

## GERDA AND KURT KLEIN FOUNDATION

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610 Moreno Road  
Narberth, PA 19072

*The programs of the Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation are a remarkable investment in the belief that social progress depends on youth—children who see old injustices and determine to change them. We one day will end hunger in America, and we will do it through the leadership of our young who dream and mean it.*

Dr. J. Larry Brown, Director  
Center on Hunger and Poverty  
Brandeis University  
<http://www.centeronhunger.org>

Established in 1999 by Holocaust survivor Gerda Weitzman Klein and her husband Kurt Klein, the Foundation sponsors two programs to enable American youth to make positive contributions to end hunger in their communities and in the nation:

- ***Klein Foundation Hunger Curriculum.*** (<http://www.kleinfoundation.org>) The six-unit curriculum is designed to meet standards of the National Council on Social Studies, and is targeted to youth in middle and high schools. Available free of charge from the Klein Foundation website the curriculum teaches youth about the causes, extent, impact and solutions to hunger in America. The curriculum is designed as a parallel program to the Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade, below.
- ***Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade.*** (<http://www.feinsteinfoundation.com>) This is a community service program to enable young people and adults working with them to help remedy hunger. Youth will be able to become involved in hunger in their communities, assess its extent, and engage in both local and national efforts to end it.

This document describes the ***Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade***, and how you can establish this service program in your own community.

# The Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade

*“So No Child Will Go Hungry”*

The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation is establishing the Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade to enable youngsters in communities across America to play a role in ending hunger. This national initiative will help to fulfill Gerda Klein’s greatest wish: that no child should ever know the hunger she once knew.

In collaboration with MCET, Brandeis University, The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, The SHOAH Foundation, the Klein Foundation has developed a five-part national television series called *Memories, Voices & Choices: Lessons Learned from the Holocaust & Global Genocides* which focuses on genocide and human rights, through the study of the Holocaust and other atrocities. Promoting the message of tolerance, the series helps students learn from the past, and teaches the importance of assuming responsibility for others.

With generous support from philanthropist and national hunger leader Alan Shawn Feinstein, the Klein foundation now adds the next dimension— the Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade, a national community service program to give children the opportunity to take responsibility through the concrete action of working to end hunger. The community service program has several goals:

- To help students learn about hunger and its impact
- To enable them to discover the needs in their own communities
- To let them play a role in feeding hungry children
- To give students the ability to help end hunger

This program grows out of the deep belief that Gerda and Kurt Klein have in the goodness of young people, and the desire of children to make their world better. Both Gerda and Kurt lost their families during World War II, and Gerda personally felt the pangs of hunger during her long years as a young girl in Nazi concentration camps. The Kleins resolved that children should not experience the pain of hunger, and the means they have chosen is to unleash the energy of the young to help others through community service.

The following program, designed in, collaboration between the Klein Foundation and the Center on Hunger and Poverty at Brandeis University, describes components of the Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade, its goals and objectives, and hands-on strategies for translating this dream into concrete action.

As you create an action plan to implement a Youth Hunger Brigade in your school or community, please fill out the enclosed form to let us of the scope and status of your project, and how we might assist you in your efforts.

## I. Students Research Hunger in their Communities

Before students can begin to take action against hunger in their community they must learn about the problems of hunger. Teachers or group leaders should divide up their classes into groups or teams. Each of these teams should investigate a different aspect of hunger in their community. After researching hunger each group should report back to the class their findings.

### Ideas for hunger research teams:

- **Assessing Need in Your School District**

Students should research the use of Federal School Breakfast and Lunch Programs in their district. To learn information about the Federal Programs in your district, contact your school district and the director of the Department of School Food Services in your district, or your superintendent. This is public information.

Use the following questions to gather information about Federal School **Lunch** and **Breakfast** Programs in your district.

*How many schools are in your district?*

*How many schools offer the **Lunch** Program?*

*How many don't?*

*How many schools offer the **Breakfast** Program?*

*How many don't?*

*How many kids eat school lunch? (Average daily participation)*

*Of the kids who eat school lunch how many:*

*- Pay full price?*

*- Pay a reduced price?*

*- Receive free lunch?*

*How many kids eat school breakfast? (Average daily participation)*

*Of the kids who eat school breakfast how many:*

*- Pay full price?*

*- Pay a reduced price?*

*- Receive free lunch?*

Compare the number of students who are receiving free and reduced price lunch to the number of students receiving free and reduced price breakfast. Are more students receiving lunch than breakfast? Why? How do you interpret these results?

- **Assessing Need in Your Community**

Contact local food banks and hunger relief organizations to assess their use in your community. Use the

following questions as a frame work:

*How many food banks, soup kitchens or pantries exist in your community?*

*How many people utilize their services?*

*How many families utilize their services?*

*Where do they receive funding from?*

*Where do they receive donations from?*

*How much food do they require to service your community?*

- **Assessing Hunger in our Nation**

Students should go online to <http://www.centeronhunger.org/fsifacts.html> and to <http://www.centeronhunger.org/fsistate.html> in order to research hunger in their home state and across the nation. Students should answer the following questions:

*How many families go hungry in the United States?*

*How many families go hungry in their home state?*

*How does their state compare to other states?*

*How many children go hungry in the United States?*

*What are factors, which can contribute to the problems of hunger in the United States?*

- **Assessing the Effects of Hunger**

Students in this group should look at the effects of hunger on the body and on the mind. In order to conduct their research students should speak with a biology or health and nutrition teacher in their school. They should find answers to the following questions:

*What are the biological effects of going hungry?*

*What are the effects of hunger on the ability of children to learn?*

*How does hunger effect the health of children?*

*How does hunger effect performance in school?*

*What is a well balanced diet?*

*Why is important to eat a well balanced diet?*

## **II. Taking action against hunger**

Now that students have learned about the epidemic of hunger in the United States they are prepared to take action. The class should once again be divided into groups. Each group will take on a different aspect in the battle against hunger.

- **Political Action Against Hunger**

Student will use the research collected by their classmates and start a letter writing campaign to politicians and hunger officials in their area. Students should also meet with school officials to discuss the use of Federal school breakfast and school lunch programs in their district. Additional activities such as a lobbying day in the state legislator where students go and meet with their representatives about childhood hunger should also be arranged.

**Tips on Writing Informational, Support, Opposition and Persuasive Letters**

- State your purpose right away
- Present only one issue per letter
- Research the issue thoroughly; point to published research to support your argument
- Make it clear and concise
- It's okay to disagree, but do it politely; don't accuse or attack someone
- Be complimentary; if your school officials or public official has taken positive steps or proposed legislation to help end hunger, acknowledge their actions
- If you write a letter to a legislator other than one who represents your area, send a copy to your own representative
- Type or write your letter neatly and don't forget your return address!

**Sample Follow-Up Letter to Meeting with School Officials**

Your Name  
The Name of Your Organization  
Your School  
City, State, Zip

Date

Dear Sir or Madam:

We, the concerned students of name of your school thank you for meeting with us on date regarding the School Breakfast Program. We feel that there is a strong need for the School Breakfast Program at name of your school.

In our research we discovered that x students participate in the School Lunch Program, but we do not have a School Breakfast Program. We are worried that the kids who participate in the School Lunch Program may be going without breakfast. In our research we also learned that breakfast is very important. According to new findings, students who are undernourished may suffer in school, both academically and behaviorally. This will seriously hurt their chances of getting a good education and developing into healthy, socially well-adjusted adults.

Students go to school to learn, but how can they learn if they are hungry? Please help to protect us, the children, by offering the School Breakfast Program.

We have enclosed the results of our study along with current research on the link between hunger and cognitive development in children for your review. We would like to meet with you again on date to continue this discussion. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Your name, name of your club, etc.

- **Volunteer Against Hunger**

As part of the process of food collection, students will volunteer at local emergency food program sites, where they will see the faces of families for whom hunger is an every-day threat. Understanding this battle and playing a direct part in helping to eradicate hunger leads students to assume greater ownership of the issue of hunger: they see it first hand, they learn they can do something about it, and they are encouraged to look into the root causes of the problem. This “on-the-job-training” helps to develop the next generation of leadership to see that the American population is protected from hunger.

The project will utilize and work with national food charities in the United States and local programs that feed the hungry. Thousands of organizations support emergency feeding programs in communities across the country and local schools can select one of their sites to support through student efforts, or they can choose others.

To become involved with local organizations that feed the hungry in your community, please refer to the enclosed list of organizations nation-wide. You can also visit America's Second Harvest Web site for more information at <http://www.secondharvest.org> to locate a food bank or food-rescue program near you.

Students will:

- Work with local adults to develop food collection programs and projects to supply emergency food programs in their community
- Work as volunteers in emergency food programs to gain first hand knowledge of the problems families and children face
- Students should also serve as liaisons between these hunger organizations and the schools. They should arrange for students from throughout the district to come and volunteer at hunger organizations

- **Speak Out Against Hunger**

Using the knowledge, which they have learned from their class's research, students should disseminate information about hunger to their peers and their communities.

Students will:

- Publish articles about hunger in their school newsletter.
- Publish letters in community newspapers about the problems of hunger in their communities.
- Begin a hunger newsletter for their school or community.
- Make and distribute fliers, posters and pamphlets about the problem of hunger.

- **Plan Activities Against Hunger**

Students should plan anti-hunger activities in their schools in order to educate their peers about the problem of hunger.

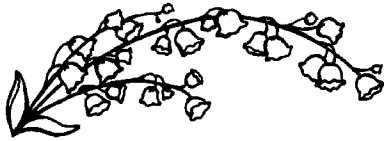
- Plan an Oxfam hunger banquet. (<http://www.oxfam.org>)
- Hold a dance where the price of admission is a non-perishable food item (to be donated to a local hunger relief organization.)
- Involve the school in a competition where each class is a different type of non-perishable food. Each grade will compete to see who can bring in the most products.
- Hold a food drive in their community.

- Participate in Halloween for the Hungry. Students, while trick or treating for candy collect non-perishable food.

When you donate the non-perishables to your local food pantry, please do so in the name of the Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation so we can track the impact of the Feinstein Youth Hunger Brigade nation-wide. Whether you are in the initial stages of creating an action plan, or are already planning a food drive, please fill out the attached Project Sheet to let us know the scope, status and timetable of your project.

### **III Reflection:**

Think about your goals and what you have accomplished so far in your action plan. What do you still want to do? How might your plan be expanded or modified? What are your next steps?



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**The Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation** would like to partner with you in the fall as you plan your follow-up action to feed the hungry. Please take a moment and fill out this brief form indicating your interest to help make your community a place—*where no child will go hungry*.

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

Possible Project: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tentative Timetable: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us how we can help you: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Respond to:

Gerda and Kurt Klein Foundation  
610 Moreno Road  
Narberth, PA 19072  
or fax: 610-668-2313  
<http://www.kleinfoundation.org>