Summer help—future benefits

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• When schools were closed due to COVID-19, Second Harvest coordinated with schools to ensure children had food in their homes, distributing bags of healthy, ready-to-eat meals, and snacks, along with school meals, in 131 schools in the region.

Connect to the work you support!

Feeding our children in and out of school

Hunger is always a threat for hurting families in our community. But during these last two pandemic-impacted years, due to unemployment and underemployment, the number of our families facing food insecurity has risen by more than 30%. In fact, 1 in 4 children in our community is hungry. Hunger in children becomes an even greater threat during the summer, when no school means no school meals.

But thanks to generous partners like you, we can bring food to these children and families during the challenging summer months, particularly our rural neighbors, with our Mobile Food Pantry and Mobile Market Programs.

Read the stories of families you’ve helped!

Volunteer Spotlight

It takes a village to feed a village

A Message from our Executive Director

Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee
PO Box 3327 | Johnson City TN 37602-3327

JUNE 2022

PO Box 3327 | Johnson City TN 37602-3327
A Message from our Executive Director

Dear Friends,

First, let me say how grateful and proud I am to not only consider you a partner in this mission to end hunger in our region, but to also call you a friend. Thank you for making everything we do possible, some of which you’ll read about in this newsletter. These success stories are your success stories.

As we are now in the midst of summer, I’m excited about what you’re helping us do to meet the unique challenges of this season. The biggest challenge is being able to feed children, especially when they are not in school. Our schools do a great job of feeding children who need the help, providing one or two nutritious meals a day. It’s a lifeline for our hurting families. But when children are out of school, they’re not able to take advantage of the free or reduced meal program. They’re also not able to get to our food box delivery program or access their school pantry.

So, during the summer months, we step up our outreach programs to feed children where they are—in their homes, or at a Boys & Girls Club, at Girls, Inc., or at a children’s community program facility. Since COVID-19 has impacted our work, we’ve been able to provide children with meals they can take back to their homes. Because of your support, we are reaching these children and families with food through our Food Box Program, our Mobile Food Pantry, and our Mobile Market. With your help, if this summer is like summers past, we’ll serve as many as 6,000 families.

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Thank you for helping families when they need it most

You help feed seniors with children

You never really know what twists and turns we’ll experience in our lives. For Dot, who is in her 80s, life has seen fit to place her 3-year-old great-granddaughter into her loving care. Until recently becoming her great-granddaughter’s foster caregiver, her Social Security income was sufficient. But now she needs some additional help feeding a healthy, energetic 3 year old.

Dot mentioned seeing a sign for the Second Harvest Mobile Pantry at her church and decided to check it out. She never used the pantry before.

Food equals care

The Jonesborough Area Ministerial Association (JAMA) has been fighting hunger in Washington County for nearly 30 years. About forty volunteers, like Tim Winter, help 400 people get the food they need each month.

It takes a village to feed a village

While the St. Anthony Catholic Church in Mountain City was completed in 2001, the new priest believed the needs of the community couldn’t wait. So, in 1999, St. Anthony’s Bread Food Pantry began operating out of store fronts. Twenty-three years later, it is distributing food to about 530 families every month.

Director Leni Smith credits the 40 volunteers she leads to make it all happen. She says, “Volunteers are the backbone of any food pantry. It takes a lot of people to make it work. And we have a fantastic group that cover program, financial, and warehouse tasks.”

Community health and well-being

Leni is proud of a grant she developed that addresses child obesity through healthy food choices, including dairy, meat, and fruit. And another grant that provides heating and utilities assistance.

Volunteers are meeting the challenges of COVID-19 by pre-packing food boxes and distributing them outside. And a volunteer even cooks for other volunteers each day the pantry is open.

The incredible stories of children, families, and seniors who have been impacted by these tireless community servants are too numerous to mention. But Leni does want to acknowledge your partnership. She says, “I would like to thank Second Harvest. We couldn’t ask for a better partner. They are helpful in every way.”

If you live in Mountain City or Johnson County and want to volunteer, reach out to Leni Smith at 440-4159 or leni1122@embargmail.com.

If you’d like to volunteer at JAMA, reach out to Tim Winter at 309-287-4560 or timwinter114@gmail.com.
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Gratefully,

Rhonda P. Chalm
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Thank you, United Healthcare

United Healthcare’s relationship with Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee began in 2008, when UHC employees held their first food drive. Through the years, UHC employees have volunteered in our warehouse sorting and packing food, helping with food drives, and even donating face masks during the pandemic.

In 2013, UHC Community Plan of Tennessee increased their support of the Food Bank’s mission with their first annual major grant for our Mobile Food Pantry. And for the 2021 holiday season, they gave an additional grant to provide healthy holiday meals.

Orlando Hayle, UHC of Tennessee’s executive director, DSNP, C&S Dual Complete Plans, says, “I am incredibly proud of United Healthcare’s partnership with Second Harvest and its mission to end hunger. Resolving hunger in our communities is fundamental to United Healthcare's part in fostering healthier outcomes and removing disparities across communities in Tennessee.”

Orlando adds, “My experience working with Second Harvest is the personal interaction a volunteer can have with individuals in the community, hearing all we have in common, and filling a basket with essential food items.”

Kevin Burchette, sales director, East TN/Southwest VA, United Healthcare Medicare & Retirement, says, “Partnering with Second Harvest is a no brainer. Our major mission as an insurance provider is to help people live healthier lives. Supporting Second Harvest is one of the best ways UHC can give back to the Northeast Tennessee community that has been so good to us.”

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UHC of Tennessee’s executive director, DSNP, C&S Dual Complete Plans

Kevin recalls joining 15 other UHC employees and agents at Second Harvest's warehouse to pack nutritious snacks and other food for the school Back Pack Program. He remembers how much fun they had getting to know each other better while working. He says, “When it was time to go—it just didn’t seem like that long. I look forward to when we can return to the warehouse and volunteer again.”

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, UHC’s national and local leadership teams stepped up. Yazmin Cespedes, senior program manager, UHC Social Responsibility, says, “Our priority was helping rural and underserved areas. We flagged Second Harvest as a partner doing important work in the community. Second Harvest has strong connections in the community and this stood out for us.”

We are extremely grateful for corporate partners like United Healthcare, who not only provide financial support, but also offer employees opportunities to volunteer and donate food.
Ending hunger in Northeast Tennessee is truly a community effort

It is only thanks to the generosity and support of so many that we can distribute the food our hungry neighbors need. Second Harvest Food Bank of Northeast Tennessee is deeply grateful for the following agencies, departments, distributors, manufacturers, retailers, and other partners who donate food, host food drives, and virtual food drives to help hungry families.

For more information on how your business or organization can help more hungry children, families, and seniors in Northeast Tennessee, please contact us at 423-279-0430 or info@netfoodbank.org