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Meals Made Easy Participants to Receive Donated Plants at Next Class

ERIE, Pa., May 23, 2016 --- Erie, PA – Participants of the Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania Meals Made Easy cooking program will receive a donation of potted vegetable plants courtesy of Stan’s Garden Center. Each client will receive either tomato, pepper or zucchini plants in addition to the food they would normally receive through the class. A Master Gardener from Penn State will also present a short talk on how to care for and get the most out of the vegetable plants.

In total, Stan’s Garden Center plans to donate nearly 900 plants for low-income recipients. “We couldn’t think of a more appropriate way of getting fresh food to those in the community who need it most,” said Jim Skarzenski, owner of Stan’s Garden Center. “Serving the community is at the core of who we are, and helping those that are hungry to grow their own food at home is a natural fit to what we do.”

The Meals Made Easy Program is aimed at low-income parents and guardians, but is also open to other low-income adults. Participants learn nutrition education and hands-on cooking lessons from a Penn State Extension Office representative. At the end of each session, clients receive a bag of food which is filled with products needed to make the meal that that was created in that day’s class. In addition, by attending all five weeks of courses, participants can earn a \$20 gift card to a local grocery store.

“We are so grateful for Stan’s Garden Center and the Penn State Extension Office for sharing our belief that all people should have access to nutritious food,” said Karen Seggi, executive director of Second Harvest. “With their help, we continue to promote healthier lifestyle and eating habits by preparing meals with fresh produce.”

Since the inception of the Meals Made Easy program in March of 2015, Second Harvest has held seven sessions of five classes each which are held in partnership with Member Agencies that can provide a kitchen. A total of 50 students have participated in at least three classes within their session. The Meals Made Easy program is funded by donations and grants to Second Harvest.

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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.