

which Mexico borrows dollars for 90 days and that can be rolled over for up to 1 year; medium-term swaps through which Mexico can borrow dollars for up to 5 years; and securities guarantees having maturities of up to 10 years.

Repayment of these loans and guarantees is backed by revenues from the export of crude oil and petroleum products formalized in an agreement signed by the United States, the Government of Mexico, and the Mexican government's oil company. In addition, as added protection in the unlikely event of default, the United States is requiring Mexico to maintain the value of the pesos it deposits with the United States in connection with the medium-term swaps. Therefore, should the rate of exchange of the peso against the U.S. dollar drop during the time the United States holds pesos, Mexico would be required to provide the United States with enough additional pesos to reflect the rate of exchange prevailing at the conclusion of the swap.

I am enclosing a Fact Sheet prepared by the Department of the Treasury that provides greater details concerning the terms of the four agreements. I am also enclosing a summary of the economic policy actions that the Government of Mexico and the Central Bank have agreed to take as a condition of receiving assistance.

The agreements we have signed with Mexico are part of a multilateral effort involving contributions from other countries and multilateral institutions. The Board of the International Monetary Fund has approved up to \$17.8 billion in medium-term assistance for Mexico, subject to the Mexico's meeting appropriate economic conditions. Of this amount, \$7.8 billion has already been disbursed, and additional conditional assistance will become available beginning in July of this year. In addition, the Bank for International Settlements is expected to provide \$10 billion in short-term assistance.

The current Mexican financial crisis is a liquidity crisis that has had a significant destabilizing effect on the exchange rate of the peso, with consequences for the overall exchange rate system. The spill-over effects of inaction in response to this crisis would be significant for other emerging market economies, particularly those in Latin America, as well as for the United States. Using the ESF to respond to this crisis is therefore plainly consistent with the purpose of 31 U.S.C. 5302(b): to give the United States the ability to take action consistent with its obligations in the International Monetary Fund to assure orderly exchange arrangements and a stable system of exchange rates.

The Mexican peso crisis erupted with such suddenness and in such magnitude as to render the usual short-term approaches to liquidity crisis inadequate to address the problem. To resolve problems arising from Mexico's short-term debt burden, longer term solutions are necessary in order to avoid

further pressure on the exchange rate of the peso. These facts present unique and emergency circumstances, and it is therefore both appropriate and necessary to make the ESF available to extend credits and loans to Mexico in excess of 6 months.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE, March 9, 1995.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. BILBRAY. Mr. Speaker, I was absent yesterday due to an illness. I would like the RECORD to show that had I been present, on rollcall 213 I would have voted "nay," on rollcall 214 I would have voted "nay," on rollcall 215 I would have voted "nay," and on rollcall 216 I would have voted "aye."

AMENDMENT FILING DEADLINE ON H.R. 1158 AND H.R. 1159

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, earlier today I announced a preprinting requirement for amendments to the two supplemental appropriations and rescissions bills, H.R. 1158 and H.R. 1159 and noted that amendments should be submitted for printing no later than Monday, March 13, 1995.

I now ask unanimous consent that Members have until 5 p.m. on Monday, March 13, which is a pro forma day to file their amendments for preprinting in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

There was no objection.

PERMISSION FOR SUNDRY COMMITTEES AND SUBCOMMITTEES TO SIT ON TOMORROW DURING THE 5-MINUTE RULE

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the following committees and their subcommittees be permitted to sit tomorrow while the House is meeting in the Committee of the Whole House under the 5-minute rule.

Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, Committee on Government Reform and Oversight, Committee on House Oversight, Committee on the Judiciary, and Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

It is my understanding that the minority has been consulted and that there is no objection to these requests.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, we have consulted with the ranking minority member of each of those committees and subcommittees, and there is no objection.

Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New York?

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, reserving the right to object, I had hoped, with the change in the House, this practice of Members being expected to be in three places at once would hopefully come to an end. Today, for example, I had a Committee on Government Reform and Oversight and a Committee on National Security meeting as we had some very important tort reform legislation going on on the floor.

Is it the intention of the Republican leadership to continue this practice for the remainder of the Congress, or at some time can we get to the point where Members can do one or maybe two things, and do them very well rather than running around like a bunch of chickens with our heads cut off?

Mr. SOLOMON. Mr. Speaker, if the gentleman will yield, I would say to him we are doing everything possible to get that Member home for the Easter break to have a work period. And once we have reached that April 8 date I would think that we would go back to the regular rules of the House and probably would not be making these requests, or very seldom.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. If I may, there are things that are more important than the Easter break. Passing well-thought-out legislation is more important than the Easter break, and I would sure hope the Republican leadership would keep that in mind.

Mr. SOLOMON. If the gentleman will yield, we certainly will, and I hope the gentleman has a happy Easter break when the time comes.

Mr. TAYLOR of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Mississippi?

There was no objection.

THE REPUBLICANS' WAR ON KIDS

Mr. SKAGGS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend to all Members of the House a striking series of articles from the Los Angeles Times. They provide a poignant rejoinder to current House Republican doctrine that we can somehow cut school lunch and breakfast programs without really hurting anybody.

The articles tell the story of the kids from West Covina, CA, a place where the local school board decided not to participate in the school breakfast program. Let me just give an excerpt.

By 10 many mornings there is a long line outside the nurse's door. Some children clutch their stomachs, others their heads. In this mostly middle-class bedroom community, these children share a common ailment. They are hungry.

Phys ed teacher Barbara Davids sometimes fed 12-year-old boy who volunteered to help custodians pick up after lunch so he could salvage garbage scraps.

Another student got in trouble so he could be sent to the principal's office, where a jar of candies was perched on the desk. "I'm so hungry. I'm so hungry," sobbed the 12-year-old-boy dipping his hand into the jar. * * *

Mr. Speaker, I include these articles for the RECORD.

The articles referred to are as follows:

[From the Los Angeles Times, Nov. 20, 1994]

GOING TO SCHOOL HUNGRY

As poverty spreads, teachers often see students who have not eaten for days. Malnutrition hinders learning, but resistance to breakfast programs raises question of how far districts should go to help.

The symptoms have swept through Edgewood Middle School.

By 10 many mornings there is a long line outside the nurse's door at the West Covina school. Some children clutch their stomachs. Others grasp their heads. In this mostly middle-class bedroom community, these children share a common ailment. They are hungry.

One boy came into Assistant Principal Amelia Esposito's office last year and confessed to stealing food from a 7-Eleven store. "Every night I go to bed hungry." the 13-year-old told her, bowing his head. "There isn't enough food."

"It's scary how many kids here are hungry," says Esposito, who believes one in four children comes to class undernourished.

America's hunger is not the starvation of Somalia or Rwanda that galvanizes global attention: bloated bellies, emaciated arms, failing bodies along roadsides. Hunger here saps people in more subtle ways: families eat only once a day or skip meals for several days, causing chronic malnutrition. It is a problem that many researchers say eased markedly in the 1960s and '70s, but resurfaced with a vengeance in recent years.

Hunger, they say, afflicts up to 30 million Americans. Twelve million of them are children, many in recession-ravaged Southern California.

Their plight has emerged most publicly in the schools, where teachers delve into their own pockets to feed children whose ability to learn is being crippled by hunger.

Yet half of California's schools—including all 11 in the West Covina Unified School District—do not offer one ready remedy: breakfast, a federally funded entitlement. Nationally, 37% of the 13.6 million low-income children who get a subsidized lunch also eat a morning meal at school. In some districts, breakfast has been barred or eliminated by school officials who oppose it on philosophical grounds. Many in West Covina, where Christian conservatives dominate the school board, oppose feeding children breakfast at school, calling it anti-family and a usurpation of what should be a parent's responsibility.

"I want kids to eat at home with their families," said school board President Mike Spence. "Breakfast at school is just one more thing school districts do rather than allowing parents to take care of their children."

A suburb that blossomed from orange groves in the San Gabriel Valley after World War II, West Covina, the "City of Beautiful Homes," is an unlikely haven for hunger. In the 1980s, however, teachers watched as lost jobs, an influx of new-comers from the inner city and an increase on single mothers left many students living hand-to-mouth. Although the median family income in West Covina is \$51,000, there are pockets of poverty: one in four single mothers lives on less than \$14,800 a year.

Although the shifts in West Covina are hardly unique, the town's emerging eco-

nomnic stratification has made hunger highly visible in the schools.

The number of students qualifying for free or reduced-price lunches at Edgewood, the district's only middle school, has surged to nearly two-thirds from one-third a decade ago.

Among them is Cristina Yopez, a soft-spoken 12-year-old with freckles and wide-set blue eyes, who spends some mornings at the school health office complaining of stomach-aches. Last year, she says, she got dizzy on the playground, crumpling onto the blacktop at Merced Elementary. She had had no breakfast that day. Dinner the night before was a potato.

"A lot of times, we have just break," says Cristina, gently combing the silky red hair on her Little Mermaid doll as her family prepares for an evening's meal. "Sometimes, I get really hungry. But there's nothing more to eat. I go to my friend's house and pretend to play and say: 'Oh, can I have something to drink?'"

Cristina sits down with her mother, Darlene, and sister, Jesseca, 13, for dinner. It is their only meal today. One hot dog each, and water. Darlene Yopez, 38, who is divorced, was sidelined from a forklift job by a back injury but is searching for work. Meanwhile, the family survives on \$607 in welfare and \$130 in food stamps, which run out halfway through the month. Swallowing her pride, the mother has gone to West Covina's food pantry—but has used her five allowed visits. A few times, the girls have gone up to three days without food, she says, quietly beginning to sob. The last two weeks, she says, they have had one meal.

Studies show that hungry students are fatigued. They cannot concentrate. They do worse than their peers on standardized tests. Because they are ill twice as often, they miss class more frequently.

"They are dazed. You can see it in their eyes. Sometimes, their hands tremble," says Edgewood teacher Kim Breen, who estimates that three-quarters of her students arrive without eating breakfast. Some do not have the energy to raise their heads from their desks. One girl broke down last year in class, her hands shaking, describing how she had gone all weekend without eating.

Kathi Jennings sees hunger's toll daily at Edgewood, which has about 1,800 students. Knowing many of them are undernourished, she keeps a choice of rewards for daily tasks on her desk: a baseball card, a small top or a cup of applesauce. Many kids choose food.

Two guards who patrol Edgewood's playground say one 13-year-old girl chases their green security cart, asking for food. Physical education teacher Barbara Davids says she sometimes fed a 12-year-old boy who volunteered to help custodians pick up after lunch so he could salvage garbage scraps.

Another student got in trouble regularly so he could be sent to the assistant principal's office, where a jar of diabetic candies is perched on her desk. "I'm so hungry. I'm so hungry," sobbed the 12-year-old boy, dipping his hand into the jar and stuffing six candies into his mouth.

Hunger plagues many U.S. schools. More than a quarter of elementary schoolchildren come to class without breakfast, said Doris Derelian, president of the American Dietetic Assn.

The Los Angeles Unified School District, like many urban areas, has long served breakfasts so the problem on those campuses is less pronounced.

Rural and suburban districts are less likely to serve a morning meal. In the Baldwin Park Unified District, nearly half of 16,000 visits to the school nurse last year were tied to hunger. Since then, the district has started offering breakfast at many of its schools.

The mounting toll in schools mirrors a resurgence in hunger, which studies show was brought under control in the '70s but grew by 50% between 1985 and 1991. Even for Americans with jobs, a growing percentage—now nearly one in five—work full time but earn less than the poverty level.

Divorce and out-of-wedlock births left children, along with their mothers, the nation's biggest losers. More than one in five children live in poverty, and almost a quarter of low-income children in the United States are anemic—a condition linked to inadequate or poor nutrition. Government cuts have not helped: median Aid to Families With Dependent Children benefits for a family of three have dropped 47% since 1970. California food stamp payments average 70 cents a meal, slightly more than half of what the U.S. Department of Agriculture says it takes to get an adequate diet.

In an effort to assess the extent of hunger in America, the federal government has launched its first tally on malnutrition. Results from the survey of 60,000 households are expected to be released in 1996.

Recent academic research already has focused on the effects of hunger in the classroom. A 1993 Tufts University study said hunger is stunting cognitive development as lethargic children disengage from learning, and warned that "our country may be heading for a crisis of enormous proportions."

"Health and nutrition are powerful determinants of educational competence," says Ernesto Pollitt, a UC Davis human development professor. His 1993 study found that anemic and iron-deficient toddlers lag behind their peers in mental development by up to 25%. Nonetheless, Pollitt said he is surprised to find that many schools do not serve breakfast and ignore the effects of hunger on the ability to learn.

A study of 1,023 public schoolchildren in Lawrence, Mass., found that when schools started to serve breakfast, students' standardized test scores rose, and absenteeism and tardiness declined. Math, another study shows, is hardest hit when children are not given a morning meal.

"Scientific evidence shows that if you don't do this, you are undermining the very reason for your existence, which is to educate children," says J. Larry Brown, director of the Tufts University Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy.

At Edgewood school, mid-morning is the worst, said science teacher Breen. "How many eat three meals a day? Two? One?" Breen asks her class. Most say they eat twice, some only once. It is her annual informal body count on hunger, and the results are more grim each year. Breen estimates a sixth of her students are hungry regularly.

"I have to repeat instructions two or three times," she says. "I try to teach them physics, but I can't." By second period, a boy in the third row drops his head to his desk. "I just leave them alone. They aren't going to get it," Breen says, her voice full of frustration.

Just before lunch, a 14-year-old girl rises from her desk and slowly approaches her teacher. She says she has not eaten in two days. Earlier, on the playground, she nearly fainted, dizzy from lack of food. "Could I have 50 cents?" she says quietly so the other children can't overhear. "I'm hungry." Breen—who often gets requests for food—fishes out four quarters. The girl, who has not yet been issued a card that will allow her to get a free lunch, still lacks enough money to buy one. She eats what she can: a bag of Doritos from the school vending machine.

"I keep my own stuff," says the school health clerk, Deborah Paschal, swinging open the office cabinet. Sandwiched between

the Band-Aids and medicines are peanut butter, crackers and boxes of juice, all purchased with her own money. Counselor Pamela Clausen sometimes gives away her sack lunch. Physical education teacher Barbara Davids occasionally brings in grocery bags of food. When she runs out, or does not have money, she sends children to the cafeteria with a note: "Feed this kid."

Throughout southern California, teachers like Ernie Sanchez are picking up the slack. When he was a second-grade teacher at Vejar Elementary School in Pomona, Sanchez spent the first period each morning making cheese sandwiches for every student. If he had no cheese, he scooped a cup of cereal into a napkin on each child's desk.

Once, he brought apples to the school, where 99% of the children qualify for free or reduced-price meals. "All these little hands reached out toward me," says Sanchez.

"We don't have food sometimes," says one 13-year-old Edgewood student, nervously adjusting her glasses. Asked what her mother does, the girl said. "She stays in the house and watches TV every day." Her father? "He takes drugs. That's why my mom threw him out."

But most, Esposito says, suffer because their parents have been laid off, work long hours and leave their children to fend for themselves in the mornings, or work at jobs that barely cover the rent.

Lisa Drynan, 32, was recently laid off from her administrative job at an engineering firm, the second position she's lost to "downsizing" in three years. She is again searching for work. Drynan has gone up to two days at a time without food. Her three boys, Kevin, 3, Kenny, 9, and Keith, 11, who attends Edgewood, often eat once or twice a day. The night before, says Drynan, staring inside her bare refrigerator, her three sons split two hot dogs.

"There are many days I don't have anything for them for breakfast," she says in her tidy apartment, where the toys are lined up outside the front door. Even though she buys generic brand foods, her \$102 in food stamps each month run out after 2½ weeks. Drynan, who is divorced, has used up her five trips to the West Covina food bank. "I know food is important. But I know we need a roof over our heads more," she says, adding that most of her income goes to the \$690-a-month rent, bills and collection agencies to pay off thousands of dollars in medical costs owed from one son's head injury.

"I'm hungry," says Kevin, tugging at his mother's white T-shirt. Drynan has heard that her 3-year-old ventures to neighbors' homes, asking for food. She pulls out a Popsicle—the last bit of food in her freezer—and gives it to Kevin, who consumes the treat in seconds.

Kenny, a skinny boy with big brown eyes, laments not having had his favorite food, pork chops, since his birthday in March. At school, he says "in the mornings, I get real hungry." By 10:30, he begins a daily lunchtime countdown, eyes focused on the classroom clock. Other children sit down after morning recess for snack time—a treat from home. "They read us a story, or we do our work. I just have to work. I don't have a snack," Kenny says quietly. "I get hungry when I look at them."

Drynan knows hunger afflicts other families in her neighborhood, even those in which the parents have jobs. When Drynan sent her children for a sleep-over to Susie Ballard's house across the street, they were told to eat supper at their own home, then come over.

Ballard, 38, whose daughter Kristin attends Edgewood, explains that although she works, she cannot put three meals on the table for her own three children, much less visitors. Ballard, whose marriage broke up two years

ago, lost her long-time job as a pizza company training manager. Work as a cleaning lady barely covers the rent. Half the month, there is no breakfast. Ballard stretches a pack of spaghetti into three meals, thinning down the red sauce with cans of water.

"There are nights I tell the kids: 'I'm not hungry. You eat.'" says Ballard, nervously smoothing the lace doily on the apartment's living room table. She gives the kids Kool-Aid to fill their bellies. Fresh fruit, vegetables and coffee are luxuries of the past.

"I tell them: 'If someone offers you a free meal, take it, take it.' I used to go to bed crying every night. I feel a failure to them. I ask: How can they look up to me?"

Kristin, 13, is curled up in a chair in the corner of the sparsely furnished but immaculate apartment. "If the food was there, I would eat more," she says shyly.

Anti-hunger advocates are waging a coordinated, nationwide campaign in a school-to-school battle to get the tens of thousands of schools without breakfast programs to sign up. Without breakfast in schools, the \$16 billion California spends on elementary and high school education may be wasted money, Assemblywoman Gwen Moore warned in a January letter to colleagues, prodding them to push the program in their districts. Twenty-one states—including New York and Texas—now mandate that all or some of their schools serve breakfast. Bills to make breakfast mandatory in California schools have failed, partly because they are viewed by some legislators as coddling immigrant children.

In La Habra, a recently implemented breakfast program has made teaching more productive. Morning stomachaches used to afflict half her students daily, said Maria Vigil, a Las Lomas elementary kindergarten teacher. "They were all nauseous" and lethargic, she said. Her office brimming with more than a dozen hungry children by mid-morning, Las Lomas Principal Mary Jo Anderson found that for 10% of the students, school lunch was their only solid meal. "I their tummies hurt, their brains can't work," Anderson says. School breakfast she adds, resulted in a 95% drop in disciplinary problems. "They are calm, happy. They aren't angry. They aren't hurting. It's like a miracle."

"Teacher! I am going to eat!" children yell at Vigil as they spill out of yellow school buses. Sandra Andrade, 5, races from the parking lot, grabs her green meal ticket, then rushes to the wire screen window, waiting impatiently for her tray of milk, juice, cereal and string cheese. Unemployed father Roberto Andrade—who some days can't scrounge up the gas money to search for work—hovers over the school breakfast tables, where four of his children who attend Las Lomas share their food with his other three younger children. "Without this, they might not eat some days," says the handyman. Three-year-old Eduardo devours a packet of graham crackers with his sister Sandra.

The focus on food is everywhere. As soon as class starts in Vigil's Room 6, she notices that 6-year-old Jonathan Quintana is irritable and crying. Vigil's hand dives into a desk drawer and pulls out a bag of crackers: "Let's get you a little cereal, OK?"

Jonathan is ushered to a table, seated next to his teddy bear, and given cereal, juice, milk and more crackers. The lesson quickly continues. Jonathan's sobs become more infrequent. He snuffles. By 9, he is seated with the other students, at work on lessons about the calendar and the weather.

As Vigil offers each child a animal cracker from a large jar. Jonathan cheerfully plays with Legos. Even as lunchtime approaches, children attentively listen to Vigil's ren-

dition of "The Three Bears," jostling to see the book's pictures. Later, Alberto Cueva, 5, savors his lunch—a burrito, followed by corn and milk—before his half day of school ends.

"Sometimes, we eat at night," says the boy, urgently shoveling the burrito into his tiny mouth. "Sometimes we don't."

SCHOOLS DEFEND DECISION AGAINST OFFERING BREAKFAST

Although school breakfast programs could help many children, there are many reasons why schools do not offer a morning meal.

Logistic barriers can be a nightmare, said Wanda Grant, food services director for El Monte City School District. Her district, which serves breakfast at its 18 schools, had to shuffle bus schedules, buy trucks to haul more food supplies and deal with water heaters that could not handle bigger dishwashing loads. Food service directors, principals and custodians usually do not jump at the chance to do more work for the same pay.

However, schools that want to offer breakfast find a way. When the Riverside Unified School District could not juggle bus schedules, it offered breakfast pizza and pancakes on the school bus.

Often, philosophical objections are the bigger obstacle. Many people believe parents, not taxpayers, should provide something as basic as breakfast for their children. If schools take on more duties—offering sex and drug education, for example—won't that encourage parents to abdicate more responsibilities?

In a case that attracted widespread attention, the Meriden, Conn., school board, arguing that children should eat at home with their families, repeatedly voted down school breakfast programs from 1990 to 1993—flouting a 1992 school breakfast state mandate until there were sued by the state attorney general.

A survey this year by the California Department of Education, which allocated only a third of the \$3 million in breakfast start-up grants last year because of a dearth of applicants, found that many principals and superintendents voiced philosophical objections to breakfast programs. "The parents have some responsibility for these kids. It's not the schools' job to be all things to all people," one principal wrote.

Since the 1980s, Shyrl L. Dougherty, the nutrition services director for Montebello Unified, has prodded four of 26 schools balking at serving breakfast. In one school, 98% of the children would qualify for free or reduced-cost morning meals. "How much are we supposed to do for families?" one principal protested to Dougherty.

Only about a tenth of students in Orange County's second-largest district, Garden Grove Unified, get free or reduced-price breakfasts, although half qualify.

"What's next? Are we going to provide housing for these people too?" one principal asked the district's food services director, Karen Papilli.

In the West Covina Unified School District, many administrators and teachers believe the decision not to offer breakfast is rooted in conservative attitudes. The school board begins its meetings with Christian prayer.

"We have a conservative school board. They are very concerned about the role of the school," said Mary J. Herbener, the district's child welfare and attendance supervisor. Merced Elementary Principal Janet Swanson said: "Breakfast is a hot potato. It's a political issue."

Edgewood Middle School Assistant Principal Amelia Esposito said she has pushed for breakfast for three years. "This board is stuck in the '60s. Lunch is OK, but breakfast is controversial."

Anthony Reymann, who calls himself the board's lone liberal, sizes up his colleagues' reaction to a breakfast program: "They will say: 'Ultimately God put parents on this earth to take care of their children. By God, that is what they should be doing.'"

The board's conservative president, Mike Spence, said: "The government is trying to usurp the responsibilities of the parent. There is a trend to take over aspects of what the family does."

"Schools need to educate," said Susan Langley, the West Covina School District Council-PTA president. She says parents should turn elsewhere for food assistance. "We are really big on self-help." Some teachers are skeptical as well. One told Esposito: "If they (parents) weren't on drugs, their kids wouldn't be hungry."

Since bringing in breakfast last year at Santa Ana's Pio Pico Elementary School, the droves of hungry children who arrived at Principal Judy Magsaysay's office sick with hunger in the morning have disappeared. Teachers are astounded at the difference in the classroom: 10 to 11:30 a.m., once dead time, has become a fertile learning period.

Magsaysay said she knows the difference the meals make when she watches students return from month-long vacations visibly thinner. Twenty-five children line up against the cafeteria's outer wall by 6:45 a.m. for breakfast. Sometimes the cafeteria lady runs late. When she finally swings open the door, the children clap and cheer.

THE FOOD ANGEL OF 42ND STREET

Mae Raines loads an old pickup with donated food and hands it out in some of the city's poorest areas. "When I can ease someone's pain, I feel good," she says.

To the children running excitedly after her rusty blue 1978 Dodge pickup for a piece of bread, or an orange, she is Mother Raines or the Muffin Lady.

Mae Raines' food truck pulls to a stop in South-Central Los Angeles and she begins the task of easing hunger. "A lot of kids don't know what a snack or lunch is," says Mae, who watches some children devour whole bags of bread. Women sometimes sob when she puts food in their hands. Men bow their heads and say thanks.

At 71, when most are quietly enjoying their golden years, Mae spends her time hauling truckloads of food to some of the most dangerous streets in Los Angeles, places many people in the City of Angels avoid. In her mind, she is simply a good Christian. "God said: Take care of the poor and the widows. I do what the Word says," says Mae, a widow herself. To her neighbors, she is the food angel of 42nd Street.

On a crisp autumn morning with wisps of clouds in the sky, Mae arrives at the Los Angeles wholesale produce market's "charity dock," where she gets donations of fruits, vegetables and bread. An ample woman, Mae—clad in flowing purple culottes, black high-top sneakers and a royal blue beret covering salt-and-pepper hair—points two of her foster sons at boxes of food to load. The boys pile the scratched and scarred Dodge with loaves of bread, sweet corn, oranges, pumpkins, even doughnuts. And they never forget an item children in her neighborhood south of the Coliseum count on May to bring: English muffins.

"We need radishes, four boxes," Mae prods her foster son, Donell.

An hour later, Mae and the children scramble into the cab of the truck. The squeaky doors clang shut. She grasps her window and pushes it down by hand. Peering out the shattered windshield, she eases away from the concrete loading dock, heading south, through the warehouse district near Downtown, over two railroad tracks, past rubble-

strewn lots and graffiti-marred walls, zig-zagging into the heart of the city.

Rolling past low-slung houses, Mae's food wagon brakes at her first stop. Most who converge on her truck are very old or very young.

One 4-year-old boy, Minor Beli, can barely believe it when Mae holds out a box of doughnuts. "Do you want it?" she asks. For a moment, Minor hesitates, then reaches out, tightly grasping the box. His eyes look lovingly at the treat, then at Mae. Minor's mother, Ana Beli, 27, says she must often limit how much her children eat to stretch their food to the end of the month. "When I pay the rent, there is little left," she says.

The Belis pay \$350 a month for a room in a house they share with another family. Her husband works for minimum wage as a garment worker. Last night, she says, Minor, 2-year-old Jennifer and Angel, 7 months, ate one egg each.

Mary Lou Ellis, an 83-year-old with tufts of gray hair peeking out from under her cap, hobbles down the block to Mae's truck. Mae thrusts a bag of bread, radishes and tomatoes into trembling hands. "Oh lordy, lordy. Thank you! Thank you!" the woman says, beaming at Mae.

The former Lockheed Corp. riveter and housecleaner says that there often isn't enough food, so she skips meals. The rent eats up \$400 of her \$645 Social Security check. Utilities consume most of the rest. Someone swindled her out of her meager retirement savings, she says. Her house was emptied of furniture in a recent break-in. She leans heavily on her brown cane and stares hard at the ground. "I've never lived like this," she says, confessing to no one in particular. "I feel like taking a gun and shooting my brains out."

The stooped woman hobbles away. But as word gets out, her neighbors emerge from their homes, creating a crowd. "Are you selling this?" one woman asks. Mae turns to her with a warm smile. "No," she says. "I'm giving it away."

"Oh! There's my girl," Mary Washington squeals at Mae, who has helped her ever since she fell and broke her neck a decade ago. A former cook and janitor, she points to a long surgical scar that runs the length of her neck. Her head tilts to the side. Ever since the accident, seizures have made it hard to keep a job.

"She'll dress you. She'll feed you," she says, striking Mae's shoulder as her friend fills a bag with radishes and corn. Each month, she tries to survive on \$212 in welfare—which lets her rent a room in a house—and \$103 in food stamps. Collecting cans and bottles from trash bins brings in \$15 more, which busy some food for the end of the month.

* * * * *

Two years ago, at 69, Mae took in a 2-day-old crack baby for a year. She has had 10 foster children over the years, and also has taken in 10 other neighborhood children off and on, occasionally sleeping on the living room window seat to accommodate them.

Sometimes, the tough grandmother feels fear on her food runs. Once, she had driven her truck Downtown to Skid Row, parked and begun laying out pans of homemade rice, chicken wings, cheese toast and cobbler. Chris and Cee were at her side, wrapping forks and spoons in napkins. A group of homeless men gathered around her menacingly. Mae quickly solicited one of the ragged men to help her. "You can come here anytime," he said, staring down the others. "I guarantee no one will take advantage of you and your children." She fed 200 that day.

Mae's neighborhood is rough, too. In recent years, two neighbors' sons—neither one in

gangs—were killed in drive-bys, shot through the back and neck. One an 18-year-old boy, was buried in a grave site Mae had purchased for herself The Menlo Avenue School one block from her home has a "gunfire evacuation plan." Its schoolyard has been sprayed with bullets 10 times in the past year and a half, once just as kindergarten was letting out, says Principal Arthur W. Chandler. Police helicopters often hover overhead, tracking clashes among the 18th Street Gang, the Rolling 40 Crips and increasingly violent tagging groups such as the Dirty Old Men.

Poverty is another mounting concern. Part of Mae's route traverses an area of South-Central in which more than one in four residents didn't have the resources to feed themselves the entire month, according to a UCLA study.

Since the 1980s, as a growing tide of poverty has left more people hungry, the efforts of nonprofit groups and individuals have become increasingly critical in curbing hunger's toll. "The government cannot do it all. If it weren't for the private sector, the tragedy would be, I think, unbelievable," says Roy B. McKeown, president of World Opportunities. Requests from people like Mae, he says, have become more urgent in recent years as joblessness in the inner cities has skyrocketed.

Mae's drive through this hungry landscape often includes a stop at her neighborhood Unocal gas station. "C'mon baby," she beckons to a man furiously washing windshields one recent day. Word spreads like wildfire down the street. Soon, the truck is surrounded by homeless women and men, many of whom have known Mae for years. She plucks oranges, apples and bread from boxes around the rim of the truck.

One bag goes to Tyrone Richardson, a 32-year-old unemployed construction worker. Taking the food, he fishes a wadded-up dollar bill from his pants. He stuffs it into Mae's shirt pocket. "This will help you get gas to help others. Sometimes I don't have a dime. Today I do," he says. The gift amounts to half of his total assets. Mae vehemently refuses the money. But, cradling a watermelon in his arm, he walks away, saying only, "She got a good heart."

"This is what we do," Mae says simply, stuffing more plastic bags with food.

"What's the problem? Tell me?" Mae quietly asks Sheree Wilson, 31, who has been homeless for three months and was headed to Jack-in-the-Box to eat a free packet of jelly when she noticed Mae's truck.

"This is my baby," the woman says, pulling from her jacket a crumpled photograph of her 1-year-old boy, Joshua, beaming from his crib. She stops peeling her orange and begins to sob, explaining that she left the baby with her mother because she is addicted to crack and "going crazy."

She says her best friend, who was on the streets with her, was recently arrested for prostitution and drug dealing. Now that she's alone, the streets are wildly dangerous. She's not sure how to get out, or if she has the will to leave crack behind.

Mae pulls out a small coin purse, counts out four quarters. Then, standing by her truck, Mae lays her hand on the woman's chest and leads her in prayer. "You are gonna be all right. Nothing is too hard," she urges.

"I have faith," Sheree says, lovingly fingering the picture of her son. "I just went the other way."

Mae pulls out of the station, leaving behind a destitute crowd on the blacktop, all of them munching apples.

It's not long before Mae happens upon Rosa Ramirez, 20, with her two children. Marbella

Heredia, 1, and Jose Heredia, 2. Her husband, she explains, gets sporadic work in the garment industry. Now things are slow and he brings home as little as \$50 a week. Marbella virtually inhales an orange she grasps in her tiny right hand. The juice cascades down her chin, trickling onto her white sweater. "I try to feed them something every day. Sometimes, it's just rice and beans," she says.

Mae prepares to leave, but Jose's brown eyes look pleadingly at her as he stuffs the orange into his mouth. "More?" he asks.

Mae's last stop of the day is Tarlee McCrady's house on Raymond Avenue. Mae peers inside the two-story house from her truck and, seeing no sign of life, drives on. But a loud pleading wail comes from behind the front door: "I'm here! I'm here!"

Mae parks in the shade. "You want a pumpkin?" she asks. The woman, who has sweptback gray hair, runs out and nods.

A 65-year-old living on Social Security, she met Mae in church nearly two decades ago. When her body is up to it, she goes out on the truck with Mae, helping distribute food. Today, she says, she is fretting over how to pay her water bill. She, too, gets much of her sustenance from Mae.

If not for the help, she says, "I'd be down on Skid Row. What else would I do?"

"She doesn't do a lot of talking. But she does a whole lot of doing," says Brenda White, who works at Church of the Harvest, which Mae attends. She says she's seen Mae take a bed out of her house—even the food in her own refrigerator—and give it away. Brenda, who has two daughters, was divorced six years ago and had a breakdown, leaving her temporarily unable to work at her hair salon. She was too embarrassed to ask for help from relatives. Mae didn't need prodding. Every other week, she began to bring bags of food.

In addition to her Social Security, Mae receives a modest income from caring for her foster children. Everything that's left after paying bills—about \$100 a month—is put in a coin purse and slowly given out to people in need. The only hand-out she's taken from the government is some cheese.

"People have millions of dollars, they die, and their children fuss over it. I give my surplus money for children," she says.

Mae, nearing exhaustion, steers her truck home.

Wheeling into her driveway, Mae still has a third of the food. "Hi, Mother Raines!" a little girl from next door cries, waving. Other neighbors drop by. "What kind of bread you need? Brown bread? White bread? Your grandma feel better today?" Mae asks Erick, 8. He nods. Mae knows that many neighbors skip some meals each day but are too embarrassed to ask for food. "I know which ones won't come out," she says. "Some people would rather die than ask for help." For these, she packs boxes, which Donell begins delivering on people's stoops.

"I work in the shadows of an inner city overrun by gangs and riotous living. But when I can ease someone's pain, or can encourage them, I feel good," Mae says. "If I never do anything for the community I live in, why am I here? I don't want to hear the baby next door cry from lack of milk or see a child walk by without shoes.

"It's not hopeless. Everyone isn't extending themselves."

On Thanksgiving Day, Mae says, she will bake 17 traditional dishes. In the morning, her natural and foster children will gather, and read prayers. "Thanksgiving is for my family," Mae says, closing her front gate as the last of the food is dispensed and dusk approaches. That said, Mae concedes that last year, she gathered her leftovers at the end of the day, some paper plates and plastic silverware and summoned her children to help.

She went to the corner of her street and served food to the thankful until every crumb was gone.

EPilogue

Three weeks after this series ran, the West Covina Unified school board voted to institute a government-subsidized breakfast program at Edgewood Middle School and at seven of its elementary schools, thus assuring breakfast—and a chance to learn unimpeded by hunger—to thousands of children.

West Covina's move to join the program was part of a rush by 60 schools in California. Thirty-three of these schools were in Southern California. They were among a group of 193 Southland schools that the state says should offer breakfast because a high proportion of their students are low income, but did not do so for a variety of reasons.

The Times reported on these schools and their struggles over whether to serve breakfast in a follow up to the series on Dec. 12.

Back at Edgewood, donations poured in. More than \$22,500 had been pledged or delivered by Dec. 13. A citizens group, formed spontaneously after the series to fight hunger in West Covina Unified schools, used the money to serve breakfast to children until the government-funded breakfast could begin.

West Covina residents were not the only ones moved to get involved. One donor offered a secondhand truck to Mae Raines, the food angel of 42nd street, to replace her old clunker. Several churches and temples read the story about "the Muffin Lady" during weekend services. At the Ahavat Zion Messianic Synagogue, 40 worshippers passed a plate and collected \$307 for Raines. Then, they planned a food drive.

"It really made us look in the mirror and say: 'We aren't doing enough,'" said Ron Bernard, synagogogue board president.

Others pledged \$12,000 to the Charity Dock, an innovative hunger program at the Los Angeles Wholesale Produce Market.

Hundreds of callers flooded the newspaper with offers of help for some of the people profiled in the series. Many called crying, saying they wanted to know how they could help a food pantry, a food drive, or assist a family in need.

"My husband is ill on life support. And I'm crippled from arthritis," wrote Majorie B. Walker of Los Angeles in halting handwriting. "But never have we went without food." She sent \$50 to one family profiled in the series.

"My wife and I found your article to be a rude awakening to a problem which we did not know existed," wrote Bob J. Ratledge of Palm Desert, who fired off a letter to the West Covina Unified school board urging that it adopt a breakfast program. Other letters to the board were more blunt, threatening a recall if action wasn't taken. Some who sent checks apologized that they couldn't afford to send more. Others said they sat their children down and read them the stories of hunger.

Lisa Drynan, who was profiled with her three young sons, received more than 200 calls from readers offering to help. She said the assistance promised to make this the best holiday season ever for her children.

The story also sparked calls from hungry people seeking food assistance. At the Southern California Interfaith Hunger Coalition, a stream of people called to ask how they could apply for food stamps. The Self-Help and Resource Exchange—a program that helps people pool their resources to buy wholesome food at half the retail cost—has also seen an uptick in activity.

And at the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank, which struggles to get a decent

share of corporate salvage food products to feed the hungry, this series helped focus new attention nationwide on the difficulties private efforts are encountering in stemming hunger. Pointing to subsequent national TV news and magazine stories touching on the issue, executive director Doris Bloch said, "these stories have built a fire under people."

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 1995, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Maryland [Mr. WYNN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. WYNN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. RIGGS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. RIGGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

TAKING FOOD OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF CHILDREN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. VOLKMER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. VOLKMER. Mr. Speaker, we are now at day 65, if my math is right, of 100 days and we are now getting to see toward the final 35 days of that 100 days. And when we look at it we look to see that we are going to have severe reductions in food stamps, school lunches, nutrition aid, the Women, Infants and Children's Program, hearing assistance for the elderly, and all because we have to give a big tax cut for the wealthy. It is not going to deficit reduction, it is not going to balance the budget. It is going to go to the wealthy, and it is going to be coming up from the young kids down here that are hungry and need that nourishment.

When I look at the school lunch program, we contacted our State Department of Education, we contacted the Governor's office, we contacted some of our local school districts, and the analysis of that school lunch program is in. Members do not have to take my word for it. The Governor of Missouri, the school superintendent of Missouri, the experts who operate the school lunch program in Missouri all agree. The majority party, led by NEWT GINGRICH, is taking food out of the mouths of children by cutting the school lunch program. Even worse, the majority party at the same time is cutting the same children's food stamps. Poor children in this country not only will not get a hot meal in school, but when they get