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## Campaign Against Summer Hunger relaunched

STAFF REPORT

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Approximately 500 community members participated in All Faiths Food Bank's Walk to End Summer Hunger on March 30

Photo provided by Harry Sayer

SARASOTA — The USDA recently announced it's going to cut more than \$1 billion from programs buying produce from local farmers to support schools and food banks.

And the state of Florida isn't using Sun Bucks again; that's \$260 million originally set for 2.1 million children across the state.

That is going to put some children into a harsh reality of hunger during the summer, according to a news release from All Faiths Food Bank.

The nonprofit held its rally with the 12th annual Campaign Against Summer Hunger on March 30 at Nathan Benderson Park in Sarasota.

About 500 supporters took part in the Walk to End Summer Hunger.



“While we’re deeply concerned about the long-term implications of these cuts, our immediate focus is ensuring that every child in our community has enough to eat this summer,” All Faiths Food Bank President/CEO Nelle S. Miller said. “We’re preparing thoughtfully and strategically, using predictive forecasting to understand how these changes could impact our neighbors — and urging our community to help meet today’s need.”

There is also a new way to help. There is a dollar-for-dollar challenge match of up to \$1 million through donors taking part through May 15, according to the news release. Helping with it are Gulf Coast Community Foundation and Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation.

“For hardworking families already managing the pressures of inflation, rising grocery costs and continued hurricane recovery, this summer will be especially tough,” campaign chair Lisa Krouse stated in the news release. “Our community has always stepped up in times of need, and now is one of those times.”

All Faiths is using schools, libraries, summer camps and community groups to provide healthy meals through mobile pantries along with school-based food distributions and “BackPacks” filled with snacks and meals. Those are in partnership with Sarasota County Schools and the School District of DeSoto County.

“More than 50% of students in Sarasota County — and 100% of students in DeSoto County — rely on free or reduced-cost school meals,” the news release stated. “Last year, thanks to community support, more than 35,000 children received vital food assistance through the campaign.”



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