

## CAM Distribution Up Over 50% in 2011 Press Release

2011 was a challenging year of extreme demand and a multitude of blessings for Christian Action Ministries (CAM). Food distribution increased over 50% with approximately 438,000 pounds, accounting for 286,830 meals, provided to Taney County residents in need.

According to CAM director Pat Davis, “Throughout 2010 we averaged 750 families per month requesting assistance at our pantries in Branson and Forsyth. In 2011 that average jumped to 1,157 families – an increase of 54%. Additionally we had made a commitment to increase the quantity and quality of food being dispersed to meet federal food pyramid guidelines for 9 nutritional meals. That commitment meant the purchase of additional food to supplement our inventory.”

The increased demand wasn’t solely due to the current economic pressures according to CAM Board Chairman Jack Burke. “We attribute about half of the increased demand to the recessionary economy. The remaining increases are due to heightened awareness of our services. The new location in Forsyth is highly visible and we’ve seen many new people who never knew the pantry existed. Plus we’ve proactively instituted a monthly mobile outreach to remote areas of eastern Taney County where there is a significant need and many are unable to travel to the Forsyth pantry. So this 54% increase is due to a number of factors including the economy, awareness, and outreach, enabling us to serve greater numbers of people who need our help.”

Looking at the totals for 2011, CAM Branson assisted an average of 655 families per month, while Forsyth helped 296 families per month. The mobile outreach provided food to an average of 74 families per month, and the seven remote food drops in Forsyth provided sustenance to 1,575 families.

One of the biggest challenges in meeting the demand was a significant decrease in available food for purchase through the Ozark Food Harvest bank and less-than-normal federal commodity deliveries during that same period. “Whether it was the Joplin impact or budgetary concerns, the fact was that we had to expend a considerable amount of our financial resources in purchasing food from alternative vendors, such as local food markets, to supplement our inventory.” Davis explained. “Outright food purchases for 2011 were up 311% over 2010.”

The remarkable fact, according to Burke, was that the generosity of local churches, businesses, and individuals enabled CAM to meet the needs of so many people while remaining in a fiscally sound position. Ironically business donations were down by \$12,000, but church donations were up over \$11,000 for the year. As Burke said, “It is a testament to the Christian spirit of our community that we are supported in such a great manner. Plus having a director like Pat Davis who refuses to take a salary for her full-time job takes a lot of pressure off the budget of a small organization like CAM. We truly feel that we live the miracle of the loaves and fishes on a daily basis.”

If you’d like more information about CAM, make a donation, volunteer your time, or conduct a food drive, visit [www.christianactionministries.org](http://www.christianactionministries.org).