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**Excerpts and Summary of the 53<sup>th</sup> Community Hunger and Nutrition Forum**  
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**California Food Policy Advocates**

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**Vitamin Settlement Cases Consumer Settlement Fund to improve the health and nutrition of California consumers.**

## **FOCUS: SETTING Food Security PRIORITIES**

Compiled by Carey Berend and Phoua Moua

**Edie Jessup, Fresno Metro Ministry:** This is the 53rd Hunger and Nutrition Forum that Fresno Metro Ministry has done in recent past and we're very pleased that you're here. I'm hoping that you're sitting at tables of topical interest to you. Later on in the program we will be doing some conversation work about those topics. Then at the end we will report back from that. We're hoping to hear what your priorities are around those issues so that we can plan and work toward ending hunger here in Fresno and the valley. Many of the topics that you see us addressing in task groups are a result of that previous priorities setting and interest from people in the community.

Today we are going to do this in two parts. First I'm going to talk very briefly about the state and federal budgets and talk a little bit about some new legislation that is being introduced that may help assist people in accessing good, healthy food here in California. We also are going to hear from Phoua Moua about Hunger Action Day, which is our opportunity to talk to our legislators. She will tell you a little bit more about the plans for that this year. How many of you have read the book The Tipping Point? Are you familiar with that concept? Things happen and things happen and finally it's enough that things start changing, and it's like a see-saw and eventually it gets to the place where it starts moving. I think that here in California and in this country we are approaching such a tipping point around quality nutrition and the importance of access to that and health outcomes. **I have an article from the Bee in your packet today, which has the Governor saying that he was going to ban junk food in schools.** Now we all just have to compliment him for that and tell him that we're ready to help him with that and other issues, so I encourage you to actually send him a note or e-mail him a note or fax him a note. It wouldn't hurt to reinforce the fact that he has a constituency out there that is willing to work with him on that. I think that we're at the tipping point. Jeremy is going to also address Farm to School and fresh co-op planning issues, a garden summit that is happening, and I will speak briefly about the Healthy School Environment Policy Committee. We will spend the bulk of our time looking at what we might do in this next few months and year to make things better for food security here in Fresno.

**Edie Jessup:** As you know, the proposed budgets on the part of both the state and federal government are in the works, and advocates around the country and here in California have some grave concerns about some of the proposals and the impact on low-income folks. **First, I want to**

**just very briefly read a proclamation that our board of supervisors passed this month, and it is recognizing this month, March, as Nutrition Month.** Next week will be Breakfast Week which looks at our kids having a healthy breakfast to start the day at school. If you will recall, when the hunger fellows were with us working on the Food Stamp Project the board of supervisors here in Fresno County passed a proclamation declaring that we were indeed a food-stamp-friendly county. **This proclamation is out of the Community Health Department, Dr. Ed Moreno, and it was proposed and introduced by Supervisor Case.**

**Whereas**, chronic disease such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity are associated with poor nutrition and impact a large number of Central Valley residents, and

**Whereas**, poor nutrition and physical inactivity together are the second most preventable cause of death among U.S. adults, and

**Whereas**, well-nourished children have better attendance, improved school performance, and fewer discipline problems, and

**Whereas**, regular consumption of fruits and vegetables are part of the dietary guidelines to promote health and reduce risk for chronic disease, and

**Whereas**, Fresno County is home to 1.88 million acres of the world's most productive farmland with agricultural operations covering nearly half the county's entire land base of 3.84 million acres, and

**Whereas**, 6,000 farmers grow more than 250 crops contributing more than \$3.5 billion a year to the California economy and supporting 30% of all jobs in the Fresno area,

**Therefore be it resolved**, that the Fresno County Board of Supervisors declares March as Nutrition Month and recognizes that the rich agricultural products of Fresno County create a resource for local residents to combat the obesity epidemic and curb the prevalence of many chronic diseases and that promoting the consumption of five or more servings of fruits and vegetables daily will not only improve the health of Fresno County residents but will also support local farmers and the local economy.

As with the Governor beginning to recognize and do some things that are really critical for the good health and the economy, the board of supervisors is on it and we should be talking to them and thanking them and holding them to their proclamations.

I have derived some information from several sources that I commend to you. The California Budget Project is one of them, and I have also consulted with California Food Policy Advocates, the Nutrition Network, and several other folks who are watching the budget. **The Governor's proposed budget which he released in January outlines \$9.1 billion in solutions.** However, the proposed budget addresses a gap that is largely structural and the structural gap can only be closed by permanently increasing revenues, permanently reducing spending, or some combination of the two. The Governor balances the budget using borrowing, deep reductions in education, social services, state employees compensation, and transportation spending but no new taxes. **It will leave the state facing a shortfall of approximately \$4 billion in 2006-2007. Lawmakers have continued to cut taxes over the years despite the state's budget crisis, and bills passed last year alone will reduce the budget this year by an estimated \$233 million.** This is a serious issue and I hope that you will study it. I'm not going to try to go into it or go over it. It is really time for us to communicate with our lawmakers about this.

**The President has introduced the national budget for 2006 and it is \$2.5 trillion for this fiscal year coming up.** The President proposes substantial funding reductions to scores of domestic

programs including programs that assist California's low-income working families that have contributed little to the federal deficit, and there are new tax cuts that are looking to be extended again. The multi-year spending caps on discretionary spending for programs that require appropriations put defense and domestic programs into competition. I really hope that you will study this. I know that it's complicated but it's really important that we weigh in with our legislators. **The total federal discretionary Grants in Aid to California would be reduced in the President's budget by \$10 billion in fiscal 2006 through 2010. Grants in Aid provide federal funds to state and local governments for a range of public services including childcare, food aid, and environmental protection. Reducing discretionary funding at the federal level will require California to cut service levels and/or increase state or local revenues to offset the federal cuts.** Particularly up for legislation, please follow the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grants, which are being proposed to be frozen, and there has not been an increase in those grants since 1997. **There are cuts that would occur in childcare assistance, children and family services, Head Start would be reduced, and the proposal for WIC reductions in California would amount to about \$113 million. That would mean that they would serve over 100,000 fewer people here in California, and we know that that is very important as an early childhood feeding program.** There would be cuts to low-income home energy assistance not to mention health cuts and education cuts. It is really serious, folks, and we hope that you will study the issue and weigh in with the variety of ways that that can be done.

I am going to very briefly go over proposals this year. If you will look at the blue packet that says State Legislative Agenda, it is **the legislative agenda from California Food Policy Advocates. These are bills that they are carrying forward. One area is to prevent obesity and the other is the Food For Families Act, which is AB 696.** Assembly member Judy Chu is carrying this legislation and is looking for folks to sign on. **The purpose of it is to prevent obesity by providing more access to food stamp benefits and to bring in federal money by knocking down some barriers to food stamp participation and improving customer service.** there are a number of issues in this. One is to ease the paperwork burden on clients and help reduce the food stamp error rate. It will align the reporting requirements of three major low-income programs, Medi-Cal, Food Stamp Program, and CalWORKS, which right now have different application processes and different requirements for application. This would begin to align them so that they were all available and accessible in an easier way. **What it would really do is replace the three-month reporting requirement with six months. This bill would also make Medi-Cal recipients categorically eligible for food stamps,** so if you applied for Medi-Cal you would automatically be thrown into the hopper for food stamps, which we think is a really good idea. **Again, it is also asking for the end to finger imaging.** I'm not sure if you're all aware that in California all adult food stamp recipients must be finger imaged. This was intended as a fraud-reducing program, but this was when there were still actual paper food stamps and there were issues about how they were changed and exchanged. Now all food stamp recipients receive their benefits by a debit card which has a built-in system for seeing that that fraud doesn't take place, and so the finger imaging is very redundant at this point. There have been studies and they have not revealed substantial fraud being exposed by finger imaging everyone. Finger imaging requires everyone to go into the food stamp office, and here in this county where we have big rural transportation issues it would be a big help not to have to do that. **Finger imaging also costs \$10 million a year, which has not been shown by audit to reduce any fraud, and so it is one of those arenas where we could be feeding people, for instance, with that \$10 million.** This has been defeated a number of years, I think every year that I have worked here, the last four years, but it is on the agenda again and we hope that you will help advocate for that.

There is a proposal here in Fresno County. We were very lucky and one of the very first, I believe, to get a waiver regarding food stamps because we are a labor surplus area. **People who are single without children were limited by rule to only three months of food stamps in their lifetime, but there is a waiver in existence in Fresno County and other counties now where we have a large**

**labor surplus, so as long as single childless people are looking for work they can still get food stamps and eat. What a concept! This bill has a proposal to make it automatic statewide that if your county is a labor surplus area the state would automatically apply for you so that people in your county could have the benefits that Fresno County folks do. The USDA is offering waivers to California to help increase enrollment in the Food Stamp Program. We are dead last in the United States in terms of the numbers of people eligible to be enrolled that are enrolled. We are 51<sup>st</sup> in not having people enrolled in this federal program, and so that is on the docket also for this bill.**

Then we have **AB 1385, which is around healthy school foods**, and you can read about that. It is really critical that kids are enrolled in school meals. Very frequently that is the meal that kids in our area have during the day reliably. It should be two meals. It should be both breakfast and lunch and all kids should be getting those at school. The Healthier U.S. Standards are federal school nutrition standards that should also be enacted, and we are working on that here in Fresno. If you support these and would like to sign on there is a separate blue sheet that you can send in or leave on the table and we'd be happy to pass it along to California Food Policy Advocates.

There is a gray sheet with the **California Hunger Action Coalition legislative agenda, which includes the things that we have talked about here and one additional piece of legislation that is SB 284, and it will provide funding for a statewide produce network that will purchase produce from California farmers and distribute it to hungry families by the food bank.** We think that this is very important. We know that the access to good food at food banks is small, but we've got produce here.

We are going to be discussing these issues further in appropriate task groups. Also on the blue sheet there are some notes from FRAC, which is the Food Action Research Center, which is on federal nutrition. This is just the first foray at legislation and we'd like to hear from you on it and we'd like your support later on if you find that it's something that you can support and help us with.

**Phoua Moua, Fresno Metro Ministry:** We, Fresno Metro Ministry want to offer you some opportunities to take action. One of the first is inviting you to our next New Leaders for Better Health meeting. This meeting will be an advocacy training that's going to be lead by Nancy Amidei who has been doing advocacy training all throughout California and the West Coast and has done a few for us in past years. It's an easy "How To Be An Advocate" advocacy training. Also, if you're a MAZON grantee this is also the Central Valley training for Hunger Action Day. **The training is on March 29<sup>th</sup> and it's from 9 to 11.** We will have food and coffee. Please join us for the training.

**Hunger Action Day is on Tuesday, May 10<sup>th</sup> this year.** This is our bus trip to Sacramento. We will be taking off from Trinity Lutheran Church out on the parking lot. You can leave your cars here. Our bus would be able to fit 55 people. It's an all-day trip. **We leave here around 6:15am and we get to Sacramento at 10 o'clock in the morning.** Right now I'm making appointments with our legislators so that everybody can have a chance to be in a meeting with one of them. **The thing that's exciting and new this year is that a group from Tulare is also taking a bus, and for those of you who are from the North Valley, Merced, Madera, if you're interested in going, that bus potentially can also pick you up on the way.** You will get a free lunch and lots of snacks and water on Hunger Action Day. When you get to Sacramento the buses usually stop at a church that's across the street from the capitol, which is probably about a block to the offices. I will have people already in groups so that they would get to go to at least one legislative visit that day. There a minimal amount of walking and that's to the offices for your scheduled visit, and then during the rest of the time there will other things that will be going on. There will be a rally, there will be people outside tabling, and other entertainments. There are always a lot of things going on that people can see and tour. There is plenty of time for resting and walking. In previous years, we've taken very elderly women and men

who were in their 70s and 80s. We go at a slow pace and we do all the rest room stops. We've also taken children in strollers before. It's almost like a family community event. **We'll be done by 3 o'clock and should get back to Fresno around 6 or 6:30.** There will be more details on this trip that are still in the works throughout this month and probably April. **Please sign up. The first people that sign up will be the first ones on my list to have a seat on the bus.**

**Jeremy Hofer, Fresno Metro Ministry:** The first thing I'm going to talk about is the Farm to School Project that we just started in the last couple of months at Fresno Metro Ministry. I'm also going to talk about the Community Garden Summit in April very briefly. The third thing I'm going to talk about is an update on the Community Food Assessment.

**Farm to School is a different look at how we provide food to our children. There are actually four aspects of Farm to School. One aspect looks at school gardens and incorporating school gardens in schools. Secondly, it looks at tying nutrition education and curriculum to these gardens and to the food that children are eating at school. The third thing is it looks at the cafeteria and what's being served in the cafeteria. The fourth thing it looks at is which local farms can produce food to go into these schools.** The Community Alliance with Family Farmers is a statewide group and they have contracted with Fresno Metro Ministry to do this work, so from now through next year fifty percent of my time is devoted to basically setting the foundation to do Farm to School in Fresno County.

What this entails in order to set the foundation is developing relationships with food service directors throughout the districts in the county. It entails bringing together farmers who are actually willing to sell here locally. **A lot of small farmers, mid size farmers, family farmers take their produce out of the valley and sell at farmers' markets in L.A., San Francisco, and San Luis Obispo, so that's the trend. A lot of the food that we serve in the schools here is shipped in from Sacramento and L.A., so what we're trying to do is minimize the transportation and have local farmers actually benefit from the huge amount of purchases that Fresno Unified and other school districts make in the county.** I do want to say that we're not limiting our scope to schools. There are other institutional buyers that are potential markets for local farmers, and so we want to bring all of these institutional buyers to the table and find out what their needs are. Basically, the main need for buyers is that there be a single point of entry for them to access local produce. That means if there are 20 farmers, for example, that are willing to sell to schools there needs to be one forager. A forager is a middle person that looks for the right farmer to fulfill a purchase that needs to be made by an institution. This is the forager model that we're going to be looking at and doing the feasibility study on. Ultimately a business plan will need to be developed because this is a business that is functioning in places like Ventura County, Santa Monica, Sacramento, and Davis. There are businesses that basically have a nonprofit side to them, but essentially what they do is buy from local farms and sell to institutional markets. **On March 31<sup>st</sup> we're having a Farm to School meeting. It's actually under the umbrella of the Food Resources Task Group.** The Food Resources Task Group has traditionally always looked at how we can use our local produce to feed people in Fresno, and Farm to School is about using local produce to feed our children. Coming up in late September or October plans are in the works for a Farm to School Summit, and it probably will encompass the Central Valley. Food service directors, farmers, business people, and other people that are involved with farms are all going to be invited and it's going to be a look at best practices. We'll bring in food service directors that are currently buying from local farms. We'll bring in people that have worked around all of these different models having to do with Farm to School. Right now we need to find some friendly food service directors that get it and are willing to say, "Look, I will buy locally." We also need a district with a strong parent group and community efforts that are working with schools because often Farm to School happens when there are parent groups advocating for fresh local produce. They know that fresh local produce tastes better. The kids are going to eat that fresh strawberry before they're going to eat the mushy one. We've found this in focus groups with parents

and we've found this just from talking to kids. It's just common sense that sweet, fresh produce is going to go over better. Also we're developing a crop calendar. Finding out when these products are available is a big need. It's a challenge in the winter sometimes to find certain products, but there are products year round here in Fresno County. Also, there is a big need to work closely with Farm to School staff at the University of California Cooperative Extension office. They have a fifty percent Farm to School position there as well, so we don't want to duplicate our efforts. They have similar goals to what we have, so developing a comprehensive plan for Farm to School in Fresno County is a big need so that we're not just off on our own doing those things. The final thing is business plan development expertise. I've been involved with business plan development but we really need to draw in some expertise on how to do that and what that entails. It looks like we may be able to pull some of our collaborative partners from EOC in on this effort.

**The Growing Communities Workshop is April 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> at the Garden of the Sun.** It's going to be a wonderful time of leadership development. We're going to have a strong contingent of the Hmong community there who will actually be running one of the workshops in Hmong, so everybody that speaks English is going to have to have headsets to translate. Also we'll have the master gardeners present. We'll have some people that are interested in school gardens from schools. We have somebody coming from as far away as the Midwest to attend this who is working with the Hmong community out there because they know that Fresno has such a unique and diverse community and they would not be able to find a similar training like this where they're from. We have a very strong network of community gardens in Fresno, most of which are Southeast Asian community gardens, so we definitely want to continue to develop their capacity to lead their communities.

**Finally, the Community Food Assessment.** We're in the final information-gathering stages and we actually this week will be working on the data, which is pretty complex. If you've seen the surveys there is quite a bit of information on each survey and so we need to translate that information, send it for analysis, and then start writing our report and recommendations that will be coming out in August or September. These recommendations will not only be coming from all of these surveys but also from the task groups and from you from this information that we'll gather today. We will then be meeting with all of the supervisors, the City Council, the Health Department, and other elected officials one by one and talking to them about food issues, and we will have a media press conference to publicize this report. I see so many faces that have helped out with the food assessment and I just want to thank everybody here that has helped out for all of their assistance.

**Edie Jessup:** I want to update you on two more things. **The first is the Healthy School Environment Policy Committee.** This is work in our community that a great number of people have participated in over the last year. We have a meeting tomorrow and we're very close to having a final recommendation for school policy with Fresno Unified. I'm assuming that the Child Nutrition task Group will be discussing this. I have the latest and greatest update. I will put that on your table back there so if you want to refer to it you may. We hope to be able to go to the school board with this in the next couple of months. **Just as an update, we have organized this policy recommendation by using the federal wellness policy elements. All schools in the nation will be required to have a wellness policy in 2006 and 2007.** We would be ahead of the game here if Fresno Unified use this. **The elements are that there are goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and school-based activities designed to promote student wellness in a manner that a local education agency determines. The highlight would be that it is in the context of the whole school being the nutrition education environment, and so it's not just the school cafeteria where folks are getting education about what it is to eat well but the whole school would be involved in that.** There is both nutrition education policy information and physical activity policy information that would ask for our schools to comply with existing law so that kids are actually getting physical education and a series of things that would give our kids better physical activity on the school

campus. There are policies to promote access to school meals and it would require our district to be involved in, as much as possible, universal breakfast and lunch and after school programs, all of which met good nutrition requirements. There are policies to increase participation in school meals and one of those essentially is to have the food services take over and it would be the elimination of junk food and contracted food from the campuses. Policies to improve the school meals have the details of good nutrition but require that the menus employ good healthy food, low fat, and low sugar for our kids while they are at school. We know that we cannot control what kids eat after school or until the next day, but on the campus we can. There is an encouragement for all school activities to comply with good healthy food, which would mean that the pizza party and using sweets and fat foods as rewards for children for behaving well or whatever would be eliminated. There are policies to improve meals other than reimbursable meals, which are called competitive meals, and the next element is an assurance that the guidelines for school meals are not less restrictive than those set by the Department of Agriculture, which just means that they at least have to do healthy meals. There is a plan for measuring the implementation of the wellness policy and a plan that will involve parents, students, and representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school administrators, that there would be a committee that would continue that would have a broad stakeholder group to look at the implementation of the policies. **If this goes forward we would quite possibly be the first school district in California to both have a comprehensive policy but also one that complied with the standards that are going to be required in 2006-2007 and so we would be on the leading edge of doing that. On a policy level this is something that could have a big impact on close to 90,000 children.**

The other small update I **want to let you know about is that there is going to be established by April an 800 number where people can call to get information about food stamps**, and we hope that that will drift into access to emergency food referral also. This was spurred by the fact that the USDA in a short time informed us that they were going to be running advertisements encouraging people to sign up for food stamps starting in April and May and they were going to put the state 800 number on it. We called the state 800 number and it was totally useless. After several layers of going through pushing this and that and this and that you got to something that said food stamps and what the number said was, "Please look in your phone book and call your county." **End of side A** ...that we would look for an 800 number to give them that would have a live person at least during part of the day, and we are in the process of doing that with an 800 number that the Community Food Bank has and so they are going to go live with the advertisements in April. We know that when the hunger fellows were here and were on TV the county would get sometimes 200 to 300 calls as a result of their being on TV and the county number being flashed on the screen, so we're expecting folks to call and we're going to need folks to be able to answer in Spanish particularly and probably Hmong.

**Table Work Discussion:** You are sitting at a table where we would like to have you discuss food security in Fresno as it relates to the issues on your table topic, and what we're looking for out of this are suggestions for priorities that we need to work on this year that will move us down the road toward food security here in Fresno. We would love to have you talk amongst yourselves about the issues but also taking a look at things that might be done to actually address those issues that you and other people might be willing to do. We will do this for about 15 or 20 minutes and then we'll call for a quick verbal summary of what you said. We will put up your lists on the wall, and I believe that you all have little stars. As you leave we would very much like for you to put a star on things that are of most importance to you. You may put all your stars on one item or you may spread them around. We will take a look at those, compile them, and use them for guidance as we work in the task groups.

**Edie Jessup:** I'm going to ask you to wind up now. Let's tape your lists up on the wall and then we'll have somebody from each table give us a short summary and I'll thank you very much for your hard work.

**Participant comment:** This group is the community hunger and nutrition forum. We had lots of ideas but we got three of the main ones down. **One of the concerns is the need to have fresh fruits and vegetables available at small community stores or markets or convenience stores.** In many areas there will be a corner market and there will be chips, beer, candy, and soda, but very rarely can you find fruits and vegetables there in the market, and so we would like to see it more accessible. We would like to target those owners and say, “Hey, why don’t you make available some fruits and vegetables?” We also talked about the way you see the pastry guy come into the barrios and honking and you can buy all those types of golocinas or the ice cream man who comes by. **We would like to have a van or a truck that comes by with fresh fruits and vegetables to those remote areas, and not just to the remote areas but also to different areas where there are offices, different business areas?** There are lots of lunch trucks but very rarely do those lunch trucks have salads or an affordable piece of fruit, so that was another idea. In addition to the salads and fruits they could also have ready-made packets to take home for dinner that night or for the next day. **Another idea was to develop a food policy council as a link to local government.** This group would be composed of teachers, organizations, parent groups, church leaders, just a hodge-podge of people from the community who would serve as liaisons to give recommendation to the city council and to the board of supervisors.

**Edie Jessup:** Thank you very much. Let’s have the community garden folks report.

**Participant comment:** When you think of a community garden you often think in terms of driving down the street and there’s a vacant lot and you have a garden, but **folks at home can grow gardens and they can donate that produce to their church or to their community group**, so everybody can be an organic home gardener if you wish and donate your excess, which is a real simple idea, it’s a grassroots beginning. **Another thing we realized is we need volunteers.** So often we want to come up with new ideas, but there are a lot of groups already working and they very often could use our help, so people could volunteer at any of the groups including the existing community gardens. Finally, tying in with volunteers again, **we need people to network with their churches, their school groups, or whatever to help in the food projects that we have.**

Edie Jessup: Thank you. Child Nutrition.

**Felicia Green:** We came up with a lot of ideas to incorporate child nutrition, but some of the main ones were focusing more in the schools. **We thought that it would be best to send some nutrition information home to families when kids get their first school packets. We could send home a list of fruits and vegetables that they can incorporate into their diet throughout the year.** Along with the list of those items we could include information about what they actually do for the body as far as the spinach and bananas, you know, you get your potassium from those different types of things, just so that it can educate them on what these items actually do for them and for their children. **Another thing is to incorporate growing gardens at the schools.** I think that they have that going on at some school sites, but maybe it could be mandatory at the majority of the school sites so that the kids can have a hands-on idea of growing fruits and vegetables. There can be more of an emphasis on something that they’re actually doing and then something that they’re actually eating and they’ll take more pride in eating because they did grow that. **Lastly, we want to work with school breakfast ,lunch and after-school snacks or summer lunch and ways of enforcing kids to utilize those programs.** I know the idea of going to school and eating lunch is not a really big thing for kids because they just got out of school and they don’t want to go back to school again, but maybe incorporating craft classes or classes where they can actually go and learn how to cook nutritious meals with somebody who can supervise them and they can take those menus or recipes home with them and educate their families as well when they’re taking those things home with them. Those were just a few of the things that we talked about with child nutrition.

**Edie Jessup:** Thank you very much. The Food Stamp group.

**Participant comment:** We wanted to establish 20 additional outreach sites and application sites throughout the county, both urban and rural. This would include two grocery stores, but we'd be in shopping malls, churches, schools, wherever we could find a place that would let us set up a table. **Another idea is to make all California SSI recipients food stamp eligible because we're the only state in the union that does not allow their SSI recipients to receive food stamps. We want to engage 10,000 residents to communicate with their elected officials so that they would delete the state finger imaging process. Also, we added an education component to make people aware that the Food Stamp Program is actually a supplemental nutrition program and we could educate potential clients on their eligibility to the program.**

**Edie Jessup:** Thank you. Senior Nutrition.

**Larry Trullinger:** Some of the issues, of course, overlap in the various categories from the community food assessments to child nutrition to food stamps. All of those that have been mentioned affect seniors, but they affect them maybe even a little more. **One of the things that we find is that seniors on low incomes tend to eat low cost foods and when you're on a tight budget and only have limited income to spend on food you aren't always able to get the most nutritious food.** You get bulk and get the necessities from that standpoint. **One of the things that seniors are facing is access to food. Transportation is a big problem.** Edie mentioned that there is a study by Diane Cassidy concerning a solution to transportation. Because seniors don't have adequate transportation, a lot of them have to get their food at their closest convenience market, the little stop and shop, etc., and you know there's no fresh meat, no produce, and a very limited selection of foods. It's very difficult. **We feel that the Brown Bag Program was a good asset for seniors and for other people too and that that should be reinstated if at all possible. We also addressed SSI recipients need to qualify for food stamps.** A lot of those are in the senior category. **Perhaps more venues for the EOC Hot Lunch Program would help.** A lot of those locations that are used now, and there are very few of them, are at a considerable distance, and again, transportation becomes a problem for seniors. There was a suggestion that maybe we could have something like urban tours where we could bring people in the north into areas where they might be able to get a visual understanding of what the problems are. We're at an imbalance. In Fresno the resources generally are in the north but the problems are in the south, as we all know, so it helps if the people that control or have the resources understand the problem better because in their eyes there is no problem. They don't see it. We have a problem with markets closing in Southeast Fresno particularly. The last supermarket we had, Save Mart, closed up. It's been going on close to a year now. There is no supermarket within reasonable distance for most seniors living in Southeast Fresno, and it's a real problem. Thank you.

**Edie Jessup:** Thank you, Larry, and thank you all. We will type this up. We have task groups. Please do join us for those. You'll see them on your calendar. I will see you in May on the Hunger Action Day tour. I am fortunate to have the month off. I'm going to Spain and walking 300 miles. I'm doing the Camino de Santiago de Compostela, and I'll come back with a picture or two for you. Thank you very much.