When it comes to combating hunger in Ohio, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks,

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COLUMBUS – When it comes to combating hunger in Ohio, the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks, Ohio’s largest charitable response to hunger in the state, is at the forefront of the battle.

On April 12, the group, working with Ohio Farmers and Ohio’s Emergency Food Assistance Network, hosted an anti-hunger clambake at the Statehouse. It was billed as "Legislative Lobby Day" to underscore the issue of hunger in Ohio before lawmakers.

"This is an opportunity to share information firsthand with elected officials about the increasing demand for emergency food in Ohio," said the Executive Director of Second Harvest Lisa Hamler-Fugitt, in an interview with the Call & Post.

When it comes to hunger, she expressed the view that "prevention is always less costly, and

hunger is completely preventable."

As the administrator of the Ohio Food Purchase and Agriculture Clearance Programs, OASHF supports Ohio’s 12 Feeding America Foodbanks and their network of nearly 3,000 member agencies, including food pantries, soup kitchens and shelters.

These agencies and other concerned groups are invited to the event, said Hamler-Fugitt.

"We have meetings scheduled with legislators throughout the day," she said, "to discuss the importance of increasing funding to programs that ensure the basic necessity of food is provided to all Ohio citizens."

The gathering will feature a photo exhibit of paper plates that have been received through the statewide Paper Plate Project. Throughout the day, paper plates will be read, telling the stories of "Ohio most vulnerable citizens and the circumstances that led them into the lines of Ohio’s emergency food assistance network."

Apparently, the work of the Ohio Association of Second Harvest Foodbanks is making a big difference. Last year, the group and its 12 member foodbanks provided over 135 million pounds of food items, including fresh food items, wholesome agricultural products and shelf-stable grocery items.

A fierce opponent of cutting funding for programs which helps the poor and the needy, Hamler-Fugitt expressed the view that "hunger is a symptom of poverty," noting, that the number of hungry families is "increasing at an alarming rate in Ohio."

"One in 6 Ohioans are forced to turn to food pantry in order to feed their family, and that's an increase of 46.7 percent," she said.

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