

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Leading organizations merge to tackle childhood hunger here

Sept. 30, 2015 – Marietta, GA. --- MUST Ministries and Alive Ministries are announcing a merger to help end the significant challenge of child hunger in the communities they serve, according to MUST Pres. and CEO Ike Reighard. MUST, who served more than 20,000 children in poverty in the past year, and Alive, who has established school food pantries in 19 Cobb schools and served more than 6,750 children in poverty this year, are joining forces effective Sept. 30.

The organizations and their respective boards have entered into a definitive agreement to merge Alive Ministries into MUST Ministries, Reighard explained. MUST has acquired the assets of Alive and will continue to operate the "Save It Forward" couponing and food pantry initiative begun five years ago by Alive founder and executive director, Rhonda Smith. She is joining MUST as Senior Director of Program Operations and will continue to lead and expand the campus-based food pantry program.

“This merger makes sense because eliminating child hunger has been a key initiative of MUST Ministries for years. Our 20-year Summer Lunch program alone has delivered more than two million sack lunches to hungry children. Under Smith's leadership, Alive's team, their board and 2,000 dedicated volunteers have built an innovative and sustainable program to provide for at-risk children, maximizing their opportunities to succeed in school... a winning game plan that works,” said Chris Fields, SVP of Programs and Administration for MUST.

Smith adds, “By teaming up and combining synergies, this unique campus-based food pantry program becomes scalable allowing us to have a greater impact in the Cobb County community and the additional seven counties MUST now serves. This combined strategy has huge impact potential for the communities we serve as we join forces to tackle child hunger together.”

In the counties where MUST operates its Summer Lunch and other food programs, more than 250,000 children face food insecurity every day. "Child hunger is a serious problem at our back door that will have major ramifications for our community if we choose to sit on the sidelines and ignore it. We are putting a call out to the community to get in the game and help tackle hunger for children in our local schools. Education provides children with an opportunity to rise

above their circumstances, but it's difficult for a hungry child to learn," according to the MUST team.

For ways to help, go to mustministries.org and click on "Donate" to contribute \$12 a month that can provide 75 lbs. of needed groceries and toiletries to a family in need in our schools. Donations can also be made on the MUST Ministries Facebook page.

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