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The nonprofit educational organization
behind Sesame Street and so much more

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SESAME STREET VISITS CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK TO LAUNCH *FOOD FOR THOUGHT* INITIATIVE

Muppets, Award-Winning Chef Art Smith Help Raise Awareness about Childhood Hunger

Washington, D.C., December 7, 2010 — With one in two children under 18 in the District at risk of hunger, the Capital Area Food Bank today hosted Sesame Street's nonprofit organization, *Food for Thought: Eating Well on a Budget* initiative. Launched in partnership with UnitedHealthcare and the Merck Company Foundation, the *Food for Thought* program is a bilingual, English-Spanish, multimedia outreach project designed to help families with small children access affordable and nutritious food.

"Children are our most precious resource, yet over 200,000 young people in the metro area are going to bed hungry each night," said Lynn Brantley, president and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank. "The *Food for Thought* initiative is a great resource to show parents how to cook healthily and stretch meals on a limited budget. Children need strong bodies and minds to thrive in school. We must ensure that they have access to quality, nutritious meals three times a day."

The contents of the *Food for Thought* initiative were unveiled during the launch event and included remarks by Brantley; Gary E. Knell, president and CEO, Sesame Workshop; Russell C. Petrella, Ph. D, president, UnitedHealthcare Community & State; Richard T. Clark, chairman and CEO, Merck; Kevin Concannon, USDA Under Secretary for Food, Nutrition and Consumer Services; and Sesame Street's Elmo. Award-winning chef Art Smith also conducted a cooking demonstration with Elmo and children from food bank partner agencies Agape, CASA de Maryland and Israel Metropolitan CME Church.

The *Food for Thought* program provides families with an educational outreach kit, in an effort to help them access nutritious food on a limited budget, as well as available resources and programs. The 400,000 kits will be distributed through UnitedHealthcare, The Merck Foundation, Feeding America, National WIC association, Head Start, Meals on Wheels and other key organizations.

The Capital Area Food Bank and its partner agencies are reporting record numbers of families, individuals and first-time visitors seeking food assistance. To help address the increased demands for food and ensure that children do not go hungry, the food bank offers numerous programs, such as Kids Cafe – an after school meal program that provides healthy snacks to children who may not have dinner available at home. For more information about the Capital Area Food Bank and the Kids Cafe program visit CapitalAreaFoodBank.org.

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The Capital Area Food Bank, a member of Feeding America, is the Washington, D.C. metro area's hub for food sourcing, distribution and nutrition education - serving over 478,000 people struggling with hunger. Through direct service and a network of 700 nonprofit partners, the CAFB distributed 27 million pounds of food last year, including 10.8 million pounds of fresh produce. The Capital Area Food Bank has served the National Capital Region over 30 years.