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## East St. Louis kids take trip to 'Sesame Street'

BY CAROLYN P. SMITH  
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To show that hunger can strike any family anywhere at anytime, the PBS children's TV show "Sesame Street" launched a new character who had to go to the food pantry to get something to eat because her family could not afford to buy groceries.

The character, Lily, tells the kids it is cool to talk about hunger and being hungry. The character says that unless you open your mouth no one will know.

Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood House joined with "Sesame Street" and Walmart on Friday in hosting a screening dealing with hunger in America.

A new "Sesame Street" special featuring the new character is called "Growing Hope Against Hunger."

Country music star Brad Paisley and his wife, Kimberly Williams Paisley, and the Sesame Street Muppets sing songs about hunger, using a community garden to produce healthy foods that make children grown big and strong.

Audre Young, deputy director of the Lessie Bates Neighborhood House, said hunger is a problem nationally and locally. Young said Lessie Bates' food pantry serves about 2,000 families.

"It's alarming," Young said.

"Hunger is one of those quiet tragedies, but we can do something about it. This country is too rich in resources and talent for Americans to be hungry," Young said. Contact reporter Carolyn P. Smith at 239-2503.

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