

# VFW, Humana, Harvesters and After the Harvest Are Uniting to Combat Hunger in Greater Kansas City

## Campaign will fight food insecurity in the Kansas City and surrounding areas, with the goal of providing 50,000 meals to families in need

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**KANSAS CITY, Mo.** – [The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S.](#), [Humana Inc.](#) (NYSE: HUM), [Harvesters–The Community Food Network](#) and [After the Harvest](#) announced they are “*Uniting to Combat Hunger*” through a collaborative campaign designed to raise awareness and fight food insecurity in the Greater Kansas City area. The goal of the campaign is to provide 50,000 meals to local individuals in need, with a special focus on veterans, via community-wide initiatives.

Food insecurity is a societal issue that affects 1 in 8 people in the United States. In the Kansas City area alone, nearly 14 percent of the community face food insecurity. Defined as the lack of access to enough nutritionally adequate foods to live an active, healthy life, food insecurity contributes to poor health, lower productivity and higher medical costs.

This is a serious issue that also plagues our nation’s service men and women, as research shows 25 percent of the nation’s total active duty and reserve personnel seeks aid from food pantries and other charitable programs across the country.

“Hunger knows no season and is found in every county in both urban and rural communities. It takes all of us working together to end hunger,” said Valerie Nicholson-Watson, president and CEO of Harvesters–The Community Food Network. “We are grateful to our community partners, like the VFW, Humana and After the Harvest, who recognize the need in our community and step forward to help us fight hunger.”

The “*Uniting to Combat Hunger*” campaign will kick-off on Wednesday, June 6, when dozens of volunteers from the VFW and Humana will pick a variety of fresh produce from a

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local Kansas City farm. The food will be transported to Harvesters' warehouse in Kansas City, where volunteers will sort and package bags of food that will be distributed to area pantries.

The campaign will culminate at the 119th VFW National Convention in Kansas City, July 21-25. Convention attendees are encouraged to bring canned goods to donate, and on-site volunteers will include those items in bags of food that will be distributed to area pantries to help those in need.

"The job of selflessly serving our nation should never be rewarded with the choice of having enough food to eat or keeping a roof over ones' family," said VFW National Commander Keith Harman. "We're pleased to join food insecurity champions like Humana, After the Harvest and Harvesters to help ensure America's heroes and their families have access to the sustenance and fulfillment every person deserves."

The community can also get involved in the "*Uniting to Combat Hunger*" campaign by donating non-perishable food items in blue Harvesters barrels located throughout the city during the months of June and July. Nearly 60 barrels will be available at a variety of locations, including VFW Posts, Humana neighborhood locations, Partners in Primary Care Centers, Harley-Davidson, Lockton Affinity and Hy-Vee store locations.

"After the Harvest is honored to join forces with the VFW, Humana and Harvesters to elevate the issue of food insecurity, especially among vets of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. At 27 percent, the rate of food insecurity among this population is a particular injustice, considering the sacrifice these men and women have made to protect their country and its citizens. We are glad to join in seeking solutions to this problem, with an emphasis on securing fresh produce to ensure that these vets and many others are not only fed but also nourished," said After the Harvest Executive Director Lisa Ousley.

"No one should be food insecure and at Humana we've made a commitment to address it as part of our Bold Goal initiative, which is to improve the health of communities across the country – including Kansas City – by 20 percent by 2020," said Jeremy Gaskill, Central Region President for Humana. "We're fortunate to have found synergies in our partners as we all work to combat this serious issue, as poor nutrition can lead to obesity, diabetes, heart disease, depression and fatigue in adults, and can damage a child's ability to learn and grow."

To find out more about the "*Uniting to Combat Hunger*" campaign and what you can do to help, visit [www.vfw.org/UnitingtoCombatHunger](http://www.vfw.org/UnitingtoCombatHunger).

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**About the VFW:** The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. is the nation's largest and oldest major war veterans

organization. Founded in 1899, the congressionally-chartered VFW is comprised entirely of eligible veterans and military service members from the active, Guard and Reserve forces. With 1.7 million VFW and Auxiliary members located in 6,400 Posts worldwide, the nonprofit veterans service organization is proud to proclaim “NO ONE DOES MORE FOR VETERANS” than the VFW, which is dedicated to veterans’ service, legislative advocacy, and military and community service programs. For more information or to join, visit our website at [www.VFW.org](http://www.VFW.org).

**About Humana:** Humana Inc. (NYSE: HUM) is committed to helping our millions of medical and specialty members achieve their best health. Our successful history in care delivery and health plan administration is helping us create a new kind of integrated care with the power to improve health and well-being and lower costs. Our efforts are leading to a better quality of life for people with Medicare, families, individuals, military service personnel, and communities at large.

To accomplish that, we support physicians and other health care professionals as they work to deliver the right care in the right place for their patients, our members. Our range of clinical capabilities, resources and tools – such as in-home care, behavioral health, pharmacy services, data analytics and wellness solutions – combine to produce a simplified experience that makes health care easier to navigate and more effective.

**About Harvesters—The Community Food Network:** Harvesters is a regional food bank and was Feeding America’s 2011 Food Bank of the Year. Serving a 26-county area of northwestern Missouri and northeastern Kansas, Harvesters provides food and related household products to more than 620 not-for-profit agencies including emergency food pantries, community kitchens, shelters and others. Agencies in Harvesters’ network provide food assistance to as many as 141,500 different people each month. Harvesters, which was founded in 1979, is a certified member of Feeding America, a nationwide network of more than 200 food banks, serving all 50 states. For more information, visit [www.harvesters.org](http://www.harvesters.org).

**About After the Harvest:** After the Harvest rescues nutritious fruits and vegetables from going to waste and donates them to agencies that serve hungry people, primarily in Greater Kansas City. Our volunteers glean after the harvest, picking what’s left in farmers’ fields and picking up already harvested leftover produce. The majority of the funds we raise helps secure semi-truckloads of donated produce that might otherwise end up in landfills. After the Harvest, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, is the largest produce donor to Harvesters—The Community Food Network. Learn more at [aftertheharvestkc.org](http://aftertheharvestkc.org).

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