



The Fight Against Hunger In Orange County

Second Harvest Food Bank's mission is to end hunger in our community. In FY 2020, we distributed more than **42 MILLION POUNDS OF FOOD** to our Partner Network members who then provided food to those in need at more than 350 locations throughout the county. We propel change through strategic, innovative partnerships and collaborations with community organizations that are equally committed to alleviating poverty. We provide reliable access to sufficient and nutritious foods and are dedicated to creating a community where all can thrive.

In Orange County more than **550,000 PEOPLE ARE AT RISK OF HUNGER**, including children and their families, seniors on fixed incomes, the working poor, those with disabilities, veterans, and the homeless. We provide food and support to our Partner Network, which includes pantries, after-school programs like Kids Cafes and Boys and Girls Clubs, Permanent School Pantries, college pantries, and senior centers.

Since food banks can't provide all the assistance needed by low-income residents struggling to make ends meet, Second Harvest also helps low-income residents apply for CalFresh (formerly known as food stamps) to amplify their food-buying power.

ADDRESSING THE PANDEMIC HUNGER CRISIS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we shifted to a more efficient food box distribution facilitated in part by our Harvest Truck Brigade, in which volunteers use their own trucks to transport food boxes to senior centers, kids' sites, and to the homes of those with critical needs. Our focus on shelf-stable food continues, supplemented with fresh produce and dairy, to ensure that we provide healthy food to those facing hunger now.

FINANCIAL EFFICIENCY

We pride ourselves on the transparent and efficient use of our donors' contributions.

Our fundraising and general management expenses are less than 10% of our total expenses, with the remainder going to programs to feed the hungry.

IT WILL TAKE ALL OF US TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Now more than ever, we need your help. To find out more about how you can make a difference in the lives of those in need with your donations of funds, time or in-kind goods, please call **949.653.2900** or visit **FEEDOC.ORG**

For information about alternative strategies for giving or about our Legacy Giving Program, call Christine Montevideo at **949.208.3150**



**Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County statistics, July 2020*

Impact And Reach: Second Harvest's Response To An Expanding, Moving Hunger Target

The pandemic-induced economic crisis sparked Second Harvest Food Bank's rapid response to the growing population of food-insecure residents, many of whom recently lost well-paying jobs. Since March 2020, we've been innovating ways to safely, efficiently and quickly meet huge spikes in demand, anywhere from 100% to 400%, and to distribute millions more pounds of food throughout Orange County.

OUR IMPACT

To meet the growing need in our community Second Harvest sourced and distributed more food than ever before.

- In July we provided food for **531,843 PEOPLE** in Orange County
- An additional **15,213 CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES** have received food at after-school sites that have remained open
- In March we provided **2,870,094 POUNDS OF FOOD** to those in need in our community
- By July we had scaled up to provide **6,784,829 POUNDS OF FOOD** to meet the increased need due to pandemic-related unemployment
- Our programs, School Pantries, Kids Cafes (after-school programs), Permanent School Pantries, College Pantries, and Senior Groceries, target the most vulnerable members of our community—



**Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County July 2020*

Impact And Reach *(Continued)*

children and seniors

Second Harvest is focused on the efficient and effective use of our donor's contributions. Our fundraising and general management expenses are less than 10% of our total expenses. The remainder goes to programs that feed the hungry.

FACTORS FUELING THE NEED FOR FOOD

Second Harvest and its Partner Network have experienced a constant and growing demand for food across a wider population of the county due in part to:

- Double-digit unemployment caused by COVID-19 closures
- Explosive demand from the first wave of the “newly vulnerable” workers who lost jobs in the hospitality, food service and travel industries
- Orange County’s high cost of living: In 2020 an OC resident would need to work 60.9 hours a week to afford rent of \$1,517 for a one-bedroom apartment

AND THERE IS MORE WORK TO DO

As more businesses shut down and unemployment continues to rise, the time to act is now. Please call **949.653.2900** or visit **FEEDOC.ORG**

For information about alternative strategies for giving or about our Legacy Giving Program, call Christine Montevideo at **949.208.3150**.



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Opinion, Analysis, Insight

What Restaurants Can Learn From Grocery Stores About Wasted Foods

Editor's Note: In 1995, Harald Herrmann helped launch the flagship Yard House, which was bought by Darden Restaurants Inc. where he became president of its Specialty Group (Seasons 52, Capital Grille and others). Herrmann joined Second Harvest Food Bank in 2019 as CEO. For more on the Business Journal's 2020 Food Issue, see page 1 and 22.

We've all done it. We've thrown out food from refrigerators at home, at restaurants and at manufacturing facilities. It happens everywhere—many times without a thought about where that food could go to make an impact.

This is a symptom of abundance that reveals a serious ailment: food waste. Today, 40% of food grown or manufactured in the U.S. goes in the garbage, yet millions of people go to bed hungry.

In Orange County, nearly 300,000 people, including one in six children, are affected by hunger.

My mother grew up in war-torn Germany, getting by on meager meals with nearly zero nutritional content. That lens informed my thinking when, as a 17-year-old, I took my very first job as a dishwasher at Marie Callender's. As I tossed uneaten food into the trash, I had my first insight into the problem of excess food going to waste. I carried this mindset throughout my career as a merchant of food.

I have long mentioned to coworkers that I wanted to support and/or lead a nonprofit, specifically an organization connected to food insecurity and children. This opportunity came at an unexpected time and was one of life's curveballs. As I learned of the open position at Second Harvest, I immediately knew, "if not now, when?"

A for-profit restaurant company competing for market share inherently develops a different muscle than a nonprofit, from the standpoint of brand self-awareness, business acumen and internal accountability.

Now, my mission is to bridge the hunger gap, and I can't help but consider how the food industry can unite to address the problem.

Challenges Restaurants Face

In the restaurant industry, there is no question that food waste is a major concern—not just because it impacts our business bottom line, but as it is a vital responsibility to be good stewards of our communities.

The goal for a restaurant is to avoid waste in throughput and capacity. We track food loss and ingredient cost to understand our waste stream. We analyze it to pinpoint efficiencies, attempting to manage yields and expenses to save money. But it is difficult in such a constantly shifting business. We may carefully plan the weekly set up but end up over-ordering a perishable ingredient such as produce.

What can we do?

There are more options besides running a special or throwing it out. We need more people to be more conscious of putting that food to work by placing it in the hands of the people who need it most.

The "good news" is that food waste is also a major concern among top restaurant CEOs, and many support food banks. Some restaurant groups are already operating food rescue programs.

What we need to make sure is that this food waste is top of mind for everyone in the food industry, from grocers and foodservice companies to growers, wholesalers and packers.

Grocery Stores to the Rescue?

We are working to translate our successful grocery rescue program to the restaurant industry. Grocery rescue works like this: As grocers pull food that is nearing its "use by" date from the shelves, Second Harvest and many of our pantry network partners pick it up and distribute it directly to those who need it. Last year, that equaled 15 million pounds of good food that five or 10 years ago would have ended up in the landfill.

In fact, almost half the food Second Harvest provided to those in need last year was from our grocery rescue program.

By Harald Herrmann
CEO, Second Harvest
Food Bank

We must look to this well-oiled grocery rescue machine to provide a blueprint for restaurants to save and send pre-prepared food into the

community. We can look to examples such as **Chefs to End Hunger** as we tackle the challenges of ensuring food safety. We must provide a trusted system to which restaurants can confidently subscribe. Chefs to End Hunger hauls away pre-prepared foods in temperature-controlled trucks to a central facility to be redistributed as a donation.

In Orange County, we can go further by providing wholesalers, grocers and copackers the means to easily make a donation when they have plenty of excess food, but not the labor, time and money to sort through it and put it to use.

The food industry must come together to reduce waste and put rescued, edible food in front of those who need the support.

If there were ever an industry on the front lines of every emergency—a hurricane, a flood, a fire—it's the food community. When the **American Red Cross** shows up at the site of a disaster, the food industry comes together as a community, feeding first responders and those who need support.

An inherent servant mindset drives this inclination, especially in the restaurant industry. We want to do good. We want to support the communities that support us. If there is a need, we are there.

We must tap into that servant mindset and realize that food insecurity is a human emergency that is lived out 365 days a year. It doesn't make the news—it's not an event. But it is pervasive, living in the shadows of every city every day, even right here. By putting together our industries, businesses and communities, we can put an end to hunger once and for all. Given our blessings of abundance within our food sources—be it store or restaurant—it's a call to action we must follow.



Recent News *(continued)*

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER SUNDAY

Sunday, March 22, 2020

\$7.00

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COMMUNITY



PHOTO BY MANDY SCHAUER—STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Police officers and Second Harvest Food Bank volunteers control heavy traffic leading into Honda Center in Anaheim on Saturday. The food bank will be distributing groceries each Saturday on an honor system basis for those most affected by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

‘CLEARLY, THIS IS UNPRECEDENTED’

Lines a half-mile long are seen near Honda Center for pop-up food distribution

By Mindy Schauer
mschauer@ocregister.com

As cars snaked a mile around Honda Center, with people waiting up to two hours for a bag of potatoes, a bag of apples and a bag of foods that won't perish, Second Harvest Food Bank CEO Harald Herrmann took in the new reality.

"Clearly, this is unprecedented," he said of the coronavirus pandemic. "The demand for food from residents of this county is staggering. The job loss coupled with school closures is putting tremendous pressure on many working-class families in this community," Herrmann said.

Second Harvest used social media to promote Saturday's pop-up distribution center, with plans in place to make it a weekly service. They were prepared to serve 4,000 but served 2,700 of the most at-risk, vulnerable families through the honor system.



A volunteer at the Second Harvest pop-up food bank hands Tammy Schuler a bag of groceries on Saturday. Schuler, who is homeless, said she can't find a shelter because "they are not taking anyone because of the virus." About 2,700 people received food Saturday.

"We know during these times people are getting laid off every day, so we trust that if they show up and wait in the line, they have a need," spokesperson Ranggin Hedayat said.

"It's sad, but also good to see the best of humanity," Herrmann said, referring to volunteers who handed out food for

several hours and Anaheim police officers who stepped in to help control the flow of traffic so people didn't have to be turned away.

At 5 a.m. a dozen cars were already lined up at the gate for the 9 a.m. distribution. So when Herrmann arrived at 6:45 he used his pickup truck to block traffic on Douglas Street and immediately started directing people, forming four lines of cars at least 300 deep. At 8 a.m. he asked the Anaheim Police Department for additional officers and they obliged.

Police also put up a tweet asking other motorists to avoid the area around Honda Center. Along the nearby 57 Freeway, lines stretched a half-mile in each direction.

Mask- and glove-clad volunteers were kept to 40 and each had a specific task. One person's job was to open car trunks while others placed food inside to avoid cross-contamination, and

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PHOTOS BY MANDY SCHAUER—STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Second Harvest volunteers help manage a pop-up food distribution line at Honda Center in Anaheim on Saturday.

Food

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organizers said.

"Normally we'd have double that number but we wanted to maintain social distance," Herrmann said.

Valerie Leth was volunteering with the food bank for the first time on Saturday, placing potatoes in car trunks.

"I know people are in need," she said, adding that she had lost her two jobs — one as a ride operator with Disney and another as a restaurant hostess.

Food bank staff coordinator Bre Piantanida said she had the best job in the world. "I was dealt a good hand. I was born on the right side of the invisible line so it's my duty to help others," she said as a beat

up, silver 1998 Buick Century approached the loading area with three people and a bound dog named Lulu inside.

The trio appeared frustrated when told that they would have to wait in line again if they wanted more than one ration. From the backseat, Tammy Schuler said she and her friends were homeless and trying to get into a shelter but was told "they are not taking anyone because of the virus."

She and her companions said they were feeling healthy and planned on staying that way. As they drove away, driver Lou West smiled as she held up a bottle of hand sanitizer.

If in need of food, go to 211oc.org or text 865211 and enter your ZIP code. You will get a prompt telling you the closest distribution center.




Police officers and Second Harvest Food Bank volunteers control heavy traffic leading into Honda Center to receive food. It is being planned to take place each Saturday.

Recent News *(continued)*

COAST
MAGAZINE

THINGS TO DO | COAST MAGAZINE - News

Up Close: Second Harvest CEO leads battle against hunger
Harald Herrmann's personal experience and restaurant industry know-how help him feed the need



Harald Herrmann, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County. (Photo courtesy Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County)

By SAMANTHA DUNN | samantha@coastmagazine.com | Orange County Register
Published: April 27, 2020 at 9:50 a.m. | Updated: April 27, 2020 at 10:25 a.m.

0 COMMENTS

A 35-year veteran of the restaurant industry whose prior post was as chief executive officer of Mendocino Farms, Harald Herrmann stepped in as the new CEO of *Second Harvest Food Bank* on March 24, 2019. A year later, he and his team face a global pandemic and skyrocketing unemployment, causing more demand than ever for the county's largest hunger-relief organization.

Second Harvest sprang into action to meet the community's needs for jobs and food. Herrmann hired 120 nonprofit and restaurant workers who had been hurt by furloughs and layoffs in this COVID-19 crisis for part-time work. Then, partnering with the city of Anaheim, police and fire departments and the Ducks, Second Harvest created pop-up drive-thru food distribution at Honda Center, now happening every Saturday. That's in addition to supplying food pantries across OC.

But Herrmann and his team are still facing a gauntlet: To cover the expected surge in food needs, Second Harvest is looking for about \$500,000 more a week in donations to cover the cost of not only maintaining its current efforts but to fund more temporary paid staffers and service thousands of critical needs households affected by the virus, including seniors. (Make donations at www.feedoc.org.)

It all may seem like a lot, and it is, but when you get to know Herrmann a little better you see that, in some ways, he's been preparing for this massive help effort his whole life.

His parents fled Germany for South Africa after the war in Europe, and he was born in Johannesburg. But by 1973, Herrmann's parents decided raising children under apartheid wasn't for them, and they moved to America, eventually settling in Orange County.

A few years later at age 17, Herrmann got his first job in the restaurant business as a dishwasher. "I loved the pace of the work, the camaraderie and the instant gratification of a job well done," he remembers.

That job became a turning point, instilling in him not only a love for the business of feeding people but a sense of community. "As an immigrant, English was my second language," he says. "My first job involved working alongside other immigrants: mothers, fathers, providers for their families. I worked next to people who sent money home, who worked very hard but also gave of themselves. Some of my greatest mentors include the dishwashers and bussers I worked with 40 years ago."

A sense of service instilled in him there was underscored by other life experiences, starting when he saw his first wife, Kathie, battle cancer for nearly two decades. She eventually died of the disease. "My need to give back began then," he says. "I wanted to support the community that had helped us so much during her long battle with cancer, so I was very active with Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure." Then he married Courtney, and her background surviving a very difficult childhood connected the Herrmanns to Canyon Acres and Seneca, two nonprofits that specialize in supporting at-risk children and families.

The last Great Recession was another turning point for this father of two. "As a restaurateur, I was a merchant of food, making a living selling it. I realized that some families would struggle to put food on the table. I just felt that I should be giving back to people who were struggling to get by. Food insecurity has been present and real throughout my life - it's a natural connection. It's unfortunate that now, due to this pandemic, we're going back to a very complicated place by reliving the 2008-2009 recession, and possibly much worse."

My neighborhood: We live in an old part of Santa Ana; our house was built in 1935. I love the soulfulness of the home, and the community, because it's a patchwork of different homes built over a long period of time. I love the old trees and the hilly topography. I love to be outside, usually in our local hills somewhere on the weekends, trail running. It's a place to reset and take in the beauty of California. Right now, the golden poppies are growing, flowers are starting to bloom. When you're plugged in and present out in the hills, you can participate firsthand in the seasonality of our state.

My sanctuary: My garden. It's my therapy. I planted a cutting garden of flowers outside my wife's office window, so I can literally hand her flowers I just picked. We give flowers as gifts. I also have a Japanese garden, and we have orange and avocado trees and a beehive in our yard that produces enough honey for us. It's the place where I feel beauty and can relax. But I am also responsible for it - it doesn't flourish unless I am in it.

Red or white? Red. I love the deep complexity of red wine. My favorite without question is a California Cabernet.

Angels or Dodgers? Angels, they're my hometown team.

Batman or Superman? Batman, because of all the gadgets.

On my nightstand... Is a book of early Picasso prints with the backstory of each one. I most often read when I'm on an airplane. The last book I read was "The Cathedral Within, Transforming Your Life By Giving Something Back" by Bill Shore, the founder of No Kid Hungry.

I'm really bad at: Repairing things! I have two left thumbs. I paint, but I am not a repairman.

On my bucket list: Continued time with my family. I'd like to see more of America; there are so many beautiful states and cities. On my shortlist is Monument Valley in Utah, and I would like to go back to Washington, D.C., to go through all of the museums.

Pet peeve: Lack of organization.

I wish more people knew about: Hunger and other causes, and how good it feels to be actively involved and how much of an impact you can actually make.

Best advice I ever received: Follow your heart.

My personal motto: I adopted Maya Angelou's "...people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel," and Mahatma Gandhi's "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

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THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

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PARTNERSHIP

Food bank plants a circle of kindness

Second Harvest and microfarm grow food, sell it, use money to buy food for needy

By Theresa Walker
thwalker@scng.com
@TellTheresa on Twitter

In what was once the staff parking lot at Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, a partnership is underway in which the result might be described as a benevolent circle packaged in a square box.

Produce sprouts from soil in row after row of planters, all elevated above the hot asphalt on waist-high rolling metal tables placed near the food bank's warehouse-sized distribution center in Irvine.

But this parking lot farm isn't producing just any produce, grown in any traditional way.



JEFF GRITCHEN — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Erik Cutter, founder of Alegría Fresh, left, and Harald Herrmann, CEO of Second Harvest, stand among raised gardens at the Irvine food bank.

Yes, there are roots and dirt and water involved. Add some social enterprise, too.

What's different? A couple of key features.

The first is the process employed by Alegría Fresh, the agricultural company growing the food. Alegría's founder, Erik Cutter, describes that process as regenerative organic, zero-waste urban microfarming.

The second is how Second Harvest, the largest food bank in Orange County, is using what's being grown.

This weekly harvest won't be eaten by the thousands of needy people Second Harvest helps feed. Instead, the produce will be sold, and the money it brings

at market will be used to buy food for the organization's clients.

The seed money — literally and figuratively — for the Alegría SoxxBoxx Farm comes from a \$150,000 grant provided by Bank of America.

Alegría is growing nutrient-dense produce. The current mix includes several types of lettuce, bright green to deep red, as well as kale and Swiss chard. There are onions and celery; herbs, including basil, parsley, sorrel and fennel; and edible flowers. That's just what's in the raised beds.

Nearby, several varieties of tomatoes climb the wire fence that separates the 3,000-square-foot SoxxBoxx Farm area from

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Food

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the many trucks that rumble past to drop off or pick up loads of food at Second Harvest's warehouse. In all, 54 SoxxBoxxes are growing food.

Alegría Fresh employs its proprietary SoxxBoxx Gro System, which uses rows of long, socklike mesh tubes to hold the plants inside the raised beds. It is designed to recycle carbon, reduce the release of methane gas, save water, maintain a cooling air flow and fend off pests. The system is similar to that used in the marijuana industry.

"I readapted it," Cutter said.

Second Harvest begins selling the SoxxBoxx Farm produce this week through an online delivery service — at \$30 a box, plus \$8 delivery charge — through its newly created Living Farmstand initiative. The farm

is expected to provide 100 boxes a week for the first month or so, a number that will be calibrated as things go along. Delivery is on Fridays and, for now, is limited to a 10-mile radius of Second Harvest's location near Orange County Great Park. A 15-mile delivery radius is expected in July.

Here's the big payoff: The money made by selling produce will help Second Harvest, part of the national Feeding America organization, purchase other food products in bulk. Those groceries, ranging from nonperishables to dairy products, are bought at discount and distributed to people in need of assistance — a number that has exploded in recent months due to the coronavirus shutdown that began in March and is only now easing.

"We're literally growing food to buy food at seven times the power," said Harald Herrmann, chief executive of Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County.

That's a win, win, win, win, win, win, win.

Idea could spread

Herrmann and Cutter say their collaborative is a first of its kind to involve a food bank growing food to sell food to buy food.

Through about 300 partner organizations in its food distribution network, Second Harvest delivered nearly 26 million pounds of food last year. Clients include children living in poverty, seniors on fixed incomes, and those who struggle with homelessness, disabilities and other issues that can fuel food insecurity.

The project managers hope that the farming experiment underway in the Second Harvest parking lot will be repeated by other food banks, and by individuals and organizations in urban neighborhoods who bear the unfortunate designation of "food deserts" because of a lack of nearby, dependable access to fresh,

nutritious vegetables and fruits.

Since 2016, Bank of America has provided \$50,000 grants annually to Solutions for Urban Agriculture to collaborate with Alegría Fresh on urban regenerative farming projects. The SoxxBoxx Farm-Living FarmStand project is bearing fruit from that investment.

"This is the first urban regenerative microfarm, now moving from pilot phase to actual full concept," said Shari Battle, Orange County market manager for Bank of America, who oversees community relations and cultivates partnerships in the area.

"It can be used in urban deserts anywhere," Cutter, who used Google to do his research, estimates that there are 40 square miles of unused or underutilized man-made surfaces in Los Angeles and Orange counties, where rolling, raised farm beds could be set up and

maintained. He envisions educational programs to teach children how to become plant doctors and to turn poor communities into their own sources of nutritious food. He sees his farming ideas taking root in homeless shelters and in prisons.

Cutter's focus — on developing a farming method that doesn't require acres of wide open land and doesn't over-tap scarce and costly water supplies — is partly philosophical and partly practical.

His bio says he has a background in biochemistry and oncology; his farming methods are all about adaptability, sustainability, zero waste, and producing food that boosts immunity — a critical factor in fighting the coronavirus.

Cutter works a 1.5-acre lot at the Farm Lab in the Great Park, about a mile from Second Harvest. There, 30 SoxxBoxxes add to the food grown for Living FarmStand, along with

composting bins that produce the "bio-rich" soil generated from discards and worms at work. (That's where the regenerative organic part comes in.)

The current SoxxBoxx Farm operation can provide a projected 300,000 pounds of fresh produce a year for the Living FarmStand. The cultivars in one box can be quickly turned into a salad that feeds up to six people.

Herrmann hopes to develop a sustainable and expanding subscription delivery.

"This is our victory garden," he said. "We brought this to life during a crisis."

How to order

Living FarmStand orders must be placed weekly by noon Thursdays. Cost is \$30 for a box, with additional delivery charge.


For more information, go to feedoc.org/living-farmstand. Questions can be emailed to livingfarmstand@feedoc.org.

Recent News *(continued)*

THE ORANGE COUNTY
REGISTER

OPINION • Opinion

We must remain unified to withstand this moment:
Harald Herrmann



Jasmine French, Food and Fund Drives Coordinator, checks one of about 33,000 boxes of produce that arrived at Second Harvest Food Bank Orange County in Irvine, CA on Monday, May 18, 2020. Each box, from the USDA Coronavirus Farm Assistance Program, holds about 20 pounds of food and will be distributed weekly through December. Second Harvest and the Orange County Food Bank will be distributing the produce. (Photo by Paul Bersebach, Orange County Register/SCNG)

By HARALD HERRMANN |

PUBLISHED: July 19, 2020 at 9:00 p.m. | UPDATED: July 19, 2020 at 11:34 p.m.

The past four months have been nothing short of life altering.

I've had the honor of serving Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County as CEO and the privilege to work alongside our team and our community partners in service of hundreds of thousands of people. We provided over 18 million pounds of food since March during an economic crisis sparked and sustained by the pandemic. The impacts of this pandemic are far from over.

From March to April, Orange County lost 222,400 jobs, primarily in the leisure, hospitality, trade, transportation and utilities industries. Experts say we are years from returning to a pre-COVID economy. In fact, the Becker Friedman Institute at the University of Chicago estimates that 42 percent of the recent pandemic-related layoffs will result in permanent job losses. Further, with stimulus monies ending in July and unemployment benefits beginning to expire in November, the 12- to 18-month outlook regarding food insecurity is bleak.

For perspective, before the COVID-19 crisis, we distributed 2.2 million pounds of food per month. Our distribution tripled in just 12 weeks, bringing our monthly average to six million pounds. How would other business sectors handle such a tremendous increase in demand? They would need additional help.

As we continue to meet demand, the funds and foods so generously donated to date will not extend in 2021—and they will unfortunately not meet the ongoing needs of the “newly vulnerable.” The CFAP program, which represents up to half of our current volume, ends in December.

However, unemployment will continue to persist, and our analysis shows an estimated 14.5% unemployment in July (when stimulus benefits are set to expire) and over 11 percent in December. Some experts anticipate a recovery where the unemployment and food curves may not coincide, meaning community demand will significantly outstrip the supply provided by these programs. Without supplemental USDA support, we estimate our shortfall to be three to four million pounds of food by the end of January 2021.

We must work together now to meet the clear demand for food facing our community.

We must plan to meet the expanding and long-lasting reality of food insecurity caused by this pandemic and the economic shockwave that has followed. We can do that by leaning in together, embracing this reality and preparing to meet the call for food, a basic must-have for our communities' health and well-being.

Let's lock arms, exchange ideas, marshal financial support and light the torch of community spirit needed to lift each other up and power through. We are better and stronger together.

To donate or partner with Second Harvest Food Bank of Orange County, visit FeedOC.org today.

Harald Herrmann is the CEO of the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Call for more information
949.653.2900

CLAUDIA KELLER
949-208-3136

CHRISTINE MONTEVIDEO
949-208-3150

DEBBIE GORDON
949-208-3148

MEGAN HUNKER
949-208-3187

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