

It's NOT too late to Join the Team ... Get in the Game ... and Tackle Hunger in your community through the Souper Bowl of Caring! It's more important than ever, this year!!

Did you know that, **this year, 2014**, the youth of America, are poised to surpass the **\$100 million dollar mark in cash and food** items collected for **local** food charities, that help the hungry and the hurting, through their participation in the **Souper Bowl of Caring** collections, held on or near, Super Bowl weekend, each year? **Now** is the time for **your** young people to join the team and experience the excitement and sense of satisfaction from **doing their part** to help achieve this significant milestone by helping to "*feed the hungry*" in your community!

What began, in 1989, with a simple prayer: "*Lord, even as we enjoy this Super Bowl football game, let us be mindful of those who are without even a bowl of soup to eat*" uttered by a seminary intern, serving in a small Presbyterian church in Columbia SC ... and a collection, the following year, where they joined together with 21 other Columbia area churches to collect a total of **\$5,700** during Super Bowl XXIV, in 1990, ... has grown to become the **Souper Bowl of Caring** which, since its inception, has helped to raise over **\$98 million dollars** for **local** food charities through the efforts of youth participants from churches, schools and community groups, across the country!

Participation in the **Souper Bowl of Caring** is a simple and meaningful way for youth to **learn** about the needs in their community and **do** something to help. They also learn that when we all work together, **big things can happen**. This project provides a fun-filled, yet focused, service opportunity for the youth of your parish to play a **leadership** role in helping to **bring home a victory against hunger in your community!**

During the time around the Super Bowl, youth collect food or monetary donations. Each group donates their collection directly to the charity of their choice. Organizers simply ask that groups report their collection amount so a national total can be determined.

It's this easy!

- Register at www.souperbowl.org or www.tacklehunger.org or call 1-800-358-SOUP (7687) to receive your free promotional materials.
- Collect donations on or near Super Bowl Sunday.
(Churches typically collect **on** Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 2nd this year, and schools collect **between** Jan. 20th and Feb 2nd)
- Report your results at www.souperbowl.org for the country to see the power of caring.
- Donate **100%** of your collection to the charity of **your** choice.

The issue of hunger is **not** new to our region and, with the inevitable state and federal cutbacks in funding and the growing number of unemployed workers, including members of our own parishes, the need will be **even greater than ever this year!** According to sources, **one in seven** households will be "food insecure", this year, which is another way of saying that **they, simply, aren't sure where their next meal is coming from ...or the one after that!**

It's no secret that **every** parish is, already, working hard to address the issue of hunger, in our local communities, by conducting fundraisers, food drives, volunteering at soup kitchens and even maintaining parish pantries to lessen the plight of the *hungry among us*.

While most parish hunger relief efforts are ongoing, year-round, and performed, mostly, by adults, the **Souper Bowl of Caring** is youth-led and time sensitive ...centered around the largest single sporting event in the country - the annual Super Bowl game - a time when people come together for football, **food** and fun. This program **uses the energy and excitement of the Super Bowl football game** to mobilize youth to assist **local** food charities at a time when consumption is **high**, yet donations, historically, are **low** ...after the holidays! Through this national movement, America's teens are transforming Super Bowl weekend and, the two weeks before, which includes "**Catholic Schools Week**", into **the nation's largest youth-led period of giving and serving!**

While this is not, specifically, a Catholic program, both the **Life Teen** movement and the **National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM)** are national Community Partners of the **Souper Bowl of Caring**.

The time is right ... the need is great ... and growing (we're experiencing the **worst economy in 54 years**) ... and **it's really not too late!** There are many resources available, online, that will allow your young people to participate **at the very last moment** (a little **2-minute football** comes to mind)! **Souper Bowl of Caring** literature suggests that it could be as easy as placing an announcement in the bulletin (or, from the pulpit) on one week and taking up a collection on the next week. While that may, or may not, be the best way to conduct a fund raising campaign, **it works**. And, when it comes to supporting local food charities, **every dollar counts!**

To learn more about **Souper Bowl of Caring**, visit www.souperbowl.org or www.tacklehunger.org or call 800-358-7687. America's youth are working to make **2014** a record year for the **Souper Bowl of Caring**, by raising millions for hunger and poverty-related charities across the country! How **wonderful** it would be if we had **100% participation**, among the parishes in the diocese, in this worthwhile, grass-roots, **youth-led** event to support those whose mission is to "*feed the hungry*" in our communities!

Bruce Broyles, a member of Ste. Rose de Lima Parish in Chicopee, is a volunteer ambassador with the **Souper Bowl of Caring** in Western New England. He can be reached, anytime, at jbroylesma@verizon.net or, by phone, at (413) 335-4924 and is happy to assist, in any way, in making participation, in a **2014 Souper Bowl of Caring** event, a success for the youth of your parish and, especially, for the hungry and those who "*feed the hungry*" in your community!.