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Contact:

Erica Teti-Zilinskas

202.847.0228

eteti@dccentralkitchen.org

Student volunteers tap university resources to address hunger in rural areas

Two-Year \$150,000 investment from CoBank supports the development of innovative hunger solutions at seven university chapters of The Campus Kitchens Project

February 13, 2015 – Washington, D.C. – The Campus Kitchens Project, a national organization that empowers student volunteers to fight hunger in their communities, today announced a \$150,000 investment from CoBank that will support seven Campus Kitchens in addressing the challenge of rural hunger in their communities. Each Campus Kitchen will use existing college or university campus resources to develop innovative programs that address the root causes of hunger, and develop a replicable toolkit for other schools to implement. Students will also be encouraged to incorporate local food systems as part of their solutions.

“Addressing rural hunger requires new and innovative thinking,” said Sarah Tyree, vice president of government affairs for CoBank. “Through our partnership with The Campus Kitchens Project, we want to harness the creativity and unique perspectives of our nation’s youth, and combine them with the strong ethic of stewardship and community involvement of our nation’s farmers and ranchers to do a better job of solving the problem of food insecurity in rural America.”

At each of the 42 Campus Kitchens nationwide, students lead efforts to combat food waste and hunger by collecting surplus food from on-campus dining halls, community gardens, restaurants, and grocery stores and transforming it into healthy meals. In the last academic year, Campus Kitchens across the country rescued more than 823,549 pounds of food and served 293,963 meals to 12,006 clients.

The seven Campus Kitchens selected to focus specifically on issues surrounding rural hunger are:

- **Elon University** – Elon, NC
- **Gettysburg College** – Gettysburg, PA
- **Minnesota State University, Mankato** – Mankato, MN
- **St. Lawrence University** – Canton, NY
- **Troy University** – Troy, AL

- **University of Georgia** – Athens, GA
- **Washington and Lee University** – Lexington, VA

Student volunteers from the seven selected Campus Kitchens are encouraged to identify new and innovative solutions to hunger in their communities that go beyond the traditional model of providing meals. From Elon University's strong partnerships with neighboring farms, to Gettysburg's innovative distribution of free CSA shares, these campuses serve as the ideal "test kitchen" for more sustainable solutions to hunger. The Campus Kitchens Project national program team will work with student leaders to evaluate the most effective rural-focused programs and support each Campus Kitchen in developing toolkits and trainings that will allow other universities to replicate these promising solutions.

"We're deeply grateful to CoBank for this generous contribution," said Director of The Campus Kitchens Project, Laura Toscano. "Traditional approaches to fighting hunger are failing, especially in rural communities where they run into costly transportation challenges. Instead of pouring more money into these old solutions, the next generation of student leaders at our Campus Kitchen chapters are bringing the existing resources of their universities to solve this endemic problem."

About The Campus Kitchens Project

Founded in 2001, The Campus Kitchens Project is a national organization that empowers student volunteers to fight hunger in their community. On 42 university and high school campuses across the country, students transform unused food from dining halls, grocery stores, restaurants, and farmers' markets into meals that are delivered to local agencies serving those in need. By taking the initiative to run a community kitchen, students develop entrepreneurial and leadership skills, along with a commitment to serve their community, that they will carry with them into future careers. Each Campus Kitchen goes beyond meals by using food as a tool to promote poverty solutions, implement garden initiatives, participate in nutrition education, and convene food policy events. To learn more about our work or bring The Campus Kitchens Project to your school, visit www.campuskitchens.org.

About CoBank

CoBank is a \$102 billion cooperative bank serving vital industries across rural America. The bank provides loans, leases, export financing and other financial services to agribusinesses and rural power, water and communications providers in all 50 states. The bank also provides wholesale loans and other 2 financial services to affiliated Farm Credit associations serving more than 70,000 farmers, ranchers and other rural borrowers in 23 states around the country.

CoBank is a member of the Farm Credit System, a nationwide network of banks and retail lending associations chartered to support the borrowing needs of U.S. agriculture and the nation's rural economy. Headquartered outside Denver, Colorado, CoBank serves customers from regional banking centers across the U.S. and also maintains an international representative office in Singapore.

For more information about CoBank, visit the bank's web site at www.cobank.com.

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