FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Cooking for a Cause: A Culinary Showdown to Combat Childhood Hunger

NORFOLK, VA | May 1, 2024 – The Foodbank is excited to announce Cooking for a Cause, a culinary competition in partnership with the Culinary Institute of Virginia, the College of Culinary Arts of ECPI University. This event will take place on Friday, May 3, at the Culinary Institute of Virginia located at 2428 Almeda Avenue in Norfolk. A timeline of events is below:

8:00 am – Students will be able to pick up their ingredients in the storeroom.
8:30 am – BackPack mystery item selection.
9:00 am – Cooking will begin once student teams have presented a description of their dish.
10:30 am – Window for submittal closes and final judging takes place.
11:00 am – Mia Lewis, Nutrition Manager from the Foodbank, will speak on the importance of the BackPack program while scores are tabulated.
11:15 am – Presentation of awards to participants and top three winning teams.

Five teams of aspiring chefs will compete to create healthy, affordable meals that include a protein, starch, and vegetable, along with a mystery ingredient provided by the Foodbank. The mystery ingredients are regular components of the BackPack Program, a nationally recognized initiative aimed at combating childhood hunger. Supported by Feeding America, the program provides nutritious, easy-to-prepare food to children who may not have access to adequate meals during weekends and school breaks.

Inspired by the popular Food Network show, Chopped, Cooking for a Cause challenges participants to craft a meal for a family of four within an $8 budget. This not only showcases the culinary skills of the contestants but also emphasizes the importance of budget-conscious meal planning, especially for families facing food insecurity. A panel of judges will evaluate each dish based on taste, presentation, creativity, and adherence to the budget.

“This event is not just about culinary prowess; it’s about raising awareness and finding creative solutions to combat childhood hunger,” said Maddie Cottrell, Foodbank Community Engagement Manager. “By incorporating BackPack ingredients into the competition, we aim to educate participants and the community about the versatility of these items and how they can be transformed into delicious, nutritious meals.”

Cooking for a Cause promises to be a morning filled with excitement, creativity, and, most importantly, a shared commitment to ending childhood hunger in our community.

About the Foodbank
Since 1981, the Foodbank of Southeastern Virginia and the Eastern Shore has proudly provided more than 380 million meals to our neighbors in need. We play a vital role in the fight against hunger by collecting, storing, and distributing food to our neighbors, while also working to address the root causes of hunger and food insecurity. This past year, we – alongside our neighbors – endured the impact of rising inflation, expiration of critical pandemic-era programs, and increased fuel and shipping costs. These hardships
intensified the demand for our services and for the first time, we distributed more than 21 million pounds of food. With the support of our dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and compassionate community members, we strive to exceed this ever-growing baseline goal each year, ensuring that no one in our community goes to bed hungry.