and resources (of those who traditionally have helped) strained.

Escalating fuel prices are making things worse. Many clients of the food banks and churches hereabouts are coming in for assistance for the first time, reflecting the strain from the loss of jobs or cutbacks in hours worked. Yes, people who were confident they could provide for themselves and their children now find themselves seeking help out of dire necessity.

And help must come. Children must not go hungry. The elderly must have nourishment. This is not a place where we tolerate deprivation.

The Food Bank of Central and Eastern North Carolina distributes food to local groups, and churches and other charitable agencies do much noble work on their own. The Food Bank also takes donations directly. Call 919-875-0707 or go to www.foodbankcenc.org. And certainly money is needed, given that the price of fuel raises the expense for Food Bank deliveries.

In the end, the story isn't about numbers. It's about real people, with hungry children who don't understand why they have less to eat so parents can drive to their jobs. And about elderly people on fixed incomes who have to pass up the groceries they used to buy because of high prices. And about a place -- this place, where many have much, but have always felt a moral obligation to help those who don't. Now is the time.

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