

The Bread Box

Spring 2021 Newsletter

"I was shocked by the amount of food I received. What a blessing to be able to take home chicken, pork, vegetables, fruit and milk."

-Richelle, Mobile Pantry Recipient

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Second Harvest

Food Bank
of Northwest Pennsylvania

MEMBER OF
FEEDING AMERICA



Perspective

For many of us, the idea of coming home from work or school to bare cupboards would have been hard to imagine. But due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, worries of when or how a meal will be provided are commonplace in more households than ever before. These worries are about more than just having enough food to put on the table.

"I don't want my kids to see that we're struggling," said Richelle, a pre-school teacher and mom of two. Like any parent, Richelle doesn't want her children to have to worry about whether or not there will be enough food for dinner each night. That's why she was so relieved to find a mobile pantry distribution near her.

"This helps so much," Richelle remarked. "I was shocked by the amount of food I received. What a blessing to be able to take home chicken, pork, vegetables, fruit and milk."

Everything we do at Second Harvest is done with families like Richelle's in mind. When you conduct a food drive for Second Harvest, volunteer at a Produce Express mobile distribution in the pouring rain or bitter cold, mail in a monetary donation or give a gift online, you are helping to ensure that our neighbors facing difficult times have enough to eat.

Providing fresh, nutritious food and shelf-stable pantry staples is about so much more than stocking up bare cupboards or filling an empty bowl. Hunger has an impact on both the mental and physical health of people of all ages. Learning difficulties, headaches, fatigue and other long-lasting problems can result from an inadequate supply of food.

Fortunately, hunger also has a cure. A warm meal means comfort for children adjusting to a new school schedule, a moment of relaxation for furloughed employees looking for new work and less stress for seniors who are self-isolating due to underlying health issues.

Second Harvest has been blessed by the support of caring people throughout northwest Pennsylvania during this time of increased need. It is only because of our generous food donors, financial supporters and volunteers that we can continue to provide food and other necessities to our neighbors facing hunger. Thank you very much for your support of our mission and belief that our work is important.

Gratefully,



Karen S. Seggi
Chief Executive Officer



P.S. Do you know someone in need of food?

Leave a message on our food helpline at (814) 459-3663 x 117. An agency relations representative will reach back to you with information on resources near you.

COVID-19 Pandemic: Our Response



Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania has been providing an essential human service to those in need of food since 1982. Thirty-eight years later, our work became even more essential when a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic impacted our global community. Thanks to the overwhelming support of our donors, staff and member organizations, Second Harvest has been able to alleviate the issue of hunger that affected so many of our neighbors for the first time.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Second Harvest focused on these three priorities:

1. Providing food to our anti-hunger network of 395 member agencies and distribution partners.
2. Modifying our distributions to follow social distancing and safety protocols outlined by the Centers for Disease Control and the Pennsylvania Department of Health.
3. Working with school districts throughout our service area to continue child feeding programs, ensuring that families have food regardless of whether classes are virtual or in person.

Thanks to these priorities and the generous support from our many partners, since the beginning of the pandemic, Second Harvest has been able to:

1. Distribute 11,975,364 pounds of emergency relief food to 68,996 unique households.
2. Provide 783,848 meals through no-touch, drive-thru Produce Express & Military Share distributions throughout our 11-county service area.
3. Distribute 1,112,753 pounds of food in July 2020, the most of any July on record.
4. Increase our distribution by nearly 10% (over 880,000 pounds) percent compared to FY 2019-2020.

Second Harvest will continue to focus our efforts on providing food to those most at risk in our service area and we are thankful for your continued support of our work.

Gratitude

Partners Strengthening Our Pandemic Response Efforts

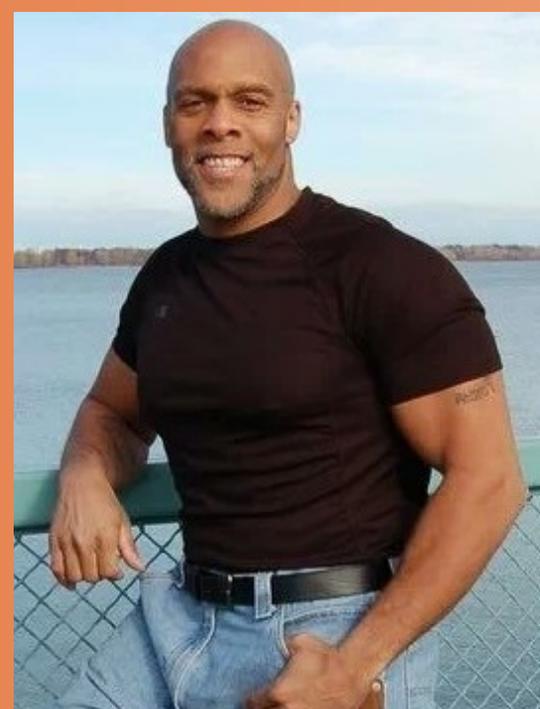
In response to the increased need for food assistance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the United States Department of Agriculture announced the first round of the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) on April 17, 2020. Through this temporary food assistance program, Second Harvest received an increase of perishable food items such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, eggs, frozen meats and fresh dairy products.

Without proper storage for perishable food items, many feeding organizations would be unable to provide these nutritious food items to their clients in need of food assistance. To ensure that these food items were made available to as many of our food-insecure neighbors as possible, Second Harvest used funding from the TEFAP Cares Act Non-Food Grant to supply our member agencies with either commercial or residential freezers and refrigerators. A total of 32 agencies benefitted from this grant, including Community of Caring who is celebrating 35 years of serving our neighbors in need.

"Thank you, Second Harvest, for providing a freezer and refrigerator to us. They give our food pantry the ability to have fresh fruits and vegetables on hand. In the past, we did not have space to store these nutritious food items," noted Katrina Hall, Executive Director of Community of Caring. "These items have been a great help in serving our clients in the community."

Second Harvest is thankful to the USDA for the items received through CFAP as well as to the agencies that partnered with us to ensure that these food items were able to be distributed throughout northwest Pennsylvania during this time of increased need. It is only through our many community partners that we were able to conduct such a successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic in our region. Thank you for your partnership and for your belief that our work to alleviate hunger is important.





Agency Spotlight:

Climate Changers, One of Second Harvest's Newest Member Agencies

Due to the additional need for food assistance caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Second Harvest made it a priority to onboard additional organizations to partner in our mission of alleviating hunger throughout northwest Pennsylvania. One of our newest member agencies is Climate Changers, run by Erie native, Fred Williams.

Fred is a man of action. His Total Change Program has been nationally recognized. Fred implemented and facilitates this program out of an intense desire to help reduce recidivism in our community, helping to solve the most critical issues facing ex-offenders when they are back in society.

"We fight a mentality," Fred states, "We address everything, including hunger and homelessness."

Fred is grateful to partner with Second Harvest in providing his clients with their most basic needs. Located in the heart of the city of Erie, the number one rule at Climate Changers is that no one leaves without receiving the assistance they need. Since the beginning of our partnership with Climate Changers in November of 2020, more than 50,000 meals have been distributed to our neighbors facing hunger. Food items provided by Second Harvest through Climate Changers include bread, dairy products, fresh produce, soup, pasta, ready-to-eat meals and entrees, canned fruits and vegetables, meat, fish, poultry, non-meat proteins, grains and rice.

As the only food bank in northwest Pennsylvania, Second Harvest is thankful for dedicated individuals like Fred who share our vision of a hunger-free society and who make our work throughout the region possible. Thank you, Fred and Climate Changers, for partnering with Second Harvest during this time of increased need throughout our community!

Second Harvest Staff Expansion

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania is the largest nonprofit food distribution organization and only food bank in the region. By working daily with all levels of the food industry, Second Harvest has been distributing food and other necessities to an anti-hunger network of member agencies and distribution partners that directly serve people facing hunger in 11 counties for nearly four decades.

Second Harvest is proud to consistently operate with an efficient, lean staff in order to invest its resources to better serve people facing difficult circumstances in northwest Pennsylvania. Second Harvest recently grew to a staff of 33 dedicated employees as it began expanding its services.



"My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style." - Maya Angelou

Second Harvest welcomed Gabriela Kellogg as our newest SNAP Outreach Coordinator. Gabriela has a diverse background with experience working at Bethesda Children's Home, the Erie School District and the Erie County Assistance office. As SNAP Outreach Coordinator, Gabriela provides information about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) along with application assistance to families in need throughout northwest Pennsylvania. This position has become even more vital to Second Harvest's mission due to the COVID-19 pandemic as many more families are in need of food assistance.



"I am happy to be able to give back to my community in addition to combining my passions of working with children and making a difference while supporting the Second Harvest mission of providing food to those in need."

Michelle Schrimper joined the Second Harvest team as the School Programs Coordinator. An Erie native and graduate of Mercyhurst University, Michelle's background in event management and customer service leads her focus on building new partnerships and strengthening Second Harvest's school programs. These 67 current programs consist of the BackPack Program and School Pantries throughout northwest Pennsylvania. As each school district decides how best to move forward with the 2020-2021 academic year amidst the pandemic, Michelle is dedicated to ensuring that children still have access to the food they need for a healthy life.



"For the community to be well, the individual must be well nutritionally, physically, and emotionally."

Healthy Pantry Nutrition Specialist David Godoy joined the Second Harvest team thanks to the Pennsylvania Healthy Pantry Initiative grant. David works to promote and implement the Healthy Pantry Initiative in our service area by educating area pantries on the necessity of nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices. Encouraging proper nutrition has become even more vital as the COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of a community's overall health.

Second Harvest staff members are looking forward to the new opportunities available to the expanded team and confident that these changes will result in better service and provision for our neighbors facing difficult times.

Community Partner Spotlight:

Giant Eagle Supporting Local Food Banks

According to Feeding America's most recent Map the Meal Gap Study, more than 85,000 individuals in northwest Pennsylvania don't know where they will get their next meal. In addition to those 85,000 individuals living in food insecurity, Second Harvest witnessed an increased level of need this past year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning even more of our neighbors were living without access to an adequate supply of nutritious food.

In order to support food banks in alleviating this increased need, Giant Eagle partnered with Feeding America and local food banks. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, local Giant Eagle and GetGo locations have been inviting customers throughout Second Harvest's 11-county service area to help their neighbors in need by donating at registers and fuel pumps. There is even an option for shoppers to donate through Giant Eagle's no-contact curbside pickup and delivery services. All donations made in our service area come directly to Second Harvest and Giant Eagle plans to match contributions up to \$250,000.

To date this campaign has raised \$140,851 throughout northwest Pennsylvania, helping Second Harvest to distribute nearly 850,000 meals throughout our anti-hunger network. Nationwide, more than 32 million meals were made available to those in need by donations made through this campaign.

"We are so thankful for the generosity that has been shown throughout these uncertain times," said Karen Seggi, Second Harvest CEO. "Our local Giant Eagle and GetGo locations have made such an impact by supporting our mission throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to sincerely thank Giant Eagle, their staff and their customers for making a difference in the lives of people who found themselves without enough to eat during this crisis."



Staff of Yorktown Plaza Giant Eagle- Erie, PA

Second Harvest Food Rescue Program



According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, more food reaches landfills than any other material in everyday trash. In 2020, 76 billion pounds of food was discarded, accounting for 22% of total generated waste. Beyond our primary mission of providing food to our neighbors facing hunger, Second Harvest believes that our work is also important to help sustain our environment. Every day, we commit to reducing food waste by working with manufacturing, retail and agricultural partners to divert safe, edible food from landfills and provide it to people in need.

Grocery and convenience stores have strict, quality guidelines that dictate how long perishable items such as bread rolls, hot dog buns, pretzel rolls, English muffins, croissants, cereal, snacks, cookies, milk and cheese can be in display cases. In 2020, Second Harvest worked with 120 retail partners as a part of our Food Rescue Program to rescue these food items from the waste stream.

Together, Second Harvest and our partners rescued over 2.5 million pounds of food in 2020. Diverting these food items from landfills resulted in the provision of over 2 million meals to our neighbors facing hunger.

If you are a grocery store, convenience store or restaurant interested in partnering with Second Harvest through our Food Rescue Program, please contact Celeste MaKay at cmakay@nwpafoodbank.org or 814-459-3663 x122.



Get Involved

At Second Harvest we realize how important it has become to get create in how we can safely collaborate with others. In this time of uncertainty, virtual food drives and fundraisers have become a lifeline for many food banks. Virtual food drives limit the need to congregate, collect, store and transfer physical food. To create your online holiday food drive or fundraiser, visit nwpafoodbank.fenly.org and follow these three easy steps:

- **Create a Fundraising Page:** The first step is to decide which is best for your fundraising needs and to create a user account. Choose either individual fundraiser, team fundraiser or virtual food drive.
- **Customize Your Page:** After you select the type of campaign you want, it's time to maximize your donations by customizing your page. Share why you chose to fundraise for Second Harvest, upload a featured image and set your fundraising goal. The built-in Goal Meter will let you easy see how close you are to your goal!
- **Share Your Fundraiser:** Let's get some donations! Email your fundraising page to family and friends, link to your fundraiser on your social media accounts or ask your coworkers to participate. Donations are easy for your supporters to make and every dollar donated will provide six meals to our neighbors in need this holiday season.

Thank you for taking the time to create a virtual fundraiser! If you need help getting started or have any questions, please contact Volunteer & Special Events Coordinator, Andrea Velez, at avelez@nwpafoodbank.org or 814-459-3663 x 113.