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**Gifts of Love's "Spring Campaign to End Hunger" Begins
Philanthropist Alan Shawn Feinstein Gives Away \$1 Million to Help in
Fight**

Avon - Alan Feinstein has money -- lots of it -- to give away to organizations that fight hunger.

And Avon's Gifts of Love, a place that helps meet the basic needs of individuals and families in Central Connecticut experiencing a financial crisis so that they can achieve and maintain self sufficiency, needs your help to get some of it. Gifts of Love assists over 10,000 people every year with food, clothes, energy assistance, furniture and more and, like so many other charities, with the increase in those looking for help, needs all the help it can get from you.

For 12 years, Feinstein, a Rhode Island philanthropist, has donated \$1 million annually to anti-hunger agencies through his nonprofit Feinstein Foundation. But he requires some participation on the agency's part.

Here's how it works: Charities like Gifts of Love across the country work to raise donations from March 1 to April 30 by letting donors know the money they raise will dictate how much they receive from the Feinstein challenge. At the end of the two months, the charities' efforts are calculated, and each gets a cut according to how much it raised and how many charities participated. In 2010, the foundation's gifts ranged from \$250 to \$40,000.

It's a simple concept that has had tremendous results. Last year, 1,700 organizations took part, raising \$197 million for the hungry. And since the foundation issued the first call a dozen years ago, 2,000-plus agencies have raised more than \$1 billion.

Gifts of Love is not your typical food pantry. "We are forming more collaboratives and developing relationships in an effort to provide our clients with healthy alternatives" says Diana Goode, Executive Director. "We are currently working with the Community Farm of Simsbury to grow, harvest and provide fresh fruits and vegetables. "Even in tough times, we need to provide healthy alternatives".

Although Gifts of Love recently received a grant to help provide fresh produce, the bulk of its operating budget comes from individual and business donations. And Feinstein hopes his challenge will pump up that volume. "I've been lucky to make money. So it seems only right to give a lot of it back to people who need help," says the 79-year-old, who answers the phone at his foundation's headquarters in Cranston, R.I.

A former schoolteacher, he made his fortune in publishing newsletters on economics and wealth, and selling collectibles. He says he wishes he had some elaborate back story as to why he chose hunger as one of his chief causes. But he doesn't. He just believes that no one should go to bed hungry at night, especially in a country as bountiful as America.

Feinstein's foundation, established in 1991, also encourages schoolchildren to get involved in charitable projects. So far, there are more than 160 "Feinstein Leadership Schools" in Rhode Island and Massachusetts that benefit financially from participating in programs that help their communities. Feinstein also provides scholarships to students.

He makes his \$1 million anti-hunger challenge simple to encourage involvement. "We've seen agencies increase their fundraising efforts by two to three times their usual returns from this initiative," he says. Gifts of Love is asking supporters to spread the word about the challenge, and the added value of March and April donations, through e-mail, social media networks, the workplace and churches.

There's no denying the challenges Gifts of Love is facing. The number of clients is growing and the donations are getting smaller. Finding the \$1 million Feinstein challenge was a "huge blessing and opportunity for us," Goode says.

Donations can be sent to Gifts of Love, P.O. Box 463, Avon CT or made on-line at giftsoflovect.org. Any questions can be directed to 860-676-2323