

## Demand for emergency food, shelter remains high

By Nathan Waggenspack, Staff Writer

Updated 10:48 PM Tuesday, July 27, 2010

DAYTON — The weak economy and high unemployment continue to strain the area's food banks and shelters.

At The Foodbank, 427 Washington St., the demand for food is about 70 percent higher than it was in 2007. For the fiscal year ended June 30, The Foodbank distributed 4.9 million pounds of food in Montgomery, Greene and Preble counties. That compares with 2.9 million pounds of food three years ago.

"the majority of our increases are people who have become unemployed," Burma Thomas, CEO of The Foodbank said. "There are more families in those groups."

But The Foodbank has received good support from donors and has been able to keep up with the high demand, Thomas said.

Shared Harvest Foodbank, which distributes food in Butler, Darke, Miami, Preble and Warren counties, has seen a similar rise in demand. Through the first six months of 2010, Shared Harvest distributed 440,000 pounds of food compared to 778,000 in all of 2009 and 492,000 for all of 2008.

According to Shared Harvest Executive Director Tina Osso, an 18-month stimulus program that doubled the U.S. Department of Agriculture's budget for providing food to charities is the reason Shared Harvest has been able to meet demand.

"Frankly, if it had not been for that (stimulus) we wouldn't have been able to keep up," Osso said.

Osso said their extra USDA supplies will stop after September. She is not certain how Shared Harvest will keep up with everyone's needs after that.

St. Vincent de Paul Gateway Shelters also have seen an increase in the number of people the shelters serve. The Gateway Shelter for Women and Families, which provides emergency assistance to people in times of crisis, had almost twice as many families and children in June this year as they sheltered in June 2009. There were 808 families and 1,431 children this year, compared to 431 families and 771 children a year ago. The sharp rise has made it tough to keep up.

"The increase in the number of clients at both shelters has put a tremendous strain on resources for St. Vincent de Paul in providing shelter operations," said Lisa Glandon, director of development for St. Vincent de Paul.

The shelters provide a place to sleep and items for the people staying there. For St. Vincent, the difficulty stems from a decrease in donations.

"We just had to go and buy toothbrushes because our donations were down on those," Glandon said.

She said some of the people who formerly donated are now out of work and could use the donations themselves. Contact this reporter at (937) 225-0743 or [nwaggenspack @DaytonDailyNews.com](mailto:nwaggenspack@DaytonDailyNews.com).

**Find this article at:**

<http://www.daytondailynews.com/news/dayton-news/demand-for-emergency-food-shelter-remains-high832579.html>