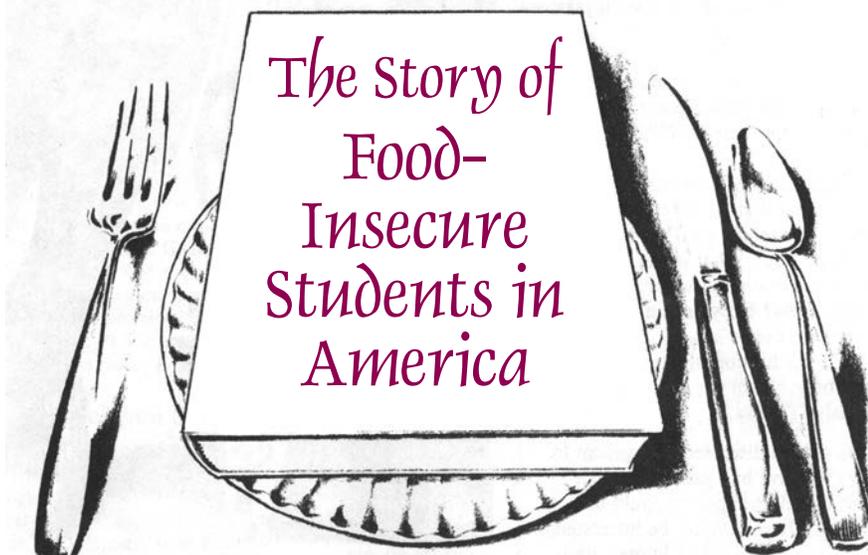


Hunger News & Hope

...a Seeds of Hope publication



When I first received Rachel Boyle's story about food insecurity on college campuses (see page 2) and Chelle Samaniego's story about food shaming in public schools (see page 4), both of them—though they were working independently and have only met once—began with essentially the same sentence: *We have a problem in this country.* We know food insecurity abounds in the US, but we are focusing in this issue on educational settings.

People have been studying, and working to end, childhood hunger in the US for a very long time, and we must continue to work until all of our children are well nourished. It is only recently that hunger in higher education has come to the national consciousness. Coupled with this is a new awareness of homelessness among youth and college students.

In this issue, Rachel Boyle will show us how food insecurity affects college and university students—and yes, even students in private schools like Baylor University, across the street from our offices. Chelle Samaniego will discuss new laws being enacted to prevent school officials from refusing food to children because of insufficient meal accounts—and from being made to feel ashamed for being economically disadvantaged. However, we believe that there is always hope, and there are always people working on behalf of the vulnerable people among us. On page 6, Susan Duty will describe one example of a new phenomenon that is bringing a bright light to American education—the Children Defense Fund's Freedom School. —lkc

What You'll Find Inside:

2
Hunger in Higher Education

4
Shame on You!
US States Work to End Food Shaming

6
Baylor Freedom School Gives Voice to Young Scholars

8
Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings



Hunger in Higher Education

by Rachel Boyle

We in the United States have a problem. Hunger in higher education exists, and it's far more serious than the popular perceptions of students subsisting on ramen for a few years. There are students, many of them, having to choose between textbooks and food, dropping classes or starving. A survey¹ across 34 institutions in 12 states—the broadest study of its kind—found that one in four community college students and one in five university students qualified as having very low food security, a range defined by the US Department of Agriculture as “reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake,” and previously known as “food insecurity with hunger.”²

At some schools, far more than 20 or 25 percent feel hunger's bite. A study of Western Oregon University in 2011 determined that of WOU's more than 5,000 students, 59 percent—three of every five—were food-insecure at some point during the previous year.³

Here's another disturbing fact from that report: having a job was one of the factors associated with being food-insecure. Specifically, employed students were twice as likely to report experiences with food insecurity. Others agree. According to the *Hunger On Campus* report by Students Against Hunger, over half of food-insecure students are working, and of those, almost 40 percent work more than 20 hours per week.

A survey across 34 institutions in 12 states—the broadest study of its kind—found that one in four community college students and one in five university students qualified as having very low food security...

These students generally can't improve their grocery budgets with financial aid, either; most are already on some kind of financial aid and can't make ends met. The *Hunger On Campus* report says that three in four food-insecure students received financial aid. More than half received Pell Grants⁴ and almost 40 percent took out student loans. Just over 60 percent reported that their household had used at least one aid service in the past year. A quarter reported using SNAP (formerly known as “food stamps”), making it the most widely used food program.⁵ Feeding America reports that more than a 10th of their reporting adult cli-

ents for meal and grocery programs are full- or part-time students—about 3.2 million people.⁶

According to Students Against Hunger, even meal plans don't guarantee a food-security safety net. Among survey respondents, 43 percent of meal plan enrollees still experienced food insecurity.

Food insecurity has consequences. The link between hunger and lackluster academic performance is well documented and corroborated. No one can think well on an empty stomach, just as focus and memory retention become difficult after a night of no sleep. However, in addition to the physiological effects of hunger, financially-based coping strategies can harm a student's education.

Even financially supported students grumble at the price tags of college textbooks; a student financially struggling may sacrifice proper study materials in order to eat. According to Students Against Hunger, the impact on education is such that some students feel they have to end up dropping classes.

Without remediation, the problem will only get worse, and the seeming absurdity of college students going hungry isn't helping. After all, many people think, higher education is voluntary; why would anyone choose to buy more education if it means he or she can't afford food?

The fallacy here is that the legal requirements of education don't exactly match up to job market expectations anymore. *The Chicago Tribune* reports that employer demand for higher education has risen even since 2014, when 30 percent of employers were hiring college graduates for jobs formerly filled by high school graduates, and 20 percent were looking for master's instead of bachelor's degrees. This trend isn't about to reverse, either, since employers report higher productivity and revenue among the results.⁷

At the same time that hiring demands are rising, so is college tuition. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, in-state tuition and fees at public National Universities have more than doubled in the past 20 years, and it's still the most affordable four-year college option.⁸

Though the reasons for tuition hikes are varied, *Business Insider* presents the budgetary cuts happening en masse after the 2007 recession as a possible explanation.⁹ As state tax revenues fell, higher education spending was cut. However, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities says that, as the economy recovered, the spending generally didn't.¹⁰ Students, then, have to pay the difference.

Also, Presidential priorities aren't favoring education this time around, so there's no help coming from that quarter. The Federal budget released for Fiscal Year 2018 explicitly

eliminates subsidized student loans and Public Service Loan Forgiveness¹¹, among other changes. *The Washington Post* reports that a \$15 million program providing childcare for low-income student parents is one of the planned cuts, and that while Pell Grants are maintained in the budget, Perkins loans¹² are reduced and the Federal Work-Study Program¹³ is cut almost in half.

College necessity and price are going up; governmental support is going down; students are squeezed in the middle. How long will it be until something has to give? — Rachel Boyle, a native of Grapevine, TX, is a senior Professional Writing student at Baylor University with concentrations in Public Relations and Creative Writing. She is greatly enjoying her time as an intern at Seeds of Hope and hopes to enter the publishing field after graduation, along with writing fiction novels.

Endnotes

1. *Hunger on Campus: The Challenge of Food Insecurity for College Students*, a joint project of four national campus-based organizations. For the full report, go to <http://studentsagainsthunger.org>. Students Against Hunger, or the National Student Campaign Against Hunger and Homelessness, was established in 1985 by the combined resources of USA for Africa and student Public Research Interest Groups. The group strives to increase student community service and action against hunger and homelessness, offering resources, information, support and guidance to college students.
2. The United States Department of Agriculture has been measuring household food security in the United States for twenty-two years as of 2017 (www.ers.usda.gov).
3. Megan M. Patton-López, Daniel F. López-Cevallos, Doris I. Cancel-Tirado and Leticia Vazquez; "Prevalence and Correlates of Food Insecurity among Students Attending a Midsize Rural University in Oregon." (See <http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu>.)
4. Federal Pell Grants are usually awarded only to undergraduate students who have not earned a degree. Unlike a loan, a Federal Pell Grant does not have to be repaid in part or in full except under certain circumstances, such as withdrawing from the program for which the grant was given or receiving outside scholarships or grants that reduce the need for federal aid.
5. SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a USDA program.
6. Feeding America has existed under various names since 1979 as a national organization for food banks, and today is the largest domestic hunger relief organization in the US. As a network of 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries and meal programs across the country, Feeding America serves about 46 million people. (Go to www.feedingamerica.org.)

7. Alexia Elejalde-Ruiz, "No College Degree? That's a Growing Hurdle to Getting Hired," *Chicago Tribune*, March 2016.
8. Briana Boyington, "20 Years of Tuition Growth at National Universities," *U.S. News & World Report*, September 2017.
9. Abby Jackson and Mike Nudelman, "This Chart Shows How Quickly College Tuition Has Skyrocketed Since 1980," *Business Insider*, August 2016.
10. Michael Mitchell and Michael Leachman, "Years of Cuts Threaten to Put College Out of Reach for More Students," Center on Budget Policy and Priority, March 2015.

The link between hunger and lackluster academic performance is well documented and corroborated. No one can think well on an empty stomach, just as focus and memory retention become difficult after a night of no sleep.

11. The Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program, enacted in 2007, essentially allows people working for a government or nonprofit organization to have their federal student loan debt forgiven after ten years. The first people set to receive these benefits are scheduled to do so in October of 2017, which is part of why the proposed cut of the program is controversial.
12. The Federal Perkins Loan Program provides low-interest federal student loans for undergraduate and graduate students "with exceptional financial need."
13. Federal Work-Study provides part-time jobs both on and off campus for undergraduate and graduate students with financial need in order to help pay for education expenses. See Emma Brown, Valerie Strauss and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, "Trump's First Full Education Budget: Deep Cuts to Public School Programs in Pursuit of School Choice," *Washington Post*, May 2017, for more information about the proposed budget.



Shame on you!

American States Work to End Food Shaming

by Chelle Samaniego

We have a problem in this country. Deuteronomy 24:16 states, “Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin.” (NIV)

But every day in elementary school cafeterias across this nation, children are suffering at the hands of adults, being humiliated in front of classmates and going hungry for the “sins of the parents.”

What is going on is a new topic called “Food Shaming,” which is denying food to children during breakfast or lunch at school due to nonexistent or insufficient lunch accounts. Whether it is intentional or unintentional on the part of the parents, if a child’s lunch account is not active, school districts across this country have gone so far as to publicly dispose of the child’s food by throwing it in the trash in their presence. They have also placed stamps on their flesh, taped notices to their arms or shirts, and even used child labor as a tactic to “repay” the meal debt so the child could eat that day.

But for all the school personnel who believe this is appropriate behavior, others across the nation understand

the detrimental effects and are working diligently to create legislation to make this practice illegal.

The first state government to make the radical move to outlaw the practice was New Mexico. Its SB 374 was signed into law in April of this year. The Land of Enchantment

Whether it is intentional or unintentional on the part of the parents, if a child’s lunch account is not active, school districts across this country have gone so far as to publicly dispose of the child’s food by throwing it in the trash in their presence.

isn’t known for being the first at many things. In fact, it is ranked 48th in the nation in regards to education and usually ranks high in food insecurity. But in this area its leaders are trendsetters.

As part of New Mexico’s “Hunger-Free Students’ Bill of Rights Act,” a school district “shall not require that a student throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student’s inability to pay for the meal or because money is owed for earlier meals.”

Section 5 of the law dives further into anti-stigmatization and anti-discrimination tactics by stating that schools can no longer do the following:

- Publicly identify or stigmatize a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt by, for example, requiring that a student wear a wristband or hand stamp; or
- Require a student who cannot pay for a meal or who owes a meal debt to do chores or other work to pay for meals, unless all students are required to participate in those chores or works.

School districts are also denied contact with the child regarding their school lunch deficit and may only address it with the parent or guardian. All public, private or religious schools that participate in the National School Lunch Program or the School Breakfast Program must adhere to these rules.

Photo courtesy of Pixnio.



The main initiative in the law requires all schools to provide a meal that meets US Department of Agriculture guidelines to any child whether he or she can pay or not. New Mexico is making sure that no child goes hungry.

With the approval of this legislation, other states are getting in line to ensure Food Shaming is abolished from their public schools. California's "Child Hunger Prevention and Fair Treatment Act of 2017," (SB 250)—along with legislation and initiatives in New York, Pennsylvania and Texas—are paving the way for other states to join in stopping Food Shaming throughout the country.

Sometimes it's an oversight. Sometimes there just isn't enough money to get to the end of the month. But, regardless of the cause, a child is a child and should not suffer the "sins of the parents." We make education accessible to every child in America. It's about time we make every meal the same.

—Chelle Samaniego is a freelance writer and social media specialist living in Waco, TX. She worked with the Waco Homeless Coalition as a VISTA volunteer and serves on the board of the McLennan County Hunger Coalition. She is also the Seeds of Hope Social Media Editor. Sources: New York Times, Food Research and Action Center, New Mexico legislature.

Ways You Can Help Stop Food Shaming in Your Community

- Contact your local school's Child Nutrition Services representative and find out how your district serves children who have a zero or negative lunch account balance.
- Pop-up organizations are appearing across the country to pay for outstanding lunch debts. This not only helps the students, but it also helps the schools who do not have the resources to pay back unpaid lunch accounts. Join and support a group in your area. You don't have one? Start your own! And see how much money you can raise. Your efforts could cancel out one student's debt or that of an entire school district.
- Do you know a child whose family is struggling? Pray about this. YOU may be the answer to their struggles.
- Talk about it. Many school districts experiencing substantial lunch debts say that numerous families qualify, but they simply will not sign up for free and reduced meal programs. Find out why. How does the school get the word out? They may need a volunteer to put application forms in new student packets or send forms to families in the mail.

—Chelle Samaniego

Would you like to receive free electronic copies of **Hunger News & Hope**

as they come out?

Email seedseditor1@gmail.com to add your name to the e-list.

Is the idea of a Hunger Emphasis new to your congregation?

If so, email seedseditor1@gmail.com or go to www.seedspublishers.org to get your free copy of:

Developing a Heart for the Hungry...



... a hunger emphasis primer for beginning churches

Baylor Freedom School Gives Voice to Young Scholars

by Susan Duty

Atmospheric buzz pervaded the cafeteria where our Freedom School scholars were learning about a topic some of them previously knew about through experience only. It's hard going to sleep hungry. It's even harder showing up to school the next day, expected to learn, listen, and

It's hard going to sleep hungry. It's even harder showing up to school the next day, expected to learn, listen, and participate. Not all, but many of our scholars knew about the struggle of hunger and food insecurity.

participate. Not all, but many of our scholars knew about the struggle of hunger and food insecurity.

After laying a foundation of community and respect for at least three weeks, our Freedom School had become a center for policy reform, a hub of knowledge and a place where our scholars could exercise their voices. This was the setting for our week of social action.

The Freedom School at Baylor University, a Children's Defense Fund-recognized Freedom School program, is a six-week literacy enrichment and empowerment program that was held this past summer at Cesar Chavez Middle School for rising sixth and seventh graders.

Part of the summer included a National Day of Social Action, in which all other Freedom School programs participate. Every year, the national office hands down a theme. This summer's theme was child hunger.

The task was laid in front of them: research child hunger in their community, familiarize themselves with the

impending policy changes put forth by our state and federal governments, form an opinion, then exercise their voice to help those who cannot help themselves. On Wednesday, July 19, the scholars were scheduled to march in downtown Waco and participate in a silent demonstration, to hopefully call policymakers' attention to the problem the scholars were facing.

Craig Nash, the Child Hunger Outreach Specialist with the Texas Hunger Initiative, came by to talk with them. On their second official research day, they broke out highlighters and pencils to mark articles about child hunger and President Trump's proposed Federal budget. After spending some time reading and learning about this particular issue, many of them could provide statistics with ease.



Left: Students in last summer's Baylor Freedom School march in a child-hunger rally as part of the Children's Defense Fund's National Day of Social Action. Photo courtesy of Susan Duty.

The scholars then had the opportunity to paint signs with slogans they came up with for the march. After taking a tour of the classrooms the day before the march, I was blown away with how creative they had been, what they were saying and how they were saying it. Many of our scholars who were comfortable speaking in public wrote speeches and rehearsed them with each other and site staff.

The day of our march came. Students invited family and other friends. Media showed up to witness the event. Our scholars couldn't believe how many people rallied around them and the issue they were taking seriously. After talking with some of them, it was clear to me that their efforts had made an impact on them. One scholar was quoted in an

I finished the letter and sat back: Did Jesus say, "Feed the hungry, but only if you feel like they deserve it"? No. That's not the Jesus I know.

interview as stating that she and her fellow students were "future presidents." This was not something you might have heard at the beginning of our summer together.

Giving our students license to act on their consciences and exercise their voices, regarding a topic with which many of them are all too familiar, changed them forever. They knew the pains of getting to school without breakfast, of wondering if there would be dinner that night. And now they knew there was something they could do about it.

At the end of all of it, I stood back, amazed at how so many of them stepped into leadership roles and carried the torch. It was a time I could say safely I looked into the eyes of the future and was sure we will be all right, so long as kids like these are fed, shepherded and given a podium.

There was some backlash. A letter written by a community member to a staff member with our site detailed grievances like how teaching kids to depend on the government was wrong, that they should be taught to work hard and provide for themselves. He even mentioned the curse of single-parenthood as being a cause of the problems our children faced. In the letter, there was a complete disregard for the realities many of our scholars and their families faced. I finished the letter and sat back: Did Jesus say, "Feed the hungry, but only if you feel like they deserve it"? No. That's not the Jesus I know.

What's important to note is that our scholars became much more aware of something their fellow classmates face. They are now carrying that into their new school year. The kids we have the pleasure of serving and teaching at Freedom Schools are indeed future presidents, lawyers,

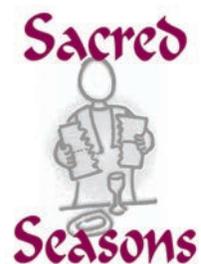
dancers, artists, police officers, librarians and policymakers. Can we expect them to fulfill the promise of tomorrow if they're hungry today? I'm glad they spoke up and spoke out in the way they did, because food-secure children secure a better future for us all.

—Susan Duty is a Waco, TX-born freelance writer who also serves as the Social Action Coordinator for the CDF Freedom School at Baylor University.

Teach Justice through Worship.



Ask for a free promotional copy of a Lent, Advent or Hunger Emphasis worship packet from Seeds of Hope.



Sacred Seasons is a series of creative worship tools to help raise awareness of hunger and justice issues. A year's subscription of US\$100 includes Advent/Christmastide, Lent/Eastertide and a fall Hunger Emphasis resource. To order, call 254/755-7745 or e-mail seedseditor1@gmail.com. Single packets are US\$40. (Non-US subscriptions are US\$115; individual packets are US\$50.) For more information, go to www.seedspublishers.org.

Hunger News & Hope is published quarterly by Seeds of Hope Publishers, in partnership with the following denominational groups:

- Alliance of Baptists
- American Baptist Churches USA
 - Christian Reformed Church in North America
- Cooperative Baptist Fellowship
- Reformed Church in America

Staff and Volunteers

Editor.....L. Katherine Cook
Acting Business Manager.....John Segrest
Editorial Assistant.....Rachel Boyle
Copy Editor.....Ellen Kuniyuki Brown
Social Media Editor.....Chelle Samaniego
Library Assistant.....Bill Hughes
Artists.....Robert Askins, Sally Askins,
Peter Yuichi Clark, Robert Darden,
Van Darden, Jesse Manning,
Erin Kennedy Mayer, Lenora Mathis,
Kate Moore, Sharon Rollins,
Susan Smith, Rebecca Ward

Seeds of Hope Council of Stewards

Sara Alexander
Guilherme Almeida
Sally Lynn Askins, Vice Pres.
Meg Cooper
Meg Cullar
Derek S. Dodson
Linda Freeto
Sandy Londos, Secretary
B. Michael Long, President

Board of Advisors

Dale A. Barron
Daniel G. Bagby
H. Joseph Haag
Kathryn Mueller
Jo Pendleton
Jacqueline L. Saxon
Jon Singletary

Statement of Purpose

Seeds of Hope is a private, independent group of believers responding to a common burden for the poor and hungry people in God's world, and acting on the strong belief that biblical mandates to feed the poor were not intended to be optional. The group seeks out people of faith who feel called to care for poor and vulnerable people; and to affirm, enable and empower a variety of responses to the problems of poverty.

Quotes, Poems & Pithy Sayings



Being concerned is seeing something awful happening to somebody and feeling, "Hey, that's really too bad." Having compassion is seeing the same thing and saying, "I just can't let that happen to my brother or sister." Concern comes from a recognition of a problem. Compassion comes out of a feeling of relationship.
—Jim Wallis

Do not forget that every protest against injustice, every prayer for liberation, every act of compassion and love is an affirmation of freedom and a living sign of the kingdom of God.

—South African theologian Allan Boesak

Young people say, "What good can one person do? What is the sense of our small effort?" They cannot see that we must lay one brick at a time, take one step at a time. We can be responsible only for the one action of the present moment. But we can beg for an increase of love in our hearts

that will vitalize and transform all our individual actions and know that God will take them and multiply them as Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes.

—Dorothy Day

Of course, there is no guarantee that we will succeed. No one can give us such a guarantee except God, and we have no right to demand guarantees from God. All we can do is fight the good fight and leave the outcome in God's hands, confident that we have done the best we could and that God, in turn, will do what is best for us.

—Jose W. Diokno

Somewhere we must come to see that human progress never rolls in the wheels of inevitability. It comes through the tireless efforts and the persistent work of dedicated individuals who are willing to be coworkers with God.

—Martin Luther King, Jr.

Editorial Address

Seeds is housed by the community of faith at Seventh & James Baptist Church. The mailing address is 602 James Avenue, Waco, TX 76706; Phone: 254/755-7745; Fax: 254/753-1909; E-mail: seedseditor1@gmail.com. Web: www.seedspublishers.org. Copyright © 2017; ISSN 0194-4495. Seeds of Hope, Inc., holds the 501(c)3 nonprofit tax status.

Seeds also produces *Sacred Seasons*, a series of worship materials for

Advent, Lent and an annual Hunger Emphasis—with an attitude "toward justice, peace and food security for all of God's children." These include litanies, sermons, children's and youth activities, bulletin art and drama.

All scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the New Revised Standard Version, Copyright © 2003 by the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. Used by permission.