



# The Women's Conference®

*The Nation's Premier Forum for Women*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **THE CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR & FIRST LADY'S CONFERENCE ON WOMEN TO PROVIDE ONE MILLION MEALS TO FAMILIES IN NEED THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

*First Lady Maria Shriver to Kick Off Million Meals Initiative Today at the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank; Governor Schwarzenegger will be joining volunteers at the Alameda County Community Food Bank*

**LOS ANGELES (December 10, 2009)** – First Lady Maria Shriver and the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women will continue their dedication to empowering women year-round through the WE Connect Program's Million Meals Initiative, a statewide campaign being launched today at the Los Angeles Regional Foodbank.

The initiative kicks off with a day of service led by Shriver and will culminate with a donation by the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women to The California Association of Food Banks to provide more than one million meals to California families in need. The donation will be allocated to 44 member organizations who will distribute food to California families through its more than 5,000 community-based organizations.

“The California Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women has always been committed to feeding women's minds, bodies and spirits,” said Shriver, “and during this time of need, we are committed to helping women feed their families. Organizations that are serving on the front lines are in urgent need of donations and helping hands. We hope this initiative inspires all Californians to serve their neighbors during this season of giving.”

First Lady Shriver will be joined at the Los Angeles event by Los Angeles Regional Foodbank Executive Director and California Association of Food Banks Board Chairman **Michael Flood**; Parents of Watts director and 2007 Minerva Award recipient “**Sweet**” **Alice Harris**; Betty's Blue Angels founder and 2008 Minerva Award winner **Betty Chinn**; and conference board members, who will stuff care bags and thank volunteers for their dedication to serving their fellow Californians.

“We are honored to be working with the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women and First Lady Maria Shriver, who has time and again proven her dedication to helping California's most needy residents,” said Michael Flood. “I am honored to host her today and help launch a campaign that is sure to make a difference in the lives of so many people this holiday season.”

The Million Meals Initiative will continue with volunteers from churches, schools, non-profit organizations and other conference partners serving in more than twelve food bank events across the state, including the cities of San Diego, Oakland, Sacramento and Fresno.

**Governor Schwarzenegger** will be joining volunteers at the Alameda County Community Food Bank in Oakland to thank them for their service and encourage other Californians to do the same.

“This holiday season, each of us has what it takes to change a life and make a difference by reaching out and helping someone less fortunate. Maria and I want struggling families to know that there is support available for them,” said Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. “We encourage all Californians to be every day heroes by reaching out to local food banks and donating or volunteering time as we celebrate this Season of Giving.”

Governor Schwarzenegger will be joined at the event by California Association of Food Banks Executive Director **Sue Sigler**.

After their work at the food banks, Governor Schwarzenegger and First Lady Shriver will both attend the annual Season of Giving tree lighting event tonight in Sacramento, where they will continue to encourage Californians to serve their fellow neighbors in need this holiday season.

The Million Meals Initiative is a project of the California Governor & First Lady's Conference on Women's **WE Connect** program, which is designed to help California's families become more financially secure by providing information about community-based services and government programs and resources available to them. The campaign, first launched by Shriver in 2005, connects working families in a groundbreaking way to money-saving programs and services they may be eligible for but are unaware of through WEConnect.net. WE Connect has partnered with organizations across the state to reach more than 11 million individuals, bring more than \$110 million in savings to families and open permanent neighborhood centers in Santa Ana, Fresno and Irvine that will serve thousands more. The WE Connect model has been extended to 22 states across the country.

### **About The California Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women**

Hosted by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and First Lady Maria Shriver, the annual non-partisan Women's Conference is the nation's premier forum for women. The purpose of The Women's Conference event is to empower, inspire and educate women to be Architects of Change in their own lives, in their communities, and around the world. More than 25,000 women attend the two-day conference and many thousands more watch the event live online. The Women's Conference is a production of the non-profit, non-partisan California Governor and First Lady's Conference on Women, which has formed partnerships with organizations and businesses that share its mission to develop far-reaching programs and initiatives that empower women throughout the year: WE Invest, WE Connect, WE Educate, WE Act, WE Inspire and WE Honor (The Minerva Awards) . For more information about The Women's Conference and the WE Programs, visit: [www.WomensConference.org](http://www.WomensConference.org).

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