Dear Flathead Food Bank Supporters in Northwest Montana,

I would like to invite you to participate in the disCONNECT to reCONNECT Challenge! **What is disCONNECT to reCONNECT Challenge all about?** It’s simple - disCONNECT from your screens on the weekend of your choosing from Friday at 5:00 PM to Sunday, at 5:00 PM and spend the weekend reCONNECTing!

I love this quote by Albert Einstein! "It has become appallingy obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity.” Anymore, most of us are connected to all things electric: cell phones, iPhones, iPods, Facebook, TV, Wii, Xbox, and the list goes on. The disCONNECT to reCONNECT Challenge is to unplug and “detox” ourselves from electrical outlets/devices everywhere and to reconnect with yourself, your family, your friends, your community and the world around you.

At the same time I am also asking you to CONNECT to the purpose of Flathead Food Bank – to provide emergency food to individuals and families who are dealing with difficult life circumstances that limit their ability to obtain food - by raising funds through sponsorships.

**Where do the funds raised go?** 100% of each dollar raised will go to purchase food for the hungry in the Flathead Valley.

**Why should you even consider disconnecting from the grid of information, communication and entertainment?** The purpose isn’t some kind of self-inflicted punishment. It’s a purposeful, intentional way to say “no” to possible interruptions and time-wasters that can be present on these devices and to say “yes” to perhaps more important things. Things like . . . I know you already have the answer!
A Harvard Business Review study found in the long run, that an always-on, always-connected mentality drains us and eventually makes us less productive and unhappy.

I may sound like my parents, but I remember when I was a kid there were only three TV stations and the broadcasts were in black and white until I was in middle-school. Video games, movie videos, personal computers, cell phones, etc. were simply unheard of back then. I barely knew what a computer was except that it helped us land on the moon. If you didn’t want to be bored, you went outside and played with other kids. When the weather was bad or at night a lot of us read books or played games with our families. You did what humans evolved to do – interact socially. Ah, those were the good old days!

The truth is, change isn’t innately good or bad, but it can be bad if it takes over our lives and causes direct or indirect results that might not benefit our lives or the lives of those around us.

**Take This Simple Test:** Ask yourself . . .

- Do you check your phone before you get out of bed in the morning?
- Do you compulsively check your phone during the day?
- Are you in front of a “screen” or do you wear an earbud or headphones more often than not?
- Are electronics always “on” in your life? Are you always listening for the TV, the music, the tone signaling a new message or update, or . . .
- Do you send and receive emails and text messages during meals, while socializing, or during exercise?
- Do you get anxious, depressed or apprehensive when you are disconnected, don’t have service, or your battery goes dead and there is no plug outlet or charging station?
- Do you panic if you can’t find your phone?
- Is your technology always within arm’s reach every moment of the day?
- Is checking your phone the last thing you do before you go to bed at night?

If you answered ‘yes’ to some or most or all these questions, you may be addicted to your technology! This possible addiction may not be doing you any favors in your personal, emotional, social, physical, spiritual or professional lives. Do you ever wonder what the real impact of always being CONNECTED is and what the intentional benefits could be of disCONNECTING (from time-to-time) to reCONNECT?

**How do I take part in disCONNECT to reCONNECT?** It’s easy!

**Step 1** – Sign up for the disCONNECT to reCONNECT Challenge/Campaign! **You can do this as an individual, a family, a company, or an organization.** Set a date for the Challenge, and then register your campaign by filling out the registration form and faxing it to: 406-756-2572, or emailing it to Flathead Food Bank at: bob@flatheadfoodbank.com. If you are a company or organization, assign a Challenge Captain who will manage all aspects/support documents of the Campaign for you.
**Step 2** – Make copies of support documents: (Note: Once your Challenge is registered with Flathead Food Bank, we will send you or your Challenge Captain PDF’s of all support documents.)

- disCONNECT to reCONNECT Registration
- Copy of this letter for participants
- disCONNECT to reCONNECT Participant & Sponsor Donation Report
- disCONNECT to reCONNECT Participant/Company/Organization Challenge Report

**Step 3** – Gather sponsors. Tell your family, friends, co-workers and community that you’re taking part in the disCONNECT to reCONNECT weekend challenge. Encourage sponsors to support you in this challenge by making a financial donation per hour, per day, or outright for your participation – and nominate, encourage them to participate in the challenge as well. Yes, donations are tax deductible!

**Step 4** – DisCONNECT on schedule. When the clock strikes 5:00 PM on the Friday of your campaign, switch off your devices, committing not to turn them back on until Sunday at 5:00 PM! You can do it! (Some individuals, companies and organizations are expanding the DisCONNECT to a week!)

**Step 5** – ReCONNECT after 5:00 PM on Sunday, or not! When you reCONNECT remember what you learned about taking a technology break. You may have experienced benefits such as:

- You escaped distractions, interruptions and technology overload – taking a break from the pressures of responding to emails, electronic notices or calls.
- You found time to focus on yourself, to be “in” and “see” the world, to create, to be healthy, to serve, to read, to pursue activities and hobbies you enjoy. You . . . daydreamed!
- You had face-to-face time to focus and be “with” your spouse, children, friends and family – engaging in meaningful conversations and discussions, creating deeper connections. You set a good example for the people, children around you.
- You built, reactivated communication skills - There's only so much of a connection you can make with people over digital correspondence. Talk together face-to-face and nothing you say will get lost in translation.
- You took time for reflection, contemplate, meditation, and to rediscover spiritual consciousness and “peace-of-mind”.

**Step 6** – Begin processing results on the report sheets. Collect pledges and donations. Submit all documents and funds to Flathead Food Bank or we can schedule a photo opportunity to accept your contribution!

**Step 7** – Using whichever medium you choose, tell Flathead Food Bank and others about your disCONNECT to reCONNECT Challenge story, to raise awareness of the challenge, to share the impact of the challenge on you and/or your company or organization, to
encourage others to join the challenge, and to celebrate the financial contribution you made to Flathead Food Bank – empowering them to feed the hungry in our community.

If you would like to do more to support Flathead Food Bank:

➢ Consider donating food items to our pantry!
➢ Volunteer! We always need volunteers, whether for one time or on a regular schedule to assist with the preparation work for and the operation of the food pantry, Senior Commodities, the BackPack program, and so much more! Call and we’ll find a place just for you!
➢ Organize a food drive! (We can help you with creative ideas!)
➢ Take a tour of Flathead Food Bank or allow us to come to you and provide your organization with a tour of our portable pantry! Yes, both tours will include the impactful stories of those we serve.

Thank you for your interest in being a part of the disCONNECT to reCONNECT challenge! If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert A. Helder
Director of Development & Community Relations