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*Girl Scouts join annual food drive to challenge community to donate enough food to provide 19,000 meals for hungry San Diegans this holiday season*

**San Diego, CA** – To help feed thousands of hungry San Diegans this holiday season, the Sixth Annual "Stuff the Bus" food drive will be held Saturday, Oct. 26, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. at 19 locations throughout San Diego County. The event is hosted by the Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), the North County Transit District (NCTD), Albertsons, the Armed Services YMCA, Girl Scouts, and the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank.

Feeding the hungry in San Diego goes beyond feeding the homeless, and extends to many local families adversely affected by the ongoing economic downturn and San Diego's high cost of living, including military families. On average, the Food Bank feeds 320,000 people every month. In fiscal year 2012, they distributed nearly 20 million pounds of food, the equivalent of 16.6 million meals.

This year, "Stuff the Bus" organizers are challenging the community to help meet the food drive's goal of collecting enough donations to provide 19,000 meals to surpass last year's final tally of over 12,000 meals. MTS and NCTD will park 19 forty-foot long buses that can each hold enough food for 1,000 meals in front of 17 Albertsons stores and two area Girl Scout headquarters.

"It is exceptional that so many organizations have joined to help battle hunger in San Diego," said James A. Floros, president & CEO of the Jacobs & Cushman San Diego Food Bank. "Tens of thousands of families will rely on the Food Bank this holiday season, and we need the community's support to be able to serve individuals and families in need. We are encouraging the community to donate at this year's food drive to help us fulfill our mission this holiday season."

A new partner to this year's food drive is Girl Scouts San Diego who will be at each location to provide lists of needed food items and thank donors for their generosity. All participating Girl Scouts will earn an exclusive badge on hunger and troops will participate in educational and age-appropriate activities to learn more about food, hunger and healthy eating habits

"For more than a century, Girl Scouts have been helping those in need and making our community a better place," said Jo Dee C. Jacob, CEO of Girl Scouts San Diego. "We anticipate that thousands of Girl Scouts will participate in 'Stuff the Bus' on Oct. 26, and encourage their friends and neighbors to join us in this important service project."

When the food drive ends at 2:00 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 26, the buses will caravan to the Food Bank where military volunteers from the Armed Services YMCA will off load each bus.

"We are proud to once again do our part for this event and to lend a helping hand to the San Diego Food Bank with a group of military volunteers," said Paul Steffens, U.S. Navy captain, retired, and executive director of the ASY San Diego. "This event is a great way for the community to help others, especially local military families who need it to help them stretch their paychecks."

In addition to the 19 designated collections sites, all 41 Albertsons stores in San Diego County will have lists and displays of needed items along with barrels shoppers can fill with donations that will also be used to stuff the buses. Barrels will be available for stuffing at all stores starting on Monday, Oct. 21.

"Albertsons and its San Diego operators are proud to support this drive," noted Wendy Oliver, vice president of operations for Albertsons Southern California Division. "The fight against hunger is an ongoing concern and we're so thankful that our customers are joining our efforts to ensure that all San Diego families have enough to eat."

"MTS initiated this partnership six year ago to help families in need have food to eat during the holidays," said Paul Jablonski, chief executive officer of MTS. "Albertsons commitment to this program is outstanding, and this year, with the addition of the Girl Scouts to our lineup of partners, I am confident that the people of San Diego will support the Food Bank in record numbers."

"We are proud to participate in this regional effort," Mark Packard, vice-chair of the NCTD board of directors, stated. "This is the season when families have the biggest need, and as a public agency, NCTD welcomes the opportunity to join the community to help ensure no one goes hungry. Every single donation helps."

MTS and NCTD buses will be located at the following San Diego Albertsons and Girl Scouts locations:

**Albertsons**

- Chula Vista, 720 3rd Avenue
- Clairemont, 5950 Balboa Avenue
- San Carlos, 8650 Lake Murray Boulevard
- La Mesa, 8920 Fletcher Parkway
- Lemon Grove, 7090 Broadway
- Mira Mesa/Scripps Ranch, 10740 West View Parkway
- Rancho Penasquitos/RB, 14340 Penasquitos Road
- Rancho San Diego, 2899 Jamacha Road
- Santee, 9870 Magnolia Avenue
- Spring Valley, 543 Sweetwater Road
- Tierrasanta, 10633 Tierrasanta Boulevard
- Escondido, 1570 West Valley Parkway

- Escondido, 1509 East Valley Parkway
- San Marcos, 151 Woodland Parkway
- Oceanside, 3450 Marron Road
- Oceanside, 3926 Mission Avenue

**Girl Scouts Headquarters**

- 1231 Upas St, San Diego, CA 92103
- 5315 Avenida Encinas, Suite 100, Carlsbad, CA 92008

MTS operates more than 90 bus routes and three Trolley lines on 53 miles of double-tracked railway. Every day more than 275,000 passenger trips are taken on MTS services. For more information on how you can use public transportation and save money, go to [www.sdmts.com](http://www.sdmts.com).

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