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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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**** LOGO ATTACHED ****

Neighbors FCU, Bus Drivers, Schools to ‘Stuff the Bus’ For Food Bank

Baton Rouge, LA – An East Baton Rouge Parish School System school bus will be stuffed to the gills with non-perishable food items and covered with “dollar bills” this month to assist the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank.

Neighbors Federal Credit Union (NFCU), the East Baton Rouge Parish School Bus Operators Association and several schools in the System have teamed up to help Stuff the Bus for the Food Bank. The effort is scheduled now through March 14. And this year they are “going green” with both food and cash donations. Food items can be dropped off at schools listed below, and monetary donations will be accepted at all Neighbors FCU locations. Some schools are collecting monetary donations, as well.

Once filled with food and decorated with fake dollar bills to represent every dollar raised, the food and funds will be given to the Food Bank to distribute to needy families, in the first case, and fund initiatives, in the latter. **“The Food Bank Express” school bus will be loaded with donations and decorated from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 17 at the Neighbors FCU branch at 7844 Goodwood Blvd.** At that time, donations also will be accepted at the bus itself.

Every dollar donated can purchase enough food to feed 10 people and generates more than \$12 worth of food for the hungry. As a non-profit organization, the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank provides food to more than 120 charitable agencies without charge, serves 11 parishes and helps about 7,300 people each day through its network. In 2007, the Food Bank distributed more than 10.8 million pounds of food. About 94 percent of its food is donated and distributed with the help of thousands of volunteers.

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STUFF THE BUS FOOD BANK/2

“This is a critical year for the Food Bank receiving donations,” said **Kathi Gill, president and CEO of Neighbors FCU**. “With the economic downturn, people are giving less and less to charities like the Food Bank – yet the need for its services are ever increasing.”

The school bus drivers held their first Stuff the Bus event for the Food Bank two years ago, and Neighbors FCU joined the partnership last year. In 2008, they collected 4,411 pounds of food and \$1,400 in monetary donations. About \$500 of those donations came from Neighbors FCU. This year, Neighbors FCU staff will continue their efforts to raise money.

As of this date, hundreds of dollars have been collected already for this year’s drive with **the goal to collect \$2,114 – enough so that every fake dollar representing a real dollar can “cover” the entire school bus**. **Baton Rouge Magnet High School** students did the math for this calculation.

Volunteers will help to get more non-perishable donations this year, as well, but they won’t turn down anything. For instance, **Westdale Heights Academic Magnet School** students collected food earlier this year for the Food Bank and will be donating vegetables from the student garden this spring. Other schools are getting creative with fundraisers. **Woodlawn Middle School** will try to collect a dollar from each student on March 17 to encourage them to wear green for St. Patrick’s Day. Other schools and clubs, like **McKinley High School’s Key Club**, are raising money and collecting food, too.

This year, school locations collecting food items in barrels include:

Broadmoor High School, Brookstown Elementary School, Dalton Elementary School, Glen Oaks Park Elementary School, Greenbrier Elementary School, Jefferson Terrace Elementary School, Lanier Elementary School, Melrose Elementary School, McKinley Middle School, Northeast Elementary School, Park Forest Elementary School, University Terrace Elementary School and Westminster Elementary School.

At the end of the drive, **Future Farmers of America students from Broadmoor High School** will help load and unload food items for the Food Bank.

For more information, contact Pam Wilson of the School Bus Operators Association at (225) 262-4572 or (225) 921-5181, Neighbors FCU’s Joni Herrmann at (225) 819-5748 or the Food Bank at (225) 359-9940.

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