

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.

ÉPILOGUE

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

home there will be less food. In the morning when they wake up there will be less or no food, and when they go to school there will not be any breakfast program at the school for them.

How are they going to learn on empty stomachs, their stomachs growling and turning around and churning because they have not gotten the nutrition that they need?

The majority party, quite simply, does not care if poor children in this country eat or not.

Is the majority party taking this mean-spirited approach in order to reduce the deficit? Oh, no, Mr. Speaker, not to balance the budget, not to reduce the deficit, but to give a tax cut to the wealthy. How callous can you get, taking food from children to give fat cats more money?

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Let us look at it. These young children out here, we have got a man and a wife working part-time, making a little over minimum wage. They are making about \$20,000 a year, \$19,000, \$19,000 a year. They are scraping by. They have got two kids. They are eligible for food stamps. In some ways they are eligible for a reduced price for the school lunch.

But when they pass their bills on welfare reform, they call it, those folks are not going to get anything.

Well, they say, hey, we are going to give you a \$500 per child tax cut. That is what we are going to do for you.

But for that couple, folks, and those children, that \$500 is zip. It is nothing, because it is not a refundable tax cut. So they do not get a thing.

But what they are doing is, they are saying, those kids, you do not need any help, because your parents are making all of \$20,000, you do not need any help.

You know what they say who really needs the money, folks? Who really needs that money? Well, under their tax bill, the man and wife who are making \$200,000, \$200,000, they are going to get, for those same two kids, they are going to get \$1,000; \$1,000 is what they are going to get. And they tell you those people making that \$200,000 need it. They need it for their kids. But the one making \$18,000, \$19,000, they do not need anything, they need less. And that is what they are going to get from the majority party.

You know why they say that \$200,000 couple needs that money, that thousand dollars for their kids? They need it so they can be the leaders of this country, so they can go to Harvard and Yale and all those other places and they can sock the money away. So if you have ever seen Robin Hood in reverse, just watch the next 35 days, America.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LONGLEY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. WELDON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

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

FEDERAL FOOD ASSISTANCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mrs. CLAYTON] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, from yesterday morning into the wee hours of this morning, for 15 hours, the Committee on Agriculture marked-up title five of the Personal Responsibility Act. That bill, with great reductions and many restrictions on feeding hungry Americans, is now poised for consideration on the House floor. Leadership of the committee is to be commended for eliminating the mandate for block granting the Food Stamp Program.

A State option on block grants, however, remains in title five and will be an issue on the floor. Also, during mark-up, the committee accepted my amendment, which requires persons 18 to 50 years old, those who must work for food stamps, to be paid at least the minimum wage for their labor. Without my amendment, the bill would have forced many food stamp recipients to work for less than 1 dollar an hour. The agriculture committee was wise to support the amendment. But, with action by other committees, the block grant issue continues to loom large and will be hotly contested during floor consideration.

Mr. Speaker, I would urge our colleagues, as we consider the block grant issue, to recall their days in school. Recall the importance of a hearty breakfast and a healthy lunch. Recall the necessity of the mid-morning and mid-afternoon milk or snack break. Recall the sense of urgency each of you felt the first time you experienced the pangs of hunger. And, recall how the ache of not being fed in your stomachs prevented you from being fed in your minds. Mr. Speaker, this debate is not about party or politics or pocketbooks. This debate is about our young, and our old. This debate is about strong bodies and clear minds. This debate is about the future of this Nation. Understanding the future, however, sometimes lies in remembering the past. Recall the infant mortality rate in America before the WIC Program. That rate has been lowered by as much as 66 percent, in some cases. WIC works. Babies don't die today like they died in the past, because we invested in life. Recall the fact that since the Institution of Nutrition Programs, the gap between the diets of low-income and other families has narrowed, significantly. Stunting has decreased by 65 percent. Anemia has dramatically improved. Low birthweights are down. Mr. Speaker, it is easy to forget. Members of Congress dine at some of the finest restaurants. Eating is taken for granted. Hunger is unknown. But, while it is easy to forget, it is dangerous to fail to remember. This Nation is strong because we

care for our weak. Every citizen is important. All can make a contribution. But, none, who is hungry, can participate or contribute in any meaningful way. Even those incarcerated in our jails and prisons, throughout the United States, are assured of three square meals a day. Surely, our children and seniors should get nothing less.

Mr. Speaker, I have been increasingly concerned about how rapidly we are making major and dramatic changes to the way our Government functions, indeed, many of our colleagues have commented on the pace of this Congress. It seems that we are emphasizing quantity at the expense of quality, and, more importantly, at the expense of the American people. The U.S. Constitution has been amended just 27 times in more than 200 years, yet this Congress has proposed several new amendments in less than 50 days. Moreover, in the space of fewer than 3 months, we have proposed a balanced budget amendment, passed unfunded mandates legislation, proposed a Presidential line-item veto, rewritten last year's crime bill, passed a plethora of regulatory reform measures, acted on defense spending and national security matters in a couple of days, considered term limits, welfare reform and rescissions, and we are now in the midst of tort reform. In our rush to meet an artificial, 100-day goal, it is a fair question to ask, are we hurting more than we are helping? Consider an article which appeared in today's New York Times. When the Personal Responsibility Act was marked up by the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, the language passed resulted in 57,000 children of military families being denied access to the State feeding programs that would be established. To restore this feeding program for the military, it will cost the Pentagon more than \$5 million for meals and another \$5 million for administrative costs. It seems, Mr. Speaker, that we profess to want a strong military, yet we pass legislation that will cause military children to go hungry. These actions are either mean spirited or grossly negligent. Either way, America suffers.

I urge my colleagues to stand up against nutrition program block grants. Let us demonstrate that a wise and thankful Nation really does remember.

WELFARE REFORM

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

Mr. TALENT. Mr. Speaker, on March 21, the House will take up comprehensive, real and historic welfare reform. The object of that bill will be an historic and fundamental change in the direction of our welfare policy, away from a failed system that is destroying the poor and towards a system of relief