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Forgotten Harvest to air WDIV telethon for donations

By [Sherri Begin Welch](#)

Oak Park-based food rescue **Forgotten Harvest** is teaming up with **WDIV-Channel 4** to host its first on-air appeal for cash donations Nov. 30.

"The food is out there. We just have to be able to get it," said Russ Russell, chief development officer at Forgotten Harvest.

Forgotten Harvest, which can rescue and distribute a pound of surplus perishable food for about 18 cents, hopes to raise at least \$300,000 through the "Good Neighbor" telethon, he said.

Forgotten Harvest rescued more than 12.5 million pounds of surplus food during fiscal 2009 from more than 400 grocery stores, produce markets, restaurants, caterers, dairies, farmers, wholesale food distributors and other sources.

The food went to 155 emergency food providers in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties, but 26 percent of those agencies are running out of food, Russell said.

And Forgotten Harvest projects it will only get worse, with more than 10,000 people in Macomb County alone expected to fall off of unemployment benefits in January.

The food rescue has set a goal to rescue 18 million pounds of food this year, Russell said. To do that, it will need to put more trucks on the road.

It's awaiting word on the donation of several new trucks, he said. But the cost of operating each of those trucks annually is between \$65,000 and \$75,000.

A number of companies have committed challenge grants to help raise matching funds during the telethon, provided Forgotten Harvest raises at least \$50,000. Those companies and their grants are:

- **PNC Foundation:** \$50,000
- **Kroger:** \$30,000
- **Art Van Furniture:** \$25,000
- **Busch Markets:** \$25,000
- **Jewish Fund:** \$10,000

The **Detroit Pistons**, **Detroit Red Wings** and **Detroit Tigers** also have donated pairs of tickets for giveaways to telethon donors who contribute \$100 or more during designated times.

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