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Longtime Leader of Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania Set to Retire

April 29, 2024 – The Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest Pennsylvania Board of Directors announced today that Karen S. Seggi, Chief Executive Officer of northwest Pennsylvania’s only food bank, will retire in February of 2025.

Current Board President, Doug Starr, shared, “Karen's commitment to Second Harvest and the community it serves cannot be overstated. Her passion and commitment are as strong today as it was when she first started working at the food bank 34 years ago. She has been a true advocate for our neighbors in need and we are grateful for all her hard work.”

The Board will begin a national search for a new Chief Executive Officer in May with plans to have a new CEO in place by February of 2025. When asked, Seggi said, “I am leaving Second Harvest poised for a successful future. There is more work to be done to help those who are food insecure, and I am confident that the organization will continue to grow under new leadership.”

Karen was hired at Second Harvest as an accountant in 1990 and became Chief Executive Officer of the 11-county area food bank in 2001. At that time, Second Harvest had 270 member agencies, 16 employees, collected \$399,603 in donations, and distributed 7.3 million pounds of food. At retirement, Seggi has grown the food bank to include 376 member agencies, 45 employees, has raised more than \$3.3 million this year, and is on track to distribute 13 million pounds of food. Under her leadership, Second Harvest was able to increase its annual charitable giving by 888%. Seggi also increased the organization’s endowment by 518%.

During her tenure, Second Harvest became the lead agency for TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) in all its eleven counties and became the lead agency for the State Food Purchase Program in Clarion, Jefferson, McKean, Forest, and Erie counties. In 2008, Seggi was also able to conduct a \$3.5 million capital campaign which helped move the organization from its 29,000 square foot warehouse on Ash Street, in Erie, to its current 60,000 square foot warehouse located on Grimm Drive.

Mary Weber, Distribution Manager for Edinboro Food pantry, a member agency for Second Harvest’s for more than 30 years said of Seggi, “What a fantastic job she has done. She has been quite amazing. We can always count on Karen to come through for our little food pantry, and she comes through for the community all the time.”

Other notable accomplishments include the creation of Second Harvest’s SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) outreach program, backpack and school pantry programs, the Senior Box Program, the Healthy Pantry

Initiative, the Produce Express and Military Share mobile distribution food programs, the Order Ahead system, a partnership with Door Dash, the Jim Renshaw orchard, and the development of a warehouse bar coding system that will make operations more efficient. Also established by Seggi are Feeding America's food rescue program utilizing the computer system, MealConnect, and the organization's newest initiative, Service Insights, which will enable Second Harvest to learn more about our neighbors and how to better serve them.

Former Board member, Robert Crowley, of Warren, shared, "I am Impressed that Second Harvest Food Bank has received a 4-star rating from Charity Navigator, the nation's top non-profit watchdog, for close to 20 years. Only 1% of all nonprofits ranked nationwide receive this honor. I attribute this accomplishment to Karen's leadership, strategic thinking, and adaptability."

In service to her community, Seggi was a founding member and current treasurer of the statewide association, Feeding Pennsylvania, served as President of Hunger Free PA, and leader of the Emergency Food and Shelter Board in Erie County. She recently finished two terms as a member of the Fort LeBoeuf School Board. Karen is a basketball referee for the PIAA District 10 Basketball Chapter, where she served as Treasurer and notably officiated a state championship game in Hershey last month.

"With the help of our talented staff, generous donors, dedicated board, and committed volunteers, we have been able to feed millions of our neighbors in need throughout northwest Pennsylvania throughout my time at Second Harvest. For that, I will always be proud and humbled," shared Seggi.

After retirement, Karen will remain available to help with the transition of the new CEO and is looking forward to spending more time on Lake Erie with her husband, Eric, and her two adult children.

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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 over 11.5 million pounds of food through an anti-hunger network of 376 partner organizations. Second Harvest serves the following 11 counties in northwest Pennsylvania: Cameron, Clarion, Clearfield, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, McKean, Venango and Warren.