

# United Way makes a big deposit with starved food banks

## Cash donation from reserves totals \$10,000

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**DAYTONA BEACH** — Starved food banks will get a boost with a local United Way cash donation to help get through the holidays.

Ray Salazar, president of the United Way of Volusia-Flagler Counties, said Friday that the agency's board approved taking \$10,000 out of its reserves to help local food banks struggling with an increase of people in need at the same time donations have



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dropped.

Because of the urgency, Salazar requested e-mail votes from the agency's 60 members and the majority by Friday had approved the distribution.

Another \$2,500 is being provided through a fund created by

Forough Hosseini, a systems analyst for her husband's company, ICI Homes. The fund, called Food Brings Hope, is operated under the United Way's Community Foundation and works with local schools bringing tutoring, activities and food to children in need.

Salazar said United Way chapters throughout the state are seeing similar food bank shortages. They've responded with more food drives or provided money.

"There is such a profound need out there," Salazar said. "It is a statewide hurt. There are a lot of people who are living paycheck to paycheck. Their rent, utility and food needs have grown immensely."

The local United Way's First Call for Help/211 information and referral specialists saw a 7 percent increase in calls to the hot line from October last year to last month, from people seeking rent, utility and food assis-

tance. The center normally receives 15,000 to 20,000 calls a year.

Last year, the United Way also stepped forward with \$10,000 from a private donor to help provide 32,000 meals through local food banks.

The money will be provided next week to the Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, which will purchase and distribute food to the local agencies through Second Harvest's Daytona Beach branch.

Half of the money will be provided for food before Thanksgiving and another half before Christmas.

Gloria Max, executive director of the Jewish Federation of the Volusia-Flagler Counties, said agencies are also in need of donations such as toothbrushes, toilet paper, shampoo and other items families are unable to buy with food stamps.

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