



# Tackle hunger

## Organization tailgates on Super Bowl hype to feed America's hungry

**M**mmmm ... chicken wings, pizza, hoagies, chips, pretzels, dip, nachos and ice-cold beer.

A week from tomorrow, upward of 100 million people will watch the Super Bowl and gorge on many of those delights. At the same time, many of the almost 50 million Americans living in poverty will go to bed hungry.

The Souper Bowl of Caring, **SouperBowl.org**, has used all of the hype surrounding the Super Bowl to generate food and cash donations to feed the hungry since 1990.



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*InSites*

The organization has a humble origin story. Brad Smith, a seminary intern at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, South Carolina, uttered a simple prayer; "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat." Members of the congregation, and more than 20 neighboring churches, were inspired to raise \$5,700. Donations were collected in soup pots and given to area nonprofits.

### Running with the ball

Within three years, churches and schools in 36 states had joined the effort. By 1997, Souper Bowl of Caring broke the \$1 million mark and organized as a nonprofit charity. The success of the group continues to grow with collections

sometimes exceeding \$10 million dollars a year. All of the proceeds are donated to nonprofit organizations in the areas where the food and money was collected.

### Join the team

SouperBowl.org is set up to help people organize their own soup pot collections for local charities. Individuals or organizations can register on the site and receive a free playbook filled with materials to help organize a food drive. There's also a Resources section on the site with lots of free, downloadable materials, such as posters, form letters, logos, videos, guides and more.

Once your collection is finished, donate the food and money to any local charities of your choice and report the total to the site to be added to the national figures. Participants can post their success stories and photos of their events on the site for all to see.

The site offers suggestions and opportunities for other ways to help in addition to food drives. Bowl-a-Thons are fundraising events centered around a day at the bowling alley. Kids can have a good time while they support a good cause.

A Service Blitz is a two-day affair in which youths spend Saturday volunteering at one of the nonprofit agencies they're supporting and then spend Sunday collecting donations for them. It gives kids a chance to learn more about the people they're helping, raises the public profile of their event and hopefully instills a sense

of community in them. And they can still be home in time to watch the game.

Souper Bowl of Caring has National Youth Advisory Boards in several locations that provide local high school students with service opportunities. Students share their ideas with the organization and get experience in decision making, leadership and other organizational skills.

### Going for the goal line

SouperBowl.org is kind of hit and miss as far as the design of the site goes. The content is organized logically so it's easy to find your way around. It's fairly clean looking and has a nice color palette. The typography is unified and has a structured hierarchy that allows you to easily browse the content.

The site could use some improvement in the selection and use of its art elements, such as photos and graphics. The home page has a large slide show at the top, but the images are mostly obscured and dominated by type. There's already plenty of type on the pages, so the images should be allowed to shine a little more. It could also use a little tighter editing. I came across numerous typos and grammatical errors.

Souper Bowl of Caring is doing good work addressing the pressing problem of hunger in the world's richest nation on a day associated with excess consumption.

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