

News Release
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**YOUNG PROFESSIONALS CHALLENGE
CLEVELANDERS TO RAISE HUNGER AWARENESS THIS THANKSGIVING**

CLEVELAND (October 19, 2011) — West Side Ecumenical Ministry (WSEM) is challenging Clevelanders to make a difference in the lives of those in need through the fourth annual *WSEM Food Stamp Challenge*, November 11-17. WSEM is a subsidiary corporation of Center for Families and Children.

The *WSEM Food Stamp Challenge* is a 7-day commitment, in which participants agree to live on the average food stamp allocation in 2011 - \$31.04/week or \$4.43/day - to raise awareness about hunger and generate critically needed funds to help feed hungry children and families in the community. The Challenge is the creation of the WSEM volunteer Junior Advisory Board, a group of young professionals who will take the Challenge themselves.

“The Challenge is our way of raising awareness of how little \$31 a week is when you’re trying to feed a family,” said Ann Weinzimmer, chair of WSEM’s Junior Advisory Board and an associate with Jones Day’s Cleveland office. “With rising food costs, poor economic conditions and weak job growth, \$31 does not go far for families who have to make critical choices between buying food, paying their rent or paying the gas bill on a daily basis.”

To participate in the Challenge, participants pledge to spend no more than the average weekly food stamp allotment of \$31.04 for the duration of the Challenge for all of their food and drink. Participants are not allowed to accept free food from family, friends or co-workers. Each of the Challengers is then asked to recruit 25 sponsors that are each asked to commit \$25, thus raising \$625 each.

Every dollar raised through the Challenge will be used by the three WSEM Food Centers (Brookside, Community Corner and Near West) to supplement the food pantry with nutritious fresh food items and link WSEM's clients to critical outreach services to help lead them down the path to self-sufficiency.

WSEM encourages those participating in the Challenge to spread the word about their experiences via their Facebook or Twitter accounts or follow the posts of the WSEM Junior Advisory Board on [Twitter.com/wsemchallenge](https://twitter.com/wsemchallenge) and blog at <http://wsemchallenge.wordpress.com/>.

For more information on how to participate, email wsemchallenge@gmail.com.

About our Combined Organization

The Center for Families and Children (CFC), West Side Ecumenical Ministry (WSEM) and El Barrio have joined together to increase their impact on the community. CFC is the parent corporation and WSEM is a subsidiary corporation. Our combined organization has core strengths in early learning, food centers, behavioral health, youth development and workforce development.

Our newly combined organization provides opportunities and hope for children, adults and families living in poverty in our community. With 14 locations in the greater Cleveland area, our focus remains on preserving and enhancing critical services, giving greater voice to the issues that impact the people we serve, and helping align and focus our community's best thinking, assets and collective action on our toughest challenges. To learn more, please visit c4fc.org or www.wsem.org.

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