

THE CLIFF

[Comments \(0\)](#) |

[Buzz up!](#)

- [Print](#)
- [Reprint or License](#)
- [+ Share](#)

Charlotte's CROP Walk is largest against hunger

David Perlmutt

Posted: Friday, Sep. 25, 2009

The numbers are startling, and should motivate anyone to help.

Around the globe, 1.02 billion people are hungry. Every day, nearly 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes - that's one child every 5 seconds. Hunger kills more people than AIDS, malaria and TB combined.

In Mecklenburg County, 105,000 people live in poverty. That includes 34,000 children and 8,000 seniors.

Got your attention? Here's how you can help. Join thousands of others at Charlotte's 31st CROP Hunger Walk. The walk, 3.7 miles through uptown and several inner-city neighborhoods, starts at 2:30 p.m. Oct. 4 at the Grady Cole Center, 310 N. Kings Drive, and ends about 4 p.m. along Elizabeth Avenue.

It is one of 2,000 CROP walks in the country. Ours is the largest, expected to attract at least 6,000 people. In some years, 10,000 have taken to the streets.

Anne Shoaf, heading this year's walk, has been involved for most of its existence and walked five times.

"I was raised in the church, and to me - as a Christian and human being sharing this planet - my responsibility is to care for my neighbor," Shoaf said. "The question most of us have is: 'What am I going to serve tonight?' ... For too many people it's: 'How am I going to feed me and another person tonight?' That's a heavy burden, especially in this difficult economy.

"For many people, it means that whatever they can eat is what's going to get them by. They're not even worrying about nutrition - just getting the calories, and that's a challenge."

The walks are an outgrowth of Church World Service, founded by 17 denominations in 1946 to fight hunger. CROP (Christian Rural Overseas Program) started a year later to send seed, grain and livestock to war-torn Europe.

The first Charlotte CROP walk in 1978 raised \$19,000. In the 30 years since, Charlotte's walkers have raised more than \$6 million - and \$1.5 million stayed in the community to fight hunger.

This year's goal is \$250,000. A fourth of that is to remain in Charlotte and be divided among Loaves & Fishes, Crisis Assistance Ministry and Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina. Each walker is asked to raise at least \$100, through pledges or an individual donation.

"They might get a lot of \$1 and \$2 pledges, or some might write a check for \$100 and be done with it," Shoaf said.

The walks are amazing spectacles of people caring for other people. All ages, all walks of the community. You'll make new friends and will get a little exercise.



[Subscribe to The Charlotte Observer & Earn Miles.](#)