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SECOND HARVEST LAUNCHES HOLIDAY DRIVE AS HIGH COST OF SILICON VALLEY HOUSING LEAVES FAMILIES WITHOUT ENOUGH FOOD

More people rely on Second Harvest now than at the height of the recession

Highlights:

- Largest holiday food and fund drive in the nation set to raise \$16 million and 1.5 million pounds of food to ensure healthy meals for anyone in need
- Partnering with more than 320 nonprofit agencies at more than 850 sites throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, Second Harvest feeds more than 252,000 people every month, half of which are children and seniors
- Despite an environment of divisiveness in our country, Second Harvest's mission to feed families in need is a unifier of people from all walks of life
- Individuals, corporations, and organizations can help by donating money or food. For more information, visit SHFB.org or call 866-234-3663

SAN JOSE, Calif., November 14, 2016 – The holidays are just around the corner, and that means twinkling lights, warm cheer, festive gatherings, and an overabundance of food for many local families. But others will struggle to put food on the table as the high cost of housing leaves little left over for groceries. To help feed hungry families during the holidays – and all year long – Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties is kicking off the largest Holiday Food and Fund Drive in the nation.

Second Harvest needs to raise \$16 million and 1.5 million pounds of food during the holiday season to ensure that anyone who needs a healthy meal can get one. The Food Bank raises nearly half its revenue during the holiday campaign, which ends in January.

“We’re concerned that with the booming economy, the community won’t realize that Second Harvest is feeding record numbers of people,” said Kathy Jackson, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. “During the recession, everyone knew someone who had lost their job or been hurt by the downturn in some way. People understood that the need was high. But the reality is Second Harvest is providing food to more people than we did at the height of the recession.”

More than 252,000 people rely on Second Harvest for food every month, and more than half of those are children and seniors. In fact, the number of people the Food Bank serves has continued to increase nearly every year since the recession ended.

“Hunger and malnutrition are pervasive in Silicon Valley,” Jackson said. “Rents have skyrocketed in the last five years, forcing many families to crowd into cramped apartments, live in unconventional spaces like garages and sheds, and go without basic necessities like food.”

The average monthly rent for an apartment is nearly \$2,998 in Santa Clara County and nearly \$3,058 in San Mateo County – a nearly 47% increase in Santa Clara County and a 57% increase in San Mateo County in just the last five years. An annual income of \$54,000 is needed to afford a studio apartment in Silicon Valley and more than \$111,000 to pay for a two-bedroom.

“This is a critical campaign for Second Harvest because we rely on the generosity of the community to ensure that everyone has access to food,” Jackson said. “Getting enough nutritious food to eat is crucial for kids to do well in school, adults to perform at work, and seniors to stay strong and independent. Hunger is not only a symptom of poverty, it’s a perpetuator because if you don’t get the nutrients you need, it’s hard to get ahead.”

Second Harvest is increasing the amount of wholesome food it provides like whole grains and lean protein items, and reducing the amount of unhealthy items like high-sugar foods and drinks. More than half the food Second Harvest provides is fresh produce.

Second Harvest partners with more than 320 nonprofit agencies to provide food at more than 850 sites throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties – including schools, pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and senior centers – so that everyone has access to the food they need to thrive right in their own neighborhood. It is one of only a few food banks in the nation that does not charge its partners for the food it provides, so it depends on donations. Second Harvest provides the equivalent of more than one million meals worth of food every week, including more fresh produce than any food bank in the country.

In the over 40 years it has assisted people in local communities, Second Harvest’s mission to ensure a meal for anyone who needs it has also served to unify people from all walks of life. “During a time when we are all inundated with so many divisive messages, Second Harvest is working around the clock to bring people together to do something completely non-controversial and urgent – ensure that those who need food have access to it,” said Loren Mahon, vice president of finance systems, Oracle Corporation, and chair of Second Harvest Food Bank.

Individuals, corporations, and organizations can help to ensure that anyone who needs a healthy meal can get one by donating to Second Harvest Food Bank or hosting a food and fund drive this holiday

season. To support the campaign, visit SHFB.org or call 866-234-3663. Anyone who needs food should call Second Harvest's multilingual Food Connection hotline at 800-984-3663.

Based in Silicon Valley, Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties is one of the largest food banks in the nation. Currently providing food to more than one quarter of a million people every month, Second Harvest is a trusted community-based organization that was founded in 1974. Despite the immense wealth in Silicon Valley, and partly due to the high cost of living, hunger and malnutrition are pervasive. The Food Bank distributes nutritious food, including more fresh produce than any other food bank in the country, through a network of more than 320 nonprofit partners at more than 850 sites. Second Harvest is pursuing innovative efforts to increase access to food resources as it seeks to feed an additional 100,000 hungry people each month. To reach more people, it connects those in need to federal nutrition programs and other food resources. To learn more about how Second Harvest is building a hunger-free community, visit SHFB.org.

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