

Stocks Shrink While Needs Grow at City Food Banks

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grams like those operating through the Office of Supportive Housing are crippled by months of state funding delays, and smaller state-funded supplemental programs, such as SHARE also administrators, are halted, it puts a major strain on the entire system, according to Clark and SHARE Executive Director Steveanna Wynn.

"It really takes all of those programs working in concert with one another to make sure that people in Philadelphia do not go hungry," Wynn explained in a phone interview.

And while both directors were certain that area legislators like Myers, who chairs the House Hunger Caucus, and Youngblood understood the difficulty of the situation created by budget delays, "they're not the whole legislature," Wynn said.

Despite increases in demand due to the recession and heavy pressure from feeding agencies, state funding for food assistance has remained the same for the last three years. To Clark that translates into a reduction in services. Add in the long budget delay and he is none too happy with the rest of the legislature.

"Balancing the budget on the backs of people who have to come to events to get food is probably not the most compassionate way to balance your budget," he said.

This spiral of need made the awareness event at Vernon Park all the more important. Typically Hunger Action Month, which was



Volunteers for the Veterans United Free Food Program formed a prayer circle Wednesday, September 30, as over a hundred local residents waited in line for the food giveaway. Representatives from local politicians offices and the feeding agency Philabundance attended the weekly food distribution event to call for more food donations to support Philadelphia feeding efforts.

declared in Pennsylvania on a resolution co-sponsored by Myers and Youngblood, and house citations like the one Youngblood provided Tony Moore, the volunteer who has run the city-wide Veteran's United program since the early nineties, are the kinds of things meant to get individual donors - citizen donors such as you and me - on the donations list to help boost food bank stores before the holidays hit. These donations tend to fill in where

large corporate donations have fallen off, Clark said.

And this year especially, both Clark and Wynn stressed, individual donations can make a huge difference.

"It doesn't have to be a lot of money. It doesn't have to be a thousand dollars," Wynn said. "Fifteen dollars buys a case of food. If everybody that had it would just send five dollars that would be just phenomenal. If everybody brought one can of

food that would be phenomenal."

And beyond donations, it takes a lot of work to feed people. There were at least six volunteers at the Vernon Park giveaway last Wednesday, in addition to Moore. They had to use their own cars to transport the food. They lugged 40-pound bags of carrots, and cabbage and boxes of potatoes that looked just as heavy. They were there most of the morning. And, as the largest distributor of Philabundance food, Veterans

United has four other distribution sites besides Vernon Park.

"Every day of the week he's out here. Rain, snow, sun, heat," Clark said of Moore.

Even though he is retired Moore considers his feeding work a job that he both loves and feels obligated to do. At times it can be hard on him, but he has settled into a routine that he's not likely to disturb.

"I'm disabled and I hurt every day," he said. "But it's a good feeling to help people, that's what makes it all worth it."

After receiving his official citation Moore's most heartfelt words at the podium were to the people in front of him waiting to get food. He might have spoken for Clark, Wynn, Myers, Youngblood and everyone else who doesn't want to see people go hungry.

"Just keep coming," he said.

For more information about SHARE Food Program, Inc. 2901 West Hunting Park Avenue, call 215-223-2220 or visit <http://share-foodprogram.org>.

For more information about Philabundance, 3616 South Galloway Street, call 215-339-0900 or visit <http://www.philabundance.org>.

Representatives Myers and Youngblood are accepting donations at their offices. Representative Myers' office is at 5847 Germantown Avenue, phone 215-849-6896; Representative Youngblood's office is at 5520 Wayne Avenue, phone 215-849-6426.

Electric Bikes Take to the Streets in Mt. Airy

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the down-hills, though Kaighobady is definitely researching that. Don't be scared away, however, there are still some upsides to commuting on one of these rides.

"You get about a thousand miles per gallon... in car terms," said Weavers Way employee Bill Quern, who bought his first electric bike last year.

Quern rides an eZee Torque, one of the models sold at Philly Electric Wheels. The bike allows him to adjust the level of electric assist as he pedals, and as he's an avid traditional cyclist this was important to him. But even though Quern bought the bike largely because his human powered model was starting to give him knee troubles, the eZee has become the replacement for his car, not his bike.

He uses it to travel about 8 miles per day to and from his Germantown home, the Co-op, and the Co-op warehouse in Germantown, and all year long, even in winter he said, it has worked great.

"It's so much fun," he said. "You're out of the car and you just go around the traffic. And you can still go dancing at night."

This realization was exactly what got Kaighobady into the electric bike business in the first place.

"Everybody needs to go to work and back," he said. Even his wife, Meenal



Marie Dilszian shows off the sporty A2B electric bicycle and several other models available for sale at the new Philly Electric Wheels bicycle shop, which opened October 1 at 550 West Carpenter Lane in Mt. Airy.

Raval. It was her desire to find an ecological and manageable way to travel between Mt. Airy and Germantown is what spurred the Electric Wheels brainstorm in the first place.

Raval had just opened her own eco-busi-

ness, Philly Compost. Somehow it didn't seem right to travel there by car, but she was afraid that traditional biking would be unworkable every day. That changed when she rode the modest-looking Ecobike, Kaighobady said.

Dilszian understood Raval's concerns. As a native of Europe, where electric bikes have been popular for a long time, she knew the right electric bike could really do the trick.

"For the ladies definitely the advantage is you can be on your bike and not get all messed up," she said.

The bikes at Philly Electric Wheels range in price from \$550 to \$3,000. They start with the entry level Ezip, which looks like a regular bike with two heavy battery packs and a small motor attached to the rear wheel. They go up through the small and efficient Ecobikes to the more serious eZee models and on to the impressive A2B, which, with its thick tires and front and rear shock absorbers has a decidedly motocross vibe about it. And with good reason - A2B can travel 20 miles per hour and has a range of 40 miles with dual batteries.

If you're wondering how much it costs to charge the batteries on these bikes, let's just say the \$20 per month federal tax credit available for bike commuters will pay for it many times over.

Philly Electric Wheels will hold its official Grand Opening Thursday, October 15, from 2 to 7 p.m. Ice cream will be served and most of the bike models will be available to test ride in a safely enclosed parking lot at 520 Carpenter Lane. For more information call 215-821-9266.