



EUGENE SYMPHONY

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THE EUGENE SYMPHONY and EUGENE SYMPHONY GUILD to join ORCHESTRAS FEEDING AMERICA to Benefit FOOD For Lane County

**Audiences and Community Members invited to drop off food items on
May 19 and 20 at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts**

EUGENE— The Eugene Symphony and Eugene Symphony Guild will participate in Orchestras Feeding America, a national food drive by members of the League of American Orchestras in partnership with Feeding America. This is the second consecutive year that America's orchestras have mobilized their musicians, staff, volunteers, and audiences to help alleviate hunger in communities across the country. Non-perishable food will be collected in the lobby of the Hult Center on Wednesday, May 19 between noon and 5:00 p.m. and Thursday, May 20 between noon and 5:00 p.m. and one hour prior to the Eugene Symphony's performance. The food will be donated to FOOD For Lane County. For information about the types of food that can be accepted go to eugenesymphony.org.

To date, 150 orchestras are participating in Orchestras Feeding America, and the number of participants is growing daily. The project is organized by the League of American Orchestras, which represents the nation's professional, volunteer, and youth orchestras, and Feeding America's network of over 200 food banks and 63,000 agencies. In 2009, 250 orchestras in all 50 states collected more than 200,000 pounds of food.

Oregon's hunger rate is, once again, on the rise. According to the latest report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, both food insecurity and hunger continue to increase in Oregon. Here in Lane County, thousands of families and individuals are turning to [FOOD for Lane County](http://www.foodforlane.org) for help, many for the first time.

Said Eugene Symphony Executive Director, Paul Winberg, "The length and severity of the economic downturn has impacted many of us, individuals and businesses alike, but now is the time for us to help our neighbors most in need. This food drive is one way our orchestra can give back to the community that has supported us for so long."

49.1 million Americans of which 16.7 million were children lived in food insecure households in 2008, according to the most recent USDA study. Each week, approximately 5.7 million people receive emergency food assistance from an agency served by a Feeding America member. This is a 27 percent increase over numbers reported in *Hunger in America 2006*, which reported that 4.5 million people were served each week.

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Now celebrating its 44th season, the Eugene Symphony is recognized as the cornerstone of the performing arts in the southern Willamette Valley. Under the baton of new music director Danail Rachev, the Symphony presents an annual season of classical concerts, special events, and youth and family programming at the Hult Center for the Performing Arts and throughout the community, serving a regional audience of over 640,000. Eugene Symphony performances are also broadcast worldwide on KWAX-FM.

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