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March Campaign, state's largest food drive, sets record goal

MINNEAPOLIS, MN (Feb. 15, 2010) – Every year for more than a quarter century, food shelves throughout the state have relied on Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign for support as they bring hope to those struggling to put food on the table.

This year, the campaign is calling for everyone to "be a superhero in the Minnesota fight against hunger." With support from civic groups, businesses, congregations, schools and individuals, Minnesota FoodShare is working to raise 12 million combined pounds and dollars.

This represents a record goal for the March Campaign because the need at the 300 food shelves around the state is sobering:

- In 2009 alone, there were almost 3 million food shelf visits statewide and 61 million pounds of food was distributed to Minnesota families by food shelves.
- In 2009, almost 14 percent of households in Minnesota were unable to afford enough food.
- A growing number of Minnesotans – many working and living in the suburbs and from middle-class backgrounds – are turning to food shelves for help.

Sue Kainz, March Campaign coordinator, traveled the state throughout January and heard from food shelf volunteers and others that the need is still acute. "Those making use of the food shelves are grateful that they have one less thing to worry about," she said. "Many don't qualify for the variety of government programs. They have no place else to go."

The momentum to help meet this continuing need is already building. Groups are planning unique events, including stuffing a fish house with food, donating for casual days at work and packing a meal Sundays. All this and more to help the March Campaign raise more than half the food distributed annually through food shelves in the state.

Minnesota FoodShare is just one of a family of social service programs of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC). Since 1905, GMCC has battled poverty in Minnesota, bringing together businesses, civic groups and congregations to help struggling families remain self-reliant.