

12 years ago, as I prepared to give the keynote speech as philanthropist of the year at the RI annual Philanthropy Day Banquet, the thought came to me -

...What if I was to make a \$100,000 challenge – offering to match up to \$100,000 in donations to any RI non profit made over the next 30 days? And if more than \$100,000 was raised I would divide my \$100,000 up proportionately...

The results exceeded my wildest expectations. Over \$1 million was raised from that challenge of mine...

Then the thought came to me – supposing my charitable Foundation made a \$1 million challenge to anti-hunger agencies **nationwide**? How much could THAT raise for them, I wondered?...

So, a few months later, that's just what I did – offered a \$1 million challenge to all anti-hunger agencies nationwide, promising to match up to \$1 million donated to them in response to my challenge, and to divide that \$1 million up proportionately among the participating agencies should over \$1 million be raised.

Would it raise more than \$1 million, I wondered. Perhaps even \$4 or \$5 million...

To my amazement, it raised \$33 million!... Yes, \$33 million for over 1500 participating agencies...

I've made that challenge every March and April since. The money it has raised every spring beginning in 1998, has kept growing every year - over \$100 million in 2004, \$148 million last year and this year - **\$174 million...**

A total of **\$900 million** raised to date to help the hungry. The most successful grass roots effort of all times! All from just that light-bulb of an idea I had 12 years ago...

I've made provisions that our Foundation will continue this annual \$1 million challenge to fight hunger as long as its success continues. That and our school Jr. Scholar program are the best things we do. May they continue long after I'm gone.