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## **“NOTHING” CAN END HUNGER IN RHODE ISLAND**

***Food Bank campaign goes virtual and local  
Citizens Bank to match purchases of virtual cans up to \$5,000***

PROVIDENCE, RI – Could you buy ten pounds of food for \$2.99 and fit it inside a soup can? Nothing could make that happen. “Nothing,” that is, in the form of the Rhode Island Community Food Bank’s landmark awareness-raising campaign, which is selling cans of “Nothing” for \$2.99, beginning September 1. This year, the Food Bank has embarked on a new approach to engage the community, selling “virtual” cans through a dedicated website and placing real-life cans in large and small retail stores across Rhode Island.

Supported by the Citizens Bank Foundation and designed pro bono by Nail, a Providence ad agency, the “Nothing” campaign symbolizes the reality of hunger experienced by more than 60,000 Rhode Islanders each month who rely on food provided by the Food Bank’s 122 emergency food pantries.

The campaign kicks off Thursday, Sept. 1, at Craftland, 235 Westminster St., Providence, where the gallery will be transformed into a “Nothing Store.” A food truck filled with “Nothing” will be stationed across the street from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to attract passersby. More than 30 local grocery and retail stores around the state have joined in the effort to sell “Nothing” in their own communities. Each can of “Nothing” has a coin slot, enabling people to help further by collecting spare change for the Food Bank.

“A can of ‘Nothing’ is something tangible you can hold in your hand and put on the kitchen counter or in your car,” says Food Bank CEO Andrew Schiff. “Young people can involve their schools, and adults can bring them to work.” Last year, in addition to the money raised from selling cans of “Nothing,” the campaign netted more than \$30,000 from “Nothing” cans filled with spare change that were returned to the Food Bank.

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“If you’d rather do ‘Nothing’ at home, you can purchase a virtual can at [www.nothingstore.org](http://www.nothingstore.org) and post it on your Facebook page,” says Jeremy Crisp of NAIL, whose pro bono design work on the “Nothing” campaign earned one of the advertising world’s most prestigious awards: the 2011 Effie Award Gold Medal for Goodworks-Nonprofits. Following the campaign’s initial roll-out in 2010, online donations to the RI Community Food Bank increased 42% over the last fiscal year.

This year, all purchases of virtual “Nothing” cans up to \$5,000 will be matched by the Citizens Bank Foundation, which now supports the program in Vermont and Ohio (via their franchise Charter One Bank), in addition to Rhode Island, where it was conceived.

“Citizens is once again proud to partner with the RI Community Food Bank on the Nothing campaign,” said Ned Handy, President, Citizens Bank, Rhode Island. “This innovative awareness campaign has been replicated by our colleagues in Vermont and Ohio, where they partnered with their local food banks on similar initiatives. By creating hunger awareness, we are truly proving that Nothing can end hunger – in Rhode Island and throughout our footprint.”

For a complete listing of participating stores, as well as drop-off locations for filled cans, visit [www.nothing.org](http://www.nothing.org).

Low-income families continue to struggle as the state’s economy remains stalled and unemployment remains high. In the last four years, the number of Rhode Islanders depending on the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly known as food stamps—has more than doubled. In July alone, 164,000 residents counted on SNAP to feed themselves and their families.

“The need for contributions to the Food Bank has never been greater,” Schiff says. “Thousands of Rhode Islanders, including those with SNAP benefits, depend on food pantries to feed their families, and the pantries rely on the Food Bank to stock their shelves. Already, SNAP benefits have been cut by Congress, and there will be more cuts as the debt ceiling dust settles. Unfortunately, none of these cuts will help create more jobs. There will be more people than ever for us to feed.”

**The Rhode Island Community Food Bank** is a non-profit organization located in Providence, RI. The Food Bank solicits, stores and distributes food products donated by supermarkets, wholesalers, food processors, local farmers and community food drives. The food is then distributed to the Food Bank’s statewide network of more than 250 member agency programs. In the past fiscal year, the Food Bank distributed 9.4 million pounds of food. For more information about the Food Bank, please visit [www.rifoodbank.org](http://www.rifoodbank.org).

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