

Forum on hunger issues planned Aug. 28 in Burnsville

Hunger is a growing problem in the Twin Cities area, striking children and youth, seniors and families. A forum on local hunger issues and solutions will take place Tuesday, Aug. 28, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. in the Burnhaven Library Community Room, 1101 West County Road 42, in Burnsville. The event, open to the public, is being presented by the steering committee for the sixth annual South of the River CROP Hunger Walk.

The forum will feature four panelists who will speak from different aspects addressing hunger in the area.

Melissa Tew will speak about the work of 360 Communities. This network of five emergency food shelves and two family resource centers provides immediate aid to individuals and families, and gives them access to resources to help them reach long-term self-sufficiency.

Maria Theresa Thoreson will discuss SNAP (the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps) in Dakota County. This multi-faceted program provides nutrition education and assistance in food budgeting and accessing healthy food.

Marcus Schmit is the director of advocacy for Second Harvest Heartland. One of the nation's largest, most efficient and innovative hunger relief organizations, this agency is in a unique position to connect community voices with elected officials and public policy makers.

Finally, Sandra Masin, state representative for district 51A, will talk about legislative initiatives. She will cover what is happening in the legislature to address hunger in our communities and in our state.

The South of the River CROP Hunger Walk is scheduled Sunday, Oct. 7. The walk is sponsored by Christian World Service, a global aid and development organization. This year's walk will start at St. John's Lutheran Church in

Lakeville at 2 p.m., with registration beginning at 1 p.m. The walk route will cover approximately four miles, with a mini-walk of one mile also available.

People who are interested in participating in the walk or forming a team may pick up materials at the forum.

One-quarter of the funds raised by walkers and their sponsors will go to local hunger-fighting agencies — 360 Communities, the Open Door in Dakota County and the CAP agency in Scott County. The remainder will support CWS projects around the world.

Additional information is available from one of the coordinators: Paula Nordhem at pnordhem@yahoo.com or Denise Lewis at dlewis9476@comcast.net. Information also is available on the Internet at <http://www.crophungerwalk.org> and on Facebook at Twin Cities South of the River CROP Walk.