

Baltimore Examiner
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Lynn Brantley's Response to Editorials

Shoppers' generosity essential to feeding area hungry

In regards to the July 25 and 27 editorials that were written about Sen. Ulysses Currie (D-25) I would like to provide some clarity regarding his relationship with the Capital Area Food Bank. ("Currie deals in private? No way," July 25 and "Good cause, bad governance," July 27) Before Sen. Currie joined the food bank's board, our executive committee and general counsel contacted the Maryland Legislative Ethics Committee. The ethics committee approved the decision to nominate Sen. Currie to the board of directors. They further stated that legislators are actually encouraged to be on local boards to better understand the needs of their local communities. Only after receiving this information did we move forward with the nomination.

In regard to the dollar amount given by Shoppers Food & Pharmacy, the dollars that came to the food bank were not direct corporate contributions. Rather, funds were raised by Shoppers through in-store campaigns and a golf tournament, where the general public had the opportunity to support our work. Shoppers is only one of the many incredibly important and generous members of the food industry that supports the work of the food bank. We have over 400 wholesalers, retailers, farmers, individuals, foundations and corporations that support our work to serve the community.

Six hundred and thirty-three thousand people are at risk of hunger in the metropolitan Washington community, and the Capital Area Food Bank touches the lives of over 380,000. We could not begin to serve our agencies and residents if we did not have the support of the food industry. I am disappointed that The Examiner so negatively portrayed Shoppers' contribution to the food bank; their involvement makes our work possible. Your public attack on their relationship with the food bank weakens an incredibly important support system on which hundreds of thousands of people depend. Shopper's support is to be applauded and encouraged. In these days of high food, fuel and housing costs, I can only offer a resounding thank you to those in the Maryland legislature that supported our efforts to expand and to Shopper's Food & Pharmacy for their important and critical support. Their generosity will allow us to expand our warehouse space, which will allow us to double or triple our food to the community.

The Capital Area Food Bank distributes 20 million pounds of food annually to the National Capital Region with nearly 5 million of those pounds going to Prince George's and Montgomery counties. KMPG, a national accounting firm, values one pound of food that we distribute at \$1.69. This means that nearly \$9 million worth of food was distributed to agencies and families in 2008 alone. The food bank has been serving the community for the past 28 years and thus, hundreds of millions of dollars of food have gone into the community. All contributions to the Capital Area Food Bank represent wise investments in bettering the lives of our neighbors, and an improved quality of life in all segments of our community.

Lynn J. Brantley

President and chief executive officer

Capital Area Food Bank