



SECOND
HARVEST
FOOD
BANK
ORANGE COUNTY

SUMMER

Overcoming Hunger Through Nutritional Security



Fall is here and children are back to school. With your support, we remain hopeful our community will weather the COVID-19 variants with minimal impact yet we are ready to provide food assistance, if necessary. Above all, we are committed to feeding and nourishing everyone in our community who needs help.

Nutrition is the key to our community's well-being. **Consistent access to nutritious food options increases food security and supports enhanced community resiliency.** By providing consistent access to nutrient-dense food, Second Harvest is setting up children and families for success in school, at work and in life.

Our food strategy to **procure fresh fruits and vegetables, eggs, dairy and protein is guided**

by our nutrition plan. This approach ensures the pipeline of healthy food stays full and consistent across the community for those who need it most.

While the economy appears to be improving, there are nearly 300,000 individuals each month who rely on Second Harvest for food and we must keep the momentum going to reach our goal of ensuring all are well fed in OC.

The Value and Necessity of Second Harvest's College Pantries

Kimberly, a Vanguard University student, has depended on the school's pantry to feed herself and her family, including her grandmother who must limit her contact with others because she is at very high risk for COVID-19.

"Not having access to food has been very difficult. College students shouldn't have to worry about what they're going to eat. They should be thinking about finishing assignments and studying for their exams.

"Especially during lectures, I was always worried that someone would hear my stomach rumble. It was just hard to focus. Going to the pantry has helped our family. It has definitely relieved our financial worries. It's just one less thing to worry about and it's helped me focus on my studies."



**SECOND HARVEST PROVIDES NUTRITIOUS FOOD
TO 12 OC COLLEGE PANTRIES SERVING AN
AVERAGE OF 3,716 STUDENT HOUSEHOLDS/MONTH**

PLEASE GIVE TODAY

To donate, visit feedoc.org

Always Looking Ahead: Nutrition and Food Forecasting

We began forecasting food need last year using unemployment projections and community need, minus anticipated donations and rescued food, to ensure sufficient supply. Now, our forecasting has become a food sourcing model that focuses on nutrition and provides the foundation for our strategy going forward. In addressing food insecurity through nutritional security, our plan prioritizes the purchase and sourcing of:



Our nutrition strategy also includes balancing fresh foods with the nutritional content of canned foods and dry goods.



**EACH WEEK,
SECOND HARVEST
SENDS**

1,560 DOZEN EGGS

**2,016 HALF-GALLON
JUGS OF MILK**

**TO PARTNER
PANTRIES
THROUGHOUT OC
SERVING CHILDREN
AND FAMILIES**



Self-Sufficiency in Action: We're Growing Our Own Food!

This fall, in partnership with the South Coast Research and Extension Center (South Coast REC) and local sustainability farming pioneer and Solutions for Urban Agriculture founder A.G. Kawamura, Second Harvest will begin to farm **45 acres** at the South Coast REC site on Irvine Boulevard not far from the food bank. The initial crop of transplants will produce **up to 40,000 pounds of cabbage per week** starting November 18 when the first harvest takes place.

Why cabbage? It's a hearty, healthy vegetable that's easy to grow, and it's relevant to many cultures. Think soup, cole slaw, kimchi, salads or taco topping.

After this initial crop, our second planting in May 2022 will include zucchini, cucumber and yellow squash. In the warmer months we'll be growing summer corn and mini bell peppers, too. We **anticipate providing up to 160,000 pounds per month of locally grown produce to our food pantry network once all 45 acres are in production.** This innovative partnership supports not only Second Harvest's nutrition strategy, but local farmers as well.



Who will tend the garden?

Volunteers will be an important component in making this venture a success. We will eventually require 40 people per shift—for multiple shifts per week—to harvest the crops. Please watch for more details about **volunteer opportunities** at feedoc.org/volunteer.

FARM-FRESH BENEFITS

SUPPORT OUR FARM

by making a donation today. Visit feedoc.org

Growing our own food locally:

- **Drastically cuts time** to the dinner plate and delivers more health benefits because the produce is fresher when it reaches the community
- **Harkens to the agricultural roots** of Orange County
- **Reduces environmental impact** by greatly reducing the number of miles trucks drive to deliver ultra-fresh produce to our distribution center

The Picture of Health for Our Community

Last year challenged—and changed—virtually every aspect of our operations. The pandemic brought to light the importance of addressing food insecurity and ending hunger. It also showed us just how determined and resilient our community really is.

First, we commissioned Rochester, N.Y.-based mural artist Sarah Rutherford to paint a 2.5-story-high work of art featuring Orange County residents we serve and other images that represent the flow of food throughout the county. The mural covers the northeast exterior wall of our distribution center in Irvine. Second, we worked with Laguna Beach artist Jerome Gastaldi to roll out a community mural project that transformed a Second Harvest semi-trailer into a massive mobile easel equipped with a 48' canvas. We invited an array of residents, elected officials and community representatives to paint this creative work of art.

This is our way of celebrating resiliency and a brighter nutritional pathway to self-sufficiency for all those in need in Orange County. Art is a powerfully relatable yet unique experience. With it, we were able to unify the community and raise awareness of the fact that nutritious food is the most fundamental of necessities for us all.



Phased Return of Volunteers

We are pleased to be gradually inviting back Second Harvest volunteers in phases. As our business model has changed, so has the way our volunteers serve.

We have a small group of longtime volunteers at the distribution center helping to sort produce. More opportunities are being offered to help tend our 45-acre farm.

Please visit feedoc.org/volunteer for more information.



I volunteer to give back—everyone has to eat. I feel fortunate to have a fridge full of food and eat three meals a day. If there's a way I can help others who are in a tough spot, it's a privilege to do so.

—**Pat** (above)

I have so much. Volunteering only takes a few hours a week and fills my day with something so meaningful. I'm happy to spend my time making a difference.

—**Cheri** (below)



Recent News

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER SUNDAY

IRVINE

Second Harvest Food Bank salutes good nutrition in giant mural

Group's distribution center includes two-story high paintings of real people who have been served by the food bank



Artist Sarah Rutherford, bottom left, works on painting a mural on the building at Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County distribution center in Irvine on Friday. The mural depicts faces of Orange County residents served by the food bank.

By Theresa Walker
thwalker@scng.com

Anyone who drives up to Second Harvest Food Bank's distribution center on Marine Way in Irvine will be greeted by smiling faces towering more than two stories high on the massive building's north-east corner.

One one side, a man holds a bag of oranges and a woman cradles a head of lettuce. Around the corner, a boy and a girl show off a bag of apples and a bunch of celery. The couple and the children are all real people who have been served by the food bank.

New York-based artist Sarah Rutherford worked Friday before a gathering of local dignitaries to complete the art installation — conceived by Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County to showcase its commitment to expanded distribution of fresh, nutritious food to those in need.

As Rutherford worked, a group of youngsters, led by artist Jerome "Bob" Gastaldi of Laguna Beach, fleshed out their own 48-foot-long canvas, painting the side of a semi-trailer with food-related words as "community," "hope" and "nourish."

The art symbolizes a strategic pivot by the food bank, which is now helping to feed nearly twice as many individuals — about 400,000 a month — as it did before the economic hardships ushered in by the coronavirus pandemic in early 2020. The emphasis now is on purchasing increased amounts of protein, produce and dairy to maintain a steady supply of fresh food. Learn more at feedoc.org.

Spectrum News 1 (San Fernando Valley) — Friday, July 30, 2021



KTLA-LA (WB) — KTLA 5 Morning News at 9 Thursday, July 29, 2021



FOOD BANK NEWS

Advancing Best Practices in Hunger Relief



Food-Bank Budgets Soar to Reflect Purchased (vs. Donated) Food

JULY 27, 2021

After decades of relying on donated food, food banks are starting to place more emphasis on purchasing food.

The trend appears to be an outgrowth of Covid, which forced food banks to purchase food by the truckload as constricted supply chains put the squeeze on donated food. The purchases, along with innovations like the Farmers to Families produce boxes, introduced a steady stream of healthy food into the charitable food system – which is now proving a hard habit to break.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County is like many of its peers in altering its budget to prioritize purchased food. Claudia Keller, Chief Mission Officer, described the food bank as “typical” in purchasing only 10% to 20% of its food pre-pandemic, and relying on donations for the rest. Going forward that model is flipping, with the food bank planning to purchase about 60% of the food it distributes.



With a bigger food-purchasing budget, Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County is seeking to routinely provide healthy food through its pantry network, said Claudia Keller.

“Our intention is to distribute only healthy food,” Keller said. “We’re turning away loads of food that don’t meet our nutritional standards.”

The food bank’s latest budget allocates \$4.2 million toward purchased food in the coming year, compared to less than \$1 million annually before the pandemic. With purchased food, the food bank hopes to consistently provide the backbone of a healthy diet to families shopping in pantries. “Getting eggs will no longer be a cause for celebration,” Keller said. “They will be there every time.”

Maryland Food Bank is also making budgeting adjustments with an eye toward sourcing greater volumes of healthy food. It increased its food-purchasing budget by 463% during the pandemic to \$33 million, compared to only \$6 million for the same 14-month period before the pandemic. Going forward, it is planning to purchase more than 50% of its food, compared to 25% to 30% pre-pandemic, said Carmen Del Guercio, President and CEO.

“Purchasing gives us extreme flexibility in terms of being truly intentional about the type of food we want to buy,” Del Guercio said. Though it’s a more expensive operating model, purchasing “provides much better health outcomes,” he added.

The story is similar at the Peoria, Ill., division of Midwest Food Bank, which increased food purchasing by 724% during the pandemic, according to Executive Director Monica Scheuer, RN, MS, RD, LD. Going forward, Scheuer is altering the budget to accommodate an elevated level of purchasing, specifically for high-quality food.

“If we have to purchase food, it’s not going to be hotdogs,” noted Scheuer, who came to the food bank seven years ago as a dietician and nurse, and has been endeavoring to improve nutritional quality ever since. “We could feed a lot of people with hotdogs, but it will be fruits and vegetables.”

At Greater Boston Food Bank, purchased food has been an important part of food sourcing since the early nineties, and will continue to be so, said Catherine D’Amato, President and CEO. During the pandemic, the food bank’s overall budget nearly doubled from \$48 million to \$92 million, and next year will likely reach \$100 million. “A lot of that is for purchasing food,” D’Amato said. “It’s the best way to have the nutritional impact guaranteed.”

Ballooning food-bank budgets raise the question of how food banks can sustain their investments in purchased food. Some expect that donors who became newly attuned to the issue of food insecurity during the pandemic will continue to support the goal of nutritious food. “We’ve gotten a lot of new donors that we will work to continue to keep happy,” noted Sasha Purpura, Executive Director at Cambridge, Mass.-based Food for Free, which primarily operates as a food rescuer.

Food for Free has dramatically increased its food purchasing budget from about \$200,000 before the pandemic to a planned \$1.4 million for the next fiscal year. In addition to a higher level of fundraising, Food for Free expects to support its expanded purchasing via efficiencies gained through a newly opened warehouse and other operational changes.



Carmen Del Guercio of Maryland Food Bank predicts funders will support food banks shifting away from measuring pounds of food to the quality of food.

Another pathway to sustainability lies in convincing funders of the value of distributing nutritious food, even if the total amount of food distributed is lower. While food banks have been focused on outputs such as pounds as a major driver of success, there is increasing attention being paid to health outcomes. “Shifting away from pounds to the quality of food consumed will drive more funding,” predicted Maryland Food Bank’s Del Guercio.

Second Harvest of Orange County has already begun turning that directive into action. With a goal of distributing 100% nutritious food, it plans to measure its output only in terms of healthy food. In addition, it will measure its success by its ability to bring that number down. “When you get to brass tacks, we really should be shrinking our presence, not growing it,” said Keller.

The goal of diminishing its presence has been welcomed both by funders and the food bank’s pantry network, said Keller, who noted that the past 35 years has been characterized by relentless growth in the food bank’s output and number of people served. “But we were maintaining,” she said. “If we’re going to achieve our mission, we have to think differently.” — *Chris Costanzo*

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Published in *Hunger + Health and Strategy*



Midwest Food Bank of Peoria will be purchasing fruits and vegetables, not hotdogs, said Monica Scheuer, Executive Director.



Thank You

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COMERICA CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

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