Aroostook Credit Unions join ACAP in “Soup”er Bowl to tackle hunger

PRESQUE ISLE – Members of the Aroostook Chapter of Maine Credit Unions are facing off in a game where everyone is a winner, collecting cans of soup to help stock local community cupboards and some food pantries throughout region to keep people fed this winter.

“The Credit Union’s mission of ‘people helping people’ is alive and well in Aroostook County. Tackling hunger for our communities is extremely important, as there are many families and individuals in need, and we may never know the extent of how much of a difference even the smallest donation can make in someone’s life. To know that you are helping someone in need, is rewarding in itself, and as a community, as we all pitch in together, the impact will be felt across the entire County,” said The County Federal Credit Union Executive Vice President Dan Bagley.

Aroostook County Action Program is coordinating the donation distribution. As many as ten Community Cupboards throughout The County and some food pantries in communities without a food cupboard, will receive what is collected. WAGM-TV is also partnering on the project, providing an in-kind donation of commercial spots that will soon begin airing.

“Food cupboards are a great alternative when you’re facing hunger and are unable to access traditional food pantries due to issues such as hours of operation, restrictions on numbers of visits in a given time period, or income guidelines,” said ACAP Family Coach Heidi Rackliffe. “Soup is a perfect food when someone doesn’t have a functional kitchen, and soup is a complete, nutritious meal in a can.”

Acadia, NorState and The County Federal Credit Unions are tackling hunger as part of the Maine Credit Unions overarching Ending Hunger Campaign by participating in the “Soup”er Bowl of Caring – a friendly challenge to collect cans of soup at each of their locations beginning as soon as they open in the New Year until February 22, 2019. The Souper Bowl of Caring began as a grass roots movement in a South Carolina church in 1990 to collect cans of soup during the Big Game. That first year saw almost $6,000 in donations, and has continued to grow into a multi-million-dollar national annual campaign. Last year, the Souper Bowl of Caring collected soup in excess of $8 million. The Souper Bowl of Caring inspired the
local credit unions to create their own event. ACAP will report collection totals to the national movement to be included in their 2019 campaign tally, but all soup and monetary donations will remain local.

“What a great opportunity for the Aroostook Chapter of Credit Unions to engage our credit union members and communities throughout Aroostook County to come together to help our friends and neighbors in need,” said President of the Aroostook Chapter of Credit Unions Denise Duperré, NorState Chief Marketing Executive. “A small donation goes a long way to feed an individual in need. The credit union philosophy of ‘people helping people’ still rings strong and true. Donate one or more cans of soup at your local credit union. Your donation will help feed people in your hometown.”

Anyone can drop off cans of soup or make a donation to the soup can drive at their local credit union in 16 locations around The County. Every $1 collected in donations will purchase a can of soup for distribution. All donations will benefit local people, with a few credit union sites, in towns where there are more credit unions than cupboards, being matched with nearby Aroostook County communities that host cupboards.

“Hunger and food insecurity is a problem in the county and I’m pleased that our local credit unions were able to team up to help fight this issue,” said Acadia Federal Credit Union President/CEO David Desjardins. “It’s another way that local institutions with the help of local people are helping to address the issue of hunger in Aroostook County.”

To build momentum and help spread the word, people donating soup are encouraged to take a “Selfless Selfie” to share on their credit union’s social media pages using the hashtag (#) #CUtacklehunger.

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Credit unions in Maine began raising money for Ending Hunger in 1990. Since its creation, the Maine credit unions have raised a total of $7.2 million to help end hunger in the state. 100% of all funds raised stay in Maine and go directly to hunger organizations such as food pantries and soup kitchens to help end hunger. The Maine Credit Union Campaign for Ending Hunger is the largest, philanthropic fundraising effort for ending hunger in Maine by a non-hunger organization.