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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 20, 2008

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**C4YOURSELF ALLOWS RESIDENTS TO APPLY FOR FOOD STAMPS ONLINE**

*County Human Services Agency reminds residents of aid options available in tough economic times*

**MERCED** – The Merced County Human Services Agency wants to remind the public of the availability of food stamps to ensure that no family or child goes hungry. HSA is also announcing the availability of food stamp applications online, in the County's C4Yourself program. C4Yourself allows any County resident to apply for food stamps from a computer with internet access by visiting [www.c4yourself.com](http://www.c4yourself.com). All County librarians have been trained to assist patrons with this application, and the library branches have computer terminals available for use free of charge.

*"There is no lack of food in the Central Valley. We are blessed to be one of the world's top food producers," commented Ana Pagan, Director of the Human Services Agency. "But there are families and children in our community who do not have safe and reliable access to that food or the ability to pay for it. The federal Food Stamp program is designed to assist families in stretching their dollar and to ensure that our families and our children are well-fed with nutritional, safe food. I want to encourage any family or parent that is struggling with feeding their family or their children to contact our office, or go online to see if you are eligible for this assistance."*

The Federal Food Stamp program that is administered by HSA is a Department of Agriculture program designed to assist families in meeting their nutritional needs. HSA has partnered with local farmers markets and flea markets to allow local families to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables locally from area farmers and farms, as well as our local grocery stores.

Currently there are 34,937 individuals in Merced County benefiting from the security that Food Stamps provide for families. The California Food Policy Advocates estimates that there are more than 67,000 Merced County residents eligible to receive nutritional assistance with Food Stamps, meaning that more than 54% of those eligible are not currently enrolled in the program.

For more information on how to apply for Food Stamps or other assistance, please contact the Merced County Human Services Agency at 209-385-3000 or visit their website and apply online at [www.c4yourself.com](http://www.c4yourself.com)