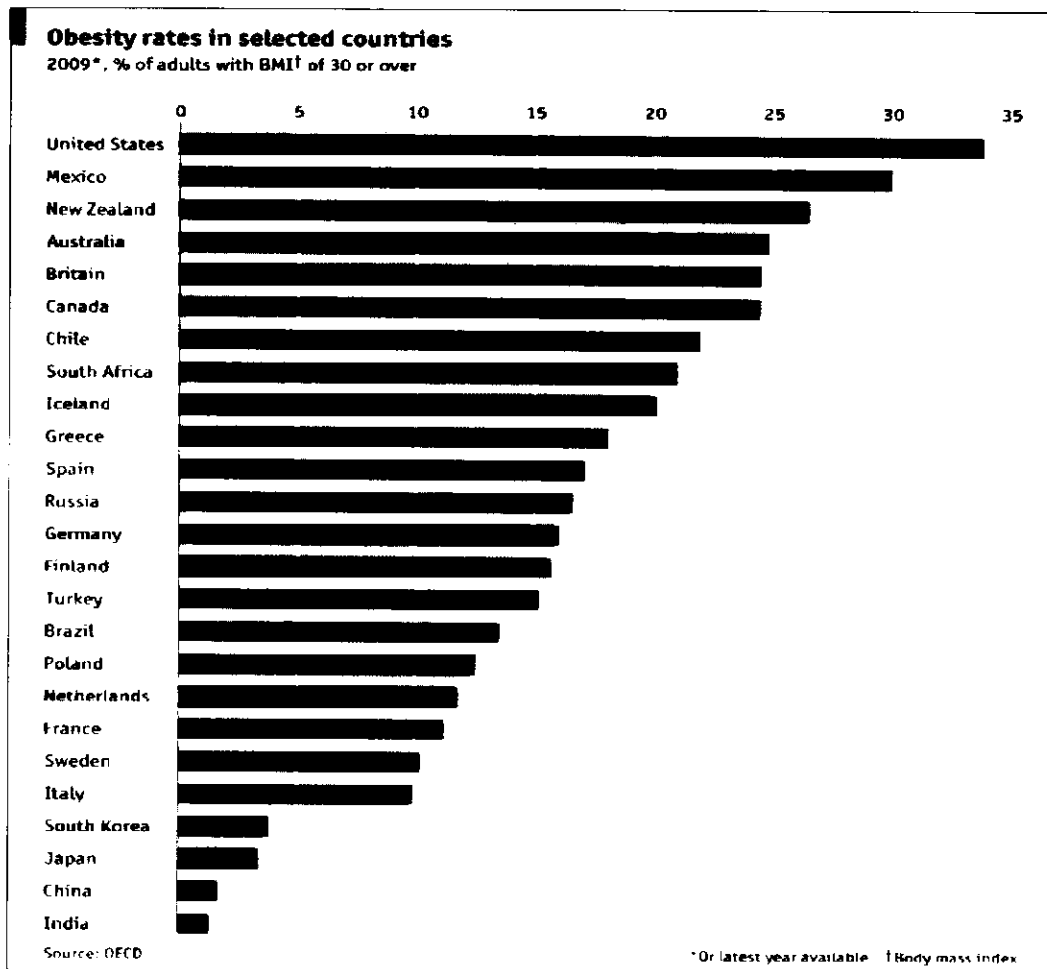


## Friends of South End Community Outreach Ministries (SECOM) Newsletter

December 6, 2010

Dear Friends,

With the holiday season upon us to begin, images of people, myself included, over eating come to mind. The US has the dubious distinction of having the greatest percentage of people that are obese. Almost 34% of the population is considered obese. It's one thing we lead the world in that isn't very flattering.



Here's another percentage. The number of people living with food insecurity in the US is 16.4%. It isn't a big surprise that so many people are obese while almost half as many are not certain that they will have enough to eat. We live in a world of 'haves' and 'have nots' and the US is no exception. (For more on widening income gap caused by the current recession, please see the attached AP article).

What is a little more surprising is that there is an overlap in these percentages. There are people that live with food insecurity and yet they are overweight. I wish I could quote you that number, haven't been able

to find it. I have a feeling that it would be a higher number than we expect. Anyone who knows where to find it please let me know.

Why the paradox of obesity and food insecurity? It's part human physiology, part human nature and part the deficiencies in the food delivery system.

Physiologically the human body stores calories for later use. The more food insecure a person is, the more they eat when there is an abundance and the more calories their body stores for when there is a shortage. Unfortunately those calories are stored as fat and in unhealthy places, like around the waist.

The human nature part is the tendency to be sedentary. This is especially true for people experiencing depression which often accompanies a life of poverty. Add in the lack of employment and there is little opportunity to use excess calories.

The deficiencies in the food delivery system are due in a large part to the lack of economies of scale that we have compared to large grocery chains. It takes a lot to acquire, store and distribute fresh produce. Our comparatively small size makes it an expensive item to supply. More often than we would like we bow to the pressure of satisfying people's caloric needs in an effort to keep them from going hungry.

For those who over eat this holiday season because they are the 'haves' and have abundance all year, they can be grateful. For those who over eat and are not obese, there is even more to be grateful for.

Thank you for understanding the complexity of the problems that people living with poverty experience and also for your efforts to change the system.

### **Wal Mart Fighting Hunger**

One way you can help to fight hunger locally is to vote for Grand Rapids/Wyoming to win \$1m from WalMart. The top vote getter will receive the grand prize and the next five will receive \$100,000. Here is the link to the website to vote: [www.walmart.com/fightinghunger](http://www.walmart.com/fightinghunger). You may need to have a Facebook account to vote, but that is easy to arrange if you don't already have one. Rumor has it that Grand Rapids is currently in the top 5 nationally. Your vote could help eliminate a lot of hunger locally.

### **Holiday Basket Update:**

Thank you to everyone that has stepped up for the Holiday Baskets. Between donations and Mildred putting baskets together from SECOM's shelves everyone that signed up for a Thanksgiving basket will receive one. We haven't covered the Christmas baskets yet, but we are getting there. If you still are looking for something to do this holiday, please let Mildred know how you would like to help.

Best Regards,

Robert Heys  
Development Director

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Please feel free to forward this email to anyone you think might be interested.

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