Spreading Hope And Health

As many friends and families begin to plan their big meals and joyfully gather for the holiday season, we’re busy preparing for an especially difficult time of the year for those facing food insecurity. The coming months are a critical time for giving. With a renewed spirit, this year we're focused on providing fresh, nutritious food to those who need us most, providing comfort at every turn.

The strength of our community relies on the physical and emotional well-being of every person who calls it “home,” and consistent nutrition is critical when it comes to achieving this strength. Yet, nearly 1 in 4 Orange County seniors faces food insecurity—battling the simultaneous challenges of rising medication prices and increasing housing costs.

They need us now. In providing our senior population with consistent meals and nutritious food, we serve our community in more ways than one. Our seniors are veterans, grandparents, sisters, brothers, activists, neighbors, parents, friends and keepers of the keys to tomorrow. Their legacies and values cement those of the generations that follow, imparting traditions and ideals that have been integral to Orange County.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County has made remarkable advancements in how we serve those who need food assistance, but there’s so much more to be done. With so many seniors relying on us each month, we cannot slow our innovation or momentum. Our decision to harvest and purchase fresh local food is one way we’re gaining ground on hunger.

As we go into this season, ready to celebrate the holidays, let’s practice gratitude by giving to every person we can. Our “home” is better when everyone shares in good health and happiness.
Caring For Our Seniors
A Chance to Serve Those Who’ve Served For Us

Victor, a U.S. Marine Corps veteran, and his wife, Elizabeth, face challenging times. When Victor suddenly faced a serious health challenge, Elizabeth had no choice but to quit her job and take care of him. As a result, they live off a fixed income that barely makes ends meet; some months the ends never meet at all.

Not knowing where to turn, Victor reached out to a fellow veteran for guidance and support. His friend pointed him to the Veterans office for help. Ultimately, he and Elizabeth were referred to a Second Harvest community partner, the Norman P. Murray Community Center.

The Norman P. Murray Community Center is a seniors-focused food distribution site for struggling individuals and families like Victor and Elizabeth. “Second Harvest are angels in disguise. If it were not for the food bank, we would have an even harder time,” said Elizabeth.

We’re very thankful they were referred to us, and we’re truly honored to serve them.

“Sometimes we didn’t have enough money for groceries. Without food from the Norman P. Murray Community Center, we would have a hard time paying for rent, and bills and everything.”

—ELIZABETH

NEARLY 45% OF ORANGE COUNTY SENIORS DON’T HAVE ENOUGH MONEY FOR THEIR BASIC NECESSITIES.

—According to the Elder Economic Security Index, which figures in housing, food, transportation and health care

SENIORS HERE IN ORANGE COUNTY NEED YOU. PLEASE GIVE TODAY.

To donate, call 949.653.2900 or visit feedoc.org
This August, we launched the Harvest Solutions Farm on a sprawling 45-acre site at the South Coast Research and Extension Center (South Coast REC) in Irvine. To establish the Farm, 26,000 tiny cabbage transplants were planted to serve Orange County residents in need. Broccoli and celery have also been planted. Now the time has come to harvest those cabbage plants and deliver them to the community.

On the Farm’s first harvest, held on November 18, 79 volunteers came together to gather bins of fresh produce, now fully grown, and prepare them to be delivered. An inspiring image of vast farmland with volunteers and Second Harvest team members working together is forever instilled in our memories.

**DID YOU KNOW?** Cabbage is a hearty, healthy power food. It’s packed full of nutrients, helping to decrease inflammation, lower blood pressure, keep the heart healthy and lower cholesterol levels. It’s also relevant to many cultures—think soup, cole slaw, kimchi, salads or taco topping.

The launch of the Farm and the ability to deliver our locally grown produce is a great accomplishment for Second Harvest. We wouldn’t be able to serve as many as we do without the incredible help of our volunteers. Now that harvesting has begun, we need to recruit 250-300 volunteers weekly.

Our volunteers are a vital piece of our organization, and we are honored that so many offer their time to help further Second Harvest’s mission. We simply couldn’t do this without them.

**WANT A UNIQUE WAY TO GIVE? DONATE TO OR VOLUNTEER AT THE HARVEST SOLUTIONS FARM.**

Call 949.653.2900 or visit feedoc.org
Big things sometimes come in small packages. In this instance, a significant change is on the horizon, thanks to Second Harvest’s raised grow beds. Each of the 150 beds are being sown with nutrient-dense romaine to help feed those we serve.

**FARM-FRESH BENEFITS OF GROWING OUR OWN FOOD LOCALLY:**

- Drastically cuts time to table
- Provides more nutrient-dense produce since it’s picked at peak ripeness
- Delivers more health benefits because produce arrives fresher
- Reduces environmental impact
Our New Addition

Launching A New Mobile Market In Senior Communities: Fresh Delivered

Since the launch of the very first Park-It Market in 2018, Second Harvest has proudly traveled many miles to deliver fresh produce, dairy products and other perishables to low-income senior housing communities and senior centers. Specially designed for Second Harvest, this refrigerated “shoppable” truck providing service to seniors marked a turning point as the first-of-its-kind to be run by a food bank. Our full-service and completely free mobile market showcased what’s possible when innovation and an unstoppable vision combine to fight senior hunger.

Now, an enhanced version of the Park-It Market is about ready to serve. Construction is in the final stages for the newest vehicle in our fleet.
Impossible Choices
The Reality Of Senior Hunger: Forced To Balance Priorities

The population of seniors in Orange County stands at roughly 450,000, with a staggering 22% struggling to get enough to eat. Fixed incomes, medical expenses, transportation challenges and debilitating medical issues are just a few of the many reasons that seniors are facing unimaginable hunger. They’re sometimes forced to choose between paying a utility bill or getting groceries, picking up medication or picking up food; foregoing one basic need for another.

Sadly, the malnutrition that results from consistently missing meals or failing to get the proper nutrients weakens the body’s immune system and causes it to grow frail and vulnerable. It’s a vicious cycle that we’re committed to ending, ensuring every individual is food secure and well-nourished.

FOOD-INSECURE SENIORS* ARE:

262% more likely to have depression

74% more likely to have diabetes

78% more likely to have asthma

71% more likely to have congestive heart failure

SOMEONE NEEDS YOU RIGHT NOW. PLEASE GIVE TODAY.
To donate, call 949.653.2900 or visit feedoc.org

*The State of Senior Hunger, Feeding America 2021
As the pandemic worsens food insecurity, new farm will help feed Orange County

BY BEN BRAZEL

Second Harvest Food Bank broke ground this week on a 45-acre farm in Irvine in an effort to combat a spiking food crisis in Orange County.

Due to the economic consequences of the pandemic, the food bank is now serving more than 10,000 families per month. But Second Harvest—one of the county’s two major food banks—isn’t just hoping to increase its food store; it’s also aiming to provide nutritional food to underserved populations in the county.

During a news conference on Tuesday morning, Second Harvest board Chairwoman Dawn Coffaro said that when he first started working at Second Harvest three decades ago, they weren’t concerned with getting people nutritional food. Rather, they were just trying to get food to people who needed it.

The food bank started focusing on alleviating nutritional insecurity in the county last year, providing consistent access to fresh food, produce, and grains. As opposed to relying on donated foods, Claudia Keller, Second Harvest chief mission officer, said the food bank’s goal is to have produce available for at least 30% of its customers. She said the goal is to have available 140,000 pounds of produce a month, though it has the capacity for 600,000 pounds of food a month.

“Our commitment is to meet food insecurity, but really going forward to tackle nutritional insecurity,” Keller said. “We want to make sure that the people that need the most help are getting the good food. That’s all of us can get at a supermarket. We want to make sure that they’re getting it with dignity and in a consistent basis.”

This is Second Harvest’s first substantial farm.

In addition to addressing nutritional needs, the farm allows Second Harvest to take control of its supply chain, fortifying it against the inflated food prices and supply chain issues caused by the pandemic.

“Since the food bank previously purchased food from the Central Valley, Second Harvest had to work around disruptions in the supply chain. It’s a new era for us as food banks here in the county,” Keller said. “We’re taking some control of our own supply chain. We are shortening the time from farm to table for our most vulnerable citizens.”

BRAZEL can be reached at brazel@ocregister.com or follow him on Twitter @benbrazel.
Recent News

KNBC-LA (NBC) — NBC Nightly News With Lester Holt
Monday, September 06, 2021

“What we know for sure is that Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, its pantry network and volunteers will be ready to meet the need should a spike arise—whether it is due to the sunsetting of enhanced benefits or the economic impact of COVID variants.”

Claudia Keller, Chief Mission Officer of Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County

HELPING THOSE HIT HARDEST BY PANDEMIC UNEMPLOYMENT

KTTV-LA (FOX) — Good Day LA 7AM
Tuesday, August 31, 2021
Recent News

Hunger remains an issue and could get worse, even as economy improves

Orange County food suppliers and others worry still-high need will spike again as unemployment benefits end.

By THERESA WALGER | twalker@ocregister.com | Orange County Register

Cars snaking through parking lots and seemingly endless lines of people waiting for boxes of groceries were poignant symbols of hardship as the pre-vaccine pandemic churned up 2020 and ground into 2021.

Now, those scenes of desperation have diminished — if not disappeared — as the economy has started to recover. And because it’s not as visible it might seem to outsiders that food insecurity is no longer a problem.

Not so, say people who feed the hungry in Orange County.

Operators of the county’s two food banks and others who provide fresh produce and shelf-stable items such as canned goods and grains, say the number of people still seeking help remains more than twice as high as it was before the coronavirus pandemic. That’s true even though some emergency resources, such as the USDA’s Farmers to Families food boxes, have stopped.

On Saturday, Sept. 4, the weekly Love Community Outreaches drive thru food distribution in Santa Ana attracted more than 300 recipients. People started queuing their cars at 5 a.m. in a line that eventually stretched about two miles.

“That tells you where we’re at as a community,” said Ralph Magana, director of Love Community Outreaches, a nonprofit that gets pallets of food from the Orange County Food Bank and donations from private supporters.

There is reason to think more people will be in need of assistance in the immediate future.

READ FULL ARTICLE HERE:
ocrregister.com/2021/09/07/hunger-remains-an-issue-and-could-get-worse-even-as-economy-improves/
Recent News

**Orange County Business Journal**

Vol. 44 No. 39 — The Community of Business

**Philanthropy**

By Kim Stemp<br>stempkim@ochi.com

**Planting Solutions**

Claudia Keller, chief mission officer, Second Harvest Food Bank; Darren Haver, director, South Coast Research and Extension Center; Don Wagner, Orange County Supervisor, District 3; Farrah Khan, mayor, city of Irvine; Dave Coffaro, board chair, Second Harvest Food Bank; Katie Porter, representative, 49th Congressional District; A.G. Kawamura, chairman, Solutions for Urban Ag and former California Secretary of Food and Agriculture.

Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, in partnership with local sustainable farming firm Solutions for Urban Agriculture, has launched a farming initiative on 45 acres of land at the University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources’ South Coast Research and Extension Center, along Irvine Boulevard in Irvine.

The goal of the project is to help provide consistent access to nutritious food for residents in Orange County by growing produce for distribution to food bank partnerships throughout Orange County. The endeavor is called the Harvest Solutions Farm.

The Food Bank planted its first cabbage transplants on Aug. 31. Dave Coffaro, board chair, Second Harvest Food Bank, joined A.G. Kawamura, chairman, Solutions for Urban Ag and former California Secretary of Food and Agriculture; Darren Haver, director, Agriculture South Coast REC; and dignitaries including Farrah Khan, mayor, Irvine; Katie Porter, representative, 45th Congressional District; and Don Wagner, OC supervisor, District 3, on-site for the ceremonial planting of the first crops.

Volunteers transplanted approximately 26,000 young cabbage plants. Second Harvest expects to receive 40,000 pounds of cabbage per week as of Nov. 18 when the first harvest is expected to take place. When all 45 acres are fully planted, they are anticipated to yield over half a million pounds of produce over four months.

“This is a historic day for Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County,” Coffaro said. “Few food banks, if any, have attempted to grow their own food on this scale. Our unique good fortune to have access to 45 acres in the heart of an urban center like Irvine where we are able to cultivate an array of crops and supply our food pantry partners with fresh, nutritious produce brings us a huge step closer to making nutritional security a reality for our entire community.”

The Harvest Solutions Farm is the latest component in Second Harvest’s strategy to fuel nutrition security for all, including a new focus on pursuing planned nutrition based on consistent access to fresh protein, produce and dairy, rather than relying on situational nutrition driven solely by donations.

The farm also allows Second Harvest to mitigate challenges like pandemic-induced inflated food prices and supply chain disruptions.
Thank You

FALL 2021

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