



BEYOND BELIEF NETWORK

Beyond Belief Network Guides: Hunger Awareness Month

November is Hunger Awareness Month and a great time to think about food-related volunteering! No matter where your team calls home, chances are good that there are hungry people in your area. Most cities and rural counties have food banks. Your team can fundraise, volunteer, or hold a food drive for a food bank. You can also deliver meals and gift cards to a needy family in your area, buy groceries for elderly or disabled people, or serve at a soup kitchen. This guide includes information about hunger, resources, and event ideas. Don't forget to submit a [report](#) about your service activity.

Prevalence of hunger in America

1. Almost 48 million Americans, including 16 million children, live in homes that are unable to provide nutritious food on a regular basis ([No Kid Hungry](#)).
2. Food insecurity is the inability to provide nutritionally adequate food. Food insecurity exists in approximately 17.2 million households in America. Of these homes, 3.9 million of them contain children ([No Kid Hungry](#)).
3. Food insecurity exists in every county in America. The lowest rate of food insecurity is 2.4% in Slope County ND and the highest rate is 35.2 in Holmes County, MS ([Feeding America](#)).

Event ideas

1. **Volunteer at a food bank or soup kitchen.** Check the resources section to find secular organizations in your area. Food banks often need help with packing or unpacking boxes and stocking shelves. Soup kitchens need people to help prepare and serve food.
2. **Hold a food drive.** Check with a food bank to see what types of donations are accepted (e.g., some places won't accept fresh food or produce). Ask members to bring items to a regularly scheduled meeting, or as an entry for a fun event.
3. **Fundraising event.** You can have any kind of fundraiser you like, although we think a Thanksgiving dinner or Flying Spaghetti Dinner (more info below) are good choices because you can raise money and provide a hot meal to needy people at the same time. If you reduce the entry fee with a canned food donation, you will provide money, supplies, and meals to the needy people in your community and have a great social event that will attract people outside your BBN team.
4. **Interfaith Meal Packing with Humanist Community at Harvard.** November 24, 2013 is the Humanist Community at Harvard's (HCH) Fourth Annual Interfaith Thanksgiving Meal Packing Project. In three years, this event has provided over 70,000 meals and strengthened relationships between local religious and nonreligious communities. This year, HCH, along with key sponsors such as the Harvard Chaplains, have set the goal of packing 50,000 meals. This means raising \$12,500. In order to reach this goal, HCH is reaching out to the Beyond Belief Network for support. If your group is interested in being a part of this national effort to end hunger, please email HCH representative, [Zachary Cole](#) to learn how to donate or contribute in another way!

Resources

1. **Feeding America:** [information](#) about hunger and its consequences, searchable list of [food banks](#), ideas for [taking action](#). Unlike many religious-based hunger organizations, Feeding America has an explicit diversity statement amongst [their mission and values](#).
2. **No Kid Hungry:** [Enter your zip code](#) to find opportunities to volunteer, advocate, and fundraise for organizations fighting hunger in your community
3. Ask Beyond Belief Network staff to vet a charity for program evaluation, financial responsibility, and religious proselytizing.

Event idea: Flying Spaghetti Monster dinner

Social events, like FSM dinners, are great for attracting non-members and building relationships within your community. You can find quite a bit of FSM art and media is available at the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster [here](#), including a wide variety of pareidolia vaguely resembling Him. Consider pasta-themed puns for your advertisements and you can have a tongue-in-cheek blessing (be cognizant of the perceptions of believers if having an interfaith event or inviting public). Wear colanders as hats or dress as pirates. Have yarn, pom poms, googly eyes, and glue for FSM crafts.

Spaghetti and meatballs is one of the easiest and cheapest meals to make or purchase; you can buy bulk dry spaghetti, frozen meatballs (or bulk ground beef and bread crumbs to make from scratch), and spaghetti sauce, all of which store well and can be easily made in huge quantities. You can also approach a local Italian restaurant and ask for discounts for venue and food. Your event might make less money, but you won't have to worry about preparation or cleanup.

Have a suggested donation or charge a set amount. Minnesota Atheists charges \$6.66 for their FSM dinners - which, besides fitting in with the theme, encourages many people to pay \$10 and donate the change.

Coordinating and defining tasks

1. **Event coordinators and hosts:** A small committee of at least three people should be responsible for securing a venue, finding a beneficiary, directing advertising, and coordinating the event schedule and food. If the event is at a university, teams will need to work with the university to make sure everything is being done to health requirements.
2. **Cashiers:** You'll need one cashier per 20 people to keep things moving. It should be someone you trust; ideally the group treasurer will be one of the cashiers or oversee them. You can allow people to pay in advance and allow needy families to attend for free.
3. **Cooks and Servers:** An additional 6-12 people should be on hand to make food and serve it (buffet style is easiest, but you'll still need people to refill the chafing dishes). If you have the event at a restaurant, you may be able to save money if your group serves. One of the committee members should oversee the food prep. Make sure that these people are briefed on health codes and keep everything (including themselves) spotless while handling food. Sauce can be heated in huge pots; spaghetti can be precooked and reheated in a large pot of water. Meatballs and breads can be precooked and reheated in an oven.
4. **Emcee and entertainers:** If someone from your beneficiary is available to speak, encourage them to come and give a presentation. Other options are local musicians, celebrities, and group leaders. One of the coordinators should act as emcee or coordinate the presentations.
5. **Clean up crew:** If you have the event at a rented or borrowed location, be sure to have 6-12 people on hand to clean up the food prep area, tables, etc. The more people the better, and ideally they will not be filling other roles so they're fresh. One of the coordinators should supervise cleanup.

Venue Guidelines

1. Access to kitchen
2. Tables and chairs –for eating, additional tables for serving, cashbox/check-in, and for any additional events (e.g., silent auction, promotional tables, food collection, etc.)
3. Parking
4. Sound setup if needed

Food and material requirements

1. **IMPORTANT:** make sure that your event is in compliance with health codes. When you're serving food to large numbers of people, the dangers of contamination are multiplied. Know what you're doing and keep everything clean!
2. 1 pound of dry spaghetti per 2-3 people (consider gluten free and vegan options)
3. 1 pound of sauce per 3-4 people (make basic sauce vegan friendly, with animal products available to add on)
4. Optional: 3-5 meatballs per person
5. Optional: 1 pound of salad per 8-10 people (don't forget 1 bottle of dressing per 10-12 people)
6. Optional: grated cheese, herbs, cooked vegetables for sauce/garnish
7. Optional: 1-2 breadsticks or rolls per person
8. Optional: 1-3 servings of dessert per person
9. Plastic plates, cutlery, napkins, plastic cups (2 sets per person, even more napkins)
10. Pitchers for water (1 per table) and/or 2-liter of soda per 5-8 people
11. 1 pound of ice per 10 people

Promoting your event

1. Put the event on your team meetup, calendar, or Facebook page
2. Make announcements at your regular programs
3. Post advertisements at businesses, on public bulletin boards, at the venue
4. Ask your local Coalition of Reason to post an advertisement
5. Submit an [event promotion request](#) for FBB to help promote your event in our social media
6. Ask the foodbank or charity receiving the funds to advertise in their social media
7. Ask any other involved businesses or organizations to advertise
8. Send a press release to local media a few weeks beforehand