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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Subject: Summer the hungriest time for many area children**

Summer may be the hungriest time of year for many area children. Consider this: According to the latest Missouri Hunger Atlas report, *3,192 children live below poverty level in Taney County*. And 74 percent (or 8,455 kids) of Taney County students are enrolled in the free or reduced school lunch program. So, what happens during summer when the breakfast and lunch they counted on at school go away?

“A significant food void is created when children are out of school during the summer months,” said Elizabeth Hughes, executive director of Christian Action Ministries. “CAM wanted to ensure that gap was filled, so last year we launched the Summer Hunger Relief for Taney County Children initiative, and the impact was astounding.” CAM provided 4 days’ worth of food to 3,311 kids May 15-August 15 in 2017—500 more children compared to the previous year.

Last Year’s Summer Hunger Relief project provided children of Taney County facing food insecurity with 4 days’ worth of much-needed food per month when they were out of school, not receiving school lunches or help through the backpack program.

“We believe we can do better, so we set a goal to reach at least 4,000 kids who may be facing food insecurity this summer,” Hughes explained. “To make sure families in need know about supplemental food help through CAM, we work with every school in Taney County, the Gift of Hope backpack program, and the Boys and Girls Club to distribute our informational flyers to students.”

CAM invites all Taney County residents to get involved with this effort.

“Summer hunger is a very real issue for our Taney County kids, and it will take all of us working together to fill this gap,” Hughes said. “Getting involved in this effort is simple—you can help us by spreading the word to families you know that may need food help over the summer.”

CAM has two pantry locations. The Branson Pantry (located at 610 S. Sixth St., Ste. 102) is open Monday-Friday 12-3 p.m. CAM’s Forsyth Pantry (located at 10726 State Highway 76 Ste E) is open Tuesday-Thursday 10 a.m.-1 p.m. On the first Wednesday of every month, CAM operates a mobile outreach at Bradleyville, Protem and Cedarcreek. Folks needing assistance through the mobile outreach should call (417) 251-0260 to find out distribution locations and times.

If you would to help further, please consider hosting a food drive or donate financially. CAM can feed one person for four days for only \$7 and a family of four for only \$28.

**Sidebar information:**

% of youth food insecure in Taney County: 26.5%

Actual number of youth food insecure: 3,023

% of youth living below poverty level in Taney County: 30.6%

Actual number of youth living below poverty: 3,192

% of Taney County students eligible and participating in the free or reduced lunch program: 74.1 %

Actual number of students participating in the free or reduced lunch program: 8,455

\*Missouri Hunger Atlas 2016