

LEGAL AID SOCIETY OF MIDDLE TENNESSEE AND THE CUMBERLANDS

Information for Release

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COOKEVILLE RADIO STATIONS AND LEGAL AID SOCIETY PARTNER TO LET STRUGGLING FAMILIES KNOW ABOUT FOOD ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

COOKEVILLE, Tenn. March 3, 2009 – The Legal Aid Society has partnered with radio station WGSQ, “The Country Giant,” to produce a public service announcement promoting the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). The PSAs, which will be aired on all Cookeville Communications radio stations in Cookeville, are part of a larger program to educate the public about SNAP, the new name for the federal Food Stamp Program.

“We want to get the word out to the recently unemployed, those who have had their hours cut back or families that can only find part time work,” said Alicia Stewart, a community educator with the Legal Aid Society in Cookeville. “In Tennessee, many more people qualify for the program than realize it.”

To record the voiceover for the PSA, Stewart enlisted the help of on-air personality Gator Harrison, whose show “Gator and the StyckMan” airs mornings on the Country Giant 94.7. The station was recently named the Country Music Association’s small market station of the year.

“There isn’t a more needed program in such a critical time,” said Harrison. “This is stimulus we can all get behind.”

The PSAs are now running on the four Cookeville Communications radio stations in Cookeville: The Country Giant FM 94.7, Magic 98.5 FM, AM 1400 WHUB and AM 780 WPTN. In addition to the radio spot, Harrison also recorded a voiceover for a television PSA.

According to statistics from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities in Washington, D.C., Tennessee ranks seventh in the nation in terms of unemployment and 37th in terms of participation in SNAP.

“The laws governing who can qualify for assistance changed last summer, making it a little easier to get much needed help,” said Stewart. “We believe that educating the public will be the key and radio is a great way to reach people. Cookeville Communications is performing a valuable public service by helping us get the word out, for which we are very grateful.”

Stewart added that participation in SNAP helps not only families that are struggling to make ends meet, but entire communities as the economic impact of the federal program is realized.

“A family that receives an extra \$300 a month to pay for food will be able to free up some other funds to pay for other necessities,” she said. “This affects local businesses, can help create jobs and create a significant boost to local economies.”

For more information about SNAP, contact the Legal Aid Society at 528-7436 or www.las.org, or apply at your local Department of Human Services.

The Legal Aid Society gives free civil legal aid to people who have nowhere else to turn. It serves 48 counties from offices in Clarksville, Columbia, Cookeville, Gallatin, Murfreesboro, Nashville, Oak Ridge, and Tullahoma. The Legal Aid Society is funded in part by United Way.

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