

For Immediate Release

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## The Michigan Harvest Gathering Kicks off in the Community

Blake's Orchard & Cider Mill Teams With the Food Bank Council of Michigan to Fight Hunger in Michigan

**Armada, MI** - The Food Bank Council of Michigan and Blake's Orchard & Cider Mill invite the public to join them for The Michigan Harvest Gathering Kick-off in the Community celebration on October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 from 8am – 6pm with proceeds from sales of pick-your-own apple bushels and gallons of cider benefiting the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual state-wide initiative to reduce hunger, the Michigan Harvest Gathering. **A brief presentation including representatives from both partners will begin at 2pm.**

Blake Farms has had a positive relationship with Michigan food banks for over a decade and wants to help because of their admiration for the non-profits efforts in increasing food access to struggling local communities. “The Blake Family has been a longtime supporter of Michigan food banks.” said Kareemah El-Amin, Executive Director of the Food Bank Council of Michigan. “When we thought about Kicking off our campaign in the community, their farm was the perfect fit.” The Kickoff in the Community event is also a chance for Blake Farms to introduce their new line of ciders, available this year for the first time from this family owned and operated business.

Founded by Attorney General Bill Schuette and Cynthia Schuette and administered by the Food Bank Council of Michigan (FBCM), the Michigan Harvest Gathering coordinates a statewide effort to benefit food banks and all people in all 83 counties. In its first 22 years, the Michigan Harvest Gathering coordinated over 8.7 Million pounds of produce and over \$8.6 Million dollars to benefit our state's emergency food response. The FBCM mobilizes many partners, including Michigan farmers, in order to make such an impact on hunger.

“As a farm we understand the hardships of limited fresh food access. We're rewarded by Mother Nature's surplus in good years and humbled in the rough years of light harvests. We understand the current issues of fresh food scarcity and seek to share our surplus this year with hungry families in Metro Detroit,” said Andrew Blake. “For three generations, we've experienced sharing our farm with so many wonderful families and want to extend our hand to the families that may not have experienced the goodness of fresh Michigan harvests.” [www.feedmichigan.org](http://www.feedmichigan.org)

Blake Farms has been a long time partner of Gleaners Community Food Bank and Forgotten Harvest. Their passion for the food bank network is evident in their many donations of fresh produce to Southeastern Michigan hungry children and families.

*Blake Farms was started in 1946 by Gerald and Elisabeth Blake and their 13 children and was one of the very first “pick your own” orchards in Michigan. Today Blake Farms has three separate locations with over 500 acres of orchard and farmland and employs 300 people to accommodate the crowd of roughly 300,000 they see each season. Blake Farms has evolved since its opening into a family entertainment farm featuring train, pony and hay rides, cornfield mazes, a haunted house and several animated attractions in addition to their orchards and cider mill.*

*Food Bank Council of Michigan: Founded in 1984, the Food Bank Council of Michigan provides statewide leadership to food banks in their efforts to alleviate hunger. We work with our seven regional food banks and over 3,200 hunger relief agencies, private companies, farmers, state and federal officials and other allies to make sure that our friends and neighbors do not go without food – the most basic of necessities.*

Media Only: For more information, or to arrange an interview with a Blake Farms representative, contact

C & B Scene at 248.336.8360 or <mailto:scene@candbscene.com>. To arrange an interview with the Food Bank Council of Michigan, please contact Adam Butler, 517.664.9904 or [abutler@fbcnich.org](mailto:abutler@fbcnich.org).  
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