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## **SMOLTZ'S STRIKE OUTS SCORE WINNING FUNDRAISING SEASON FOR THE FOOD BANK**

**ATLANTA (October 24, 2006)**—Monetary pledges and donations to help the hungry from John Smoltz's baseball fundraising campaign for the Atlanta Community Food Bank are at an all-time high even though baseball season ended early this year for the Atlanta Braves.

Each year, Smoltz personally pledges \$100 for each strike-out he achieves during the season as a part of an annual fundraising effort with the Food Bank titled *Strike Out Hunger*. This year's totals—which should have been affected by the Braves' early postseason exit—reached a whopping \$21,100 compared to last year's totals of \$16,900.

“We have surpassed our goal in pledges already!” said Holly Royston, marketing and promotions manager for the Food Bank. “Last year's totals went all the way through the holiday season, yet this year we've already had the best fundraising season in the program's history.”

Another successful facet of this year's *Strike Out Hunger* campaign includes the autograph sessions at Turner Field featuring Smoltz. The sessions allow supporters to bring any given item from home for Smoltz to personally autograph in exchange for 20 cans of food or \$20. The numbers are up for this aspect of the campaign too. This year's autograph sessions hosted by the Atlanta Braves Foundation yielded more than 10,000 pounds of food opposed to approximately 9,000 pounds garnered last year.

The third component of the *Strike Out Hunger* campaign involves special collector's items offered online by Smoltz at the Food Bank's website [ACFB.org](http://ACFB.org). Purchases of items--including autographed limited-edition photographs, baseballs, official Smoltz Braves Jerseys and gloves ranging from \$25 to \$1,250--have also sky-rocketed. “We are looking forward to an extra push in pledges from Smoltz and Braves fans for his collector's items as gifts for the holidays,” said Royston.

Collector's items will be available through the holiday season on the food bank's website, in ChopTalk Magazine, and by calling the *Strike Out Hunger* hotline 404-892-FEED, ext. 1246.

To date, Smoltz's efforts have raised more than \$300,000 since the campaign began in 1997 and more than 80,000 pounds of food to help those in need in North Georgia.

For almost a decade, Smoltz's commitment to fight hunger and support the food bank has furthered the organization's mission. It has also garnered him national recognition for his community service as the 2005 recipient of the prestigious Roberto Clemente award, an honor presented to a major league baseball player during the World Series for an individual who combines outstanding play on the field with devoted work in the community.

"The *Strike Out Hunger* program has provided a community awareness tool that supports the food bank's more than 800 nonprofit organizations, including after-school programs, food pantries, and soup kitchens," said Janice Reece, director of marketing and projects.

#### **ABOUT THE ATLANTA COMMUNITY FOOD BANK**

Founded in 1979, the Atlanta Community Food Bank annually distributes more than 23 million pounds of food to more than 800 community-based hunger-relief organizations in Metro Atlanta and North Georgia. In addition to food distribution, the Food Bank leads seven distinct community-building projects: *Atlanta's Table*, *Community Garden Initiative*, *Hunger 101*, *Hunger Walk/Run*, *Kids in Need*, *Product Rescue Center* and *The Atlanta Collaborative Kitchen (TACK)*. For more information about the Food Bank, call (404) 892-3333 or visit [www.ACFB.org](http://www.ACFB.org).

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