

Facing hunger: Food Bank of Oakland County executive director Helen Kozlowski says hunger is a continuing problem in Michigan's richest county.

Study: Hunger, poverty exist amid Oakland County's wealth

SARA CALLENDER STAFF WRITER

"While it has been dubbed one of the wealthiest counties in the country, many residents of Oak-lind Country and the wealthiest counties in the country, many residents of Oak-lind Country and thunger. "Hunger: The Faces & Facts", a recent national study sponsored by the Second Harvest National Food Bank Network and the Food Bank Network and the Food Bank of Oakland Country, revealed that 16,928 Oakland Country residents sought charitable assistance in 1997 from 34 programs. I Results of the survey, which was conducted to pinpoint the sources of hunger-related issues, were announced Monday at the FBOC in Pontice.

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Conducted last May, the survey included a questionnaire distributed to 185 agencies operating food programs and a client survey involving personal interviews with 201 clients of emergency food programs. Questions included age, residence locations and most recent causes of need.
According to FBOC Executive Director Helen Kozlowski, the



results of the inaugural survey were surprising.

The state of the transparency of the exercity flustrates not only the exercity of the problem of hunger in America but it breaks the streetypical image of who is using charitable food programs in Oakland County and the nation." Kozlowski said. "We learned that a variety of people, even those who have jobs, are food bank clients."

In 54 percent of the households not consider the state of the households receiving assistance, no adult was working, while 45 percent of the households had one or more adult holding a job.

Of the clients interviewed, 38 percent are in poor health. About 75 percent of client households have no private health insurance and 41 percent have unpaid medical or hospital bills. Another 34 percent said they are delaying medical care because they can't afford it.

"Perhaps the most disturbing results of the survey are the implications that hunger has on the health of individuals," said

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Second Harvest President and CEO Christine Vladimiroff. We found that 28 percent of the people surveyed nationally had to chouse between medical care and food, 37 percent delayed medical care due to cost and more than nine percent of the children included in the study had missed meals in the past month. And, according to the Tufte University Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy, even short periods of under-nutrition can effect a child's behavior, cognitive development and future productivity."

Other results of the survey included:

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