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**RED NOSE DAY FUND SUPPORTS SECOND HARVEST BACKPACK PROGRAM**

**ERIE, Pa., December 15** --- Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania received a \$10,000 grant from the Red Nose Day Fund Child Hunger Grant to support the Backpack Program at Springfield Elementary in East Springfield. With support from the Red Nose Day Fund, the Backpack Program will serve 72 children per week for 32 weeks, providing a total of 13,824 meals and 4,608 snacks during the 2015-16 school year.

“We are so grateful for the Red Nose Day Fund contribution to Second Harvest’s Backpack Program” said Karen Seggi, executive director of the Second Harvest Food Bank. “This grant will help to ensure students are focused more on their schoolwork and less on the worry of where their next meal will come from.”

Red Nose Day is a fundraising campaign by the nonprofit Comic Relief to raise money for children and young people living in poverty. A 30-year tradition in Europe, the first Red Nose Day in the US was on May 21, 2015.

In the 11 counties served by the Food Bank, approximately one out of every four people receive food from the Second Harvest Food Bank network each year. Of the 167,700 individuals served annually, approximately 48,600 are children under the age of 18. For many children, lunch in school on Friday is their last meal until breakfast in school on Monday. The Backpack Program addresses this program by providing children in poverty with nutritious, child-friendly food necessary for overall growth, physical and cognitive development and satisfactory performance in school. Backpacks are discreetly distributed to participating children at school on Fridays to help tide them over the weekend.

Second Harvest operates 30 of the more than 2,200 Backpack sites throughout the United States. In the 2015-2016 academic year, Second Harvest will distribute weekend backpacks to 2,028 children within eight school districts in five counties of northwest Pennsylvania. In total, Second Harvest anticipates distributing nearly 65,000 backpacks in the 2015-2016 academic year.

***About the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania***

*The mission of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania is to provide food to those in need within 11 counties of northwest Pennsylvania while creating awareness and educating the community on the realities of hunger. Last year, Second Harvest distributed nearly 13 million pounds of food to 298 member agencies, and 144 distribution sites for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program for low-income seniors. Second Harvest serves the following 11 counties in northwest Pennsylvania: Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Venango and Warren.*

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