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**SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK LAUNCHES HOLIDAY DRIVE
AS MORE PEOPLE RELY ON THE FOOD BANK THAN EVER BEFORE**

‘With so much happening in the world right now...
local hunger is a problem you can actually do something about’

Highlights:

- Largest holiday food and fund drive in the nation set to raise \$16.5 million and \$1 million pounds of food to ensure healthy meals for anyone in need.
- Partnering with 300 nonprofit agencies at more than 900 sites throughout Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, Second Harvest feeds an average of more than 257,000 people every month – more than ever before!
- At a time when there is so much divisiveness in our country, ending local hunger is something we can all do together.
- 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., October 24, 2017 – For many, the holidays are a time for festive gatherings, family traditions and an overabundance of food. But for a growing number of families in Silicon Valley, the holidays are yet another time when there won’t be enough nutritious food to eat. Despite the enormous wealth in the center of technology and innovation, the stark reality is more people rely on Second Harvest for food today than ever before – an average of more than 257,000 every month. Second Harvest is launching its holiday campaign on the heels of obtaining new data that shows hunger is far more pervasive in Silicon Valley than previously thought, making this year’s drive more critical than ever before. The Food Bank will release more detail on the data in the coming weeks.

“An astonishing 1 in 4 people in Silicon Valley is at risk for hunger,” said Cat Cvengros, vice president of marketing and development at Second Harvest Food Bank. “More kids, families and seniors rely on Second Harvest for food today than ever before in our history. It’s alarming. With so much happening in the world right now, sometimes we can feel powerless. But local hunger is a problem we all can actually do something about.”

Second Harvest needs to raise \$16.5 million and 1 million pounds of food during the holiday season to ensure that anyone who needs a healthy meal can get one. This is an important campaign for Second Harvest because it raises half its operating budget for the year during the holiday season.

“I’m not sure people understand that the need in Silicon Valley is not going down,” Cvangros added. “This is a serious problem because food is the foundation for a healthy, productive life. Without it, you can’t succeed at school or work. We can’t hope to solve other issues like the achievement gap and pay inequities until everyone has access to nutritious food.”

With the recent tech boom, Silicon Valley has experienced steep increases in the cost of housing while wages have remained relatively flat for those outside the tech industry. From 2011 to 2016, the median rent rose 45 percent while the median income increased only 14 percent, according to the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. That leaves many local families without enough money to pay rent and put food on the table. Nearly 30 percent of households in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties don’t earn enough to meet their basic needs without some type of assistance, according to the 2017 Silicon Valley Index.

“The fact that 1 in 3 kids is at risk for hunger doesn’t bode well for an economy that depends on a highly skilled workforce,” Cvangros said. “Second Harvest has an ambitious plan to get more food into the hands of those who need it. We are expanding our traditional food-banking operations and exploring new ways to connect people to nutritious food. But we can’t do it alone. We need the community’s support.”

Second Harvest partners with 300 nonprofit agencies to provide food at more than 900 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. Last year, Second Harvest provided more than 66 million pounds of food to the community, the equivalent of 55.5 million meals – 1 million more than the previous year.

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 by 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 almost any other food bank in the country, through a network of 300 nonprofit partners at 905 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 advocates for anti-hunger policies and 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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