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THE CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR & FIRST LADY'S CONFERENCE ON WOMEN TO PROVIDE ONE MILLION MEALS TO FAMILIES IN NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

First Lady Maria Shriver to Kick Off Statewide 'Million Meals Initiative' Today in San Diego to Help California Food Banks Meet the Growing Demand for Food Assistance; San Diego Chargers and San Francisco 49ers Join Effort with Million Meals Food Drives

SAN DIEGO (November 22, 2010) – California First Lady Maria Shriver and the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women will continue their commitment to empowering women year-round through the Million Meals Initiative, a statewide initiative that seeks to help California's Food Banks meet the increased demand for food assistance during the holiday season. The initiative will kick off in San Diego today with service events led by First Lady Maria Shriver and a donation by the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women to The California Association of Food Banks to provide more than one million meals to California families in need.

"The Women's Conference organization has worked on the frontlines to feed women's minds, bodies and spirits, and during this time of need, we are committed to helping California women feed their families," said Maria Shriver. "I am so pleased that individual Californians and thousands of organizations all across the state are joining together to support struggling families. What started as a donation by the conference to provide one million meals has, through the power of partnerships and the generosity of Californians, become millions of meals for California's families. This spirit of concern for our neighbors in need is a wonderful thing that happens every year during the holiday season, but the need for food continues after all the holiday celebrations are over. I hope the Million Meals Initiative inspires even more Californians to join us by donating to Million Meals food bank partners across the state—so we can keep this spirit of giving alive throughout the year."

"The holiday season is a reminder to all of us that we have a responsibility to reach out and help our fellow Californians in need. Whether it is donating our time or food, we can make a difference in the lives of others," said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. "Maria and I hope all Californians reflect on the blessings in their lives and reach out to local food banks and donate or volunteer time during the Million Meals effort as we celebrate this season of giving."

The food donated through the Million Meals Initiative will be delivered to Californians through the California Association of Food Banks' 43 member organizations and more than 5,000 organizations across the state. In addition to the food banks, five organizations have also been selected to receive grants including Father Joe's Villages, Sacred Heart Community Service, and three organizations led by the conference's Minerva Award winners: Betty Chin's Betty's Blue Angels, Christy Porter's Hidden Harvest and Janice Mirikitani's Glide Memorial Church.

Californians can donate food, dollars or time to a Million Meals partner in their neighborhood by visiting: <http://www.cafoodbanks.org>.

"In a time when one out of six Americans and one out of four children is experiencing food insecurity and hunger, food banks are hard pressed to meet the need for food," said Sue Sigler, California Association of Food Banks Executive Director. "We are so very grateful to Maria Shriver, The Women's Conference, and supporters of the Million Meals Initiative, which will provide a huge boost to the efforts of food banks around

the state to continue helping our neighbors in need.”

California First Lady Maria Shriver will launch the initiative with a lunchtime visit to Father Joe’s Villages, an organization that serves more than 5,000 people a day through its soup kitchen. After meeting with families, serving meals and touring the facility, Maria Shriver will then visit the San Diego Armed Services YMCA to join partners and volunteers to help distribute packages of healthy food to more than 1,000 families. Each family will receive enough food to feed a family of four for one week.

The day’s events will culminate with a visit by Shriver to Qualcomm Stadium for the Million Meals Food Drive, which is being organized in partnership with the San Diego Food Bank and San Diego Chargers. The Million Meals Food Drive was kicked off on Saturday, November 20 from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at Fire Station 10. The general public was invited to donate non-perishable food items, and San Diego Chargers player Gary Banks joined the San Diego Fire-Rescue Department and other volunteers in the food collection efforts.

“We are proud and grateful for the partnership with First Lady Maria Shriver to maximize the Chargers’ annual Food Drive and benefit deserving San Diego families during the holidays,” said Chargers Executive Vice President A.G. Spanos. “With the support of the Million Meals Initiative, the Chargers’ Food Drive can make a huge impact and put food on the tables of the families hit hardest during these tough economic times.”

The Million Meals Food Drive continues tonight at Qualcomm Stadium beginning at 3:30 p.m. Attendees of the San Diego Chargers Monday Night Football game are being encouraged to bring donated food items to be dropped off in red collection bins at all stadium entrances. The top contributor to the food drive will be recognized by Maria Shriver and will receive a Philip Rivers autographed football on the field. The goal of the Million Meals Food Drives is to collect enough food to provide an additional one million meals to California’s families.

“The San Diego Food Bank is honored to work with First Lady Maria Shriver whose tireless support for California’s struggling families throughout her tenure has not only helped provide food to the most vulnerable in our communities, but has also significantly raised awareness about the problem of hunger in California,” said Eugene “Mitch” Mitchell, San Diego Food Bank Chairman. “Thanks to generous support from the California Governor & First Lady’s Conference on Women and its Million Meals Initiative, thousands of needy families will not have to face hunger this holiday season.”

The San Francisco 49ers organization is also participating in the Million Meals Initiative. At their November 14 home game, the 49ers collaborated with the San Francisco Food Bank to collect 2,100 pounds of food and \$2,100 in cash donations from fans as they were arriving at the game. Yesterday, the 49ers partnered with Sacred Heart Community Service to facilitate another Million Meals Food Drive.

“The San Francisco 49ers are honored to be affiliating with California First Lady Maria Shriver and the California Governor and First Lady’s Conference on Women to support their efforts to provide one million families with the nutritional resources they need to have a safe, happy, and fulfilling holiday season,” said Team Owner Dr. John York. “Through the generosity of our fans who are donating items on their way into our games and the volunteer service of our players, alumni, staff and their families, we seek to make a difference one can and one food box at a time, realizing that together we can achieve the goal set by the Million Meals Initiative.”

Millions Meals is a special initiative of the conference organization’s **WE Connect program**, which was launched by Shriver in 2005 and is designed to help California’s families become more financially secure by connecting them to money-saving programs and services they may be eligible for but are unaware of. Californians who are in need of help are encouraged to visit **WEConnect.net** to learn about the many programs and resources that are available.

The success of The Women’s Conference event under Maria Shriver’s leadership has enabled the California Governor & First Lady’s Conference on Women to fund programs and initiatives – and form

strategic partnerships – that seek to empower women year round, in all areas of their lives. Since 2004, the conference has directly funded: more than 2 million meals through its Million Meals Initiative; a quarter of a million dollars in grants to domestic violence shelters through its WE Act program; a half a million dollars in grants to further the work of 33 Minerva Award recipients through its WE Honor program; 48 educational scholarships to promising young women totaling \$350,000 through its WE Educate program; and more than \$1 million for special exhibits and educational projects to The California Museum in Sacramento through its WE Inspire program. Through the conference's WE Invest program and its partnership with Kiva.org, 179 entrepreneurs in 17 states have received 31,000 microloans totaling more than \$1 million.

For more information about the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women, visit: <http://www.womensconference.org>.

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