Peoples Health is proud to once again sponsor the Second Harvest Food Bank Meals for Seniors Campaign. Last year, Peoples Health gave over $10,000 in monetary and food donations during the holiday season, and aims to exceed this success in 2013 as a $25,000 sponsor of the Meals for Seniors Campaign.

Senior hunger is a serious issue in Southeast Louisiana. Many seniors on fixed incomes must choose between purchasing food or medicines, and Peoples Health is driven to help break this cycle of hunger by supporting the efforts of groups like Second Harvest in the community.

Peoples Health will kick off the holiday season in New Orleans by hosting a Supermarket Sweep event at Breaux Mart in Metairie on Wednesday, Nov. 6. Like the classic game show, this event puts teams of TV personalities against one another to race through grocery store aisles, collecting items for the Second Harvest’s Thanksgiving Meals for Seniors.

On Tuesday Nov. 26, Peoples Health will further contribute to the Thanksgiving Meals for Seniors by providing two shifts of volunteers to package the meals at the Second Harvest Kitchen. Volunteers will then also deliver meals to one of the New Orleans-area Christopher Homes locations. The balance of the meals will be distributed to seniors at other Christopher Homes locations in Orleans, Jefferson and St. Bernard parishes by Second Harvest throughout the course of the day.

Additionally, Peoples Health’s donation will facilitate Second Harvest’s delivery of meals to seniors enrolled in Jefferson Council on Aging and New Orleans Council on Aging’s senior centers during the Christmas/Hanukkah holiday. This is a time of year when local Councils on Aging are not well-served and Second Harvest can leverage Peoples Health’s charitable gift to maximize this important service. In total, the Thanksgiving and holiday meals initiatives will provide more than 2,500 meals to local seniors.

For more information about Medicare benefits, annual enrollment or Peoples Health plan options, visit www.peopleshealth.com or call (800) 639-3950.
President’s Message
Let’s Tell the Truth About Hunger

Every year, Second Harvest Food Bank serves food to more than 40,000 seniors in South Louisiana. But sometimes numbers like this one obscure reality and obstruct compassion. Sometimes they prevent us from seeing and hearing, and especially feeling the truth – in this instance, the number one is too many. When one person stares at an empty cupboard, an empty wallet, or an empty table, that one person suffers. It doesn’t matter whether we know them or not; we all know what suffering is. We’ve all felt it in one way or another. And if there is even one thing we can do to alleviate suffering in someone else’s life, then one person can inspire us to action.

Margaret Harper lives in Metairie. She lives alone in a one-bedroom house. After years of work as a public school teacher in Louisiana, she had to retire due to macular degeneration. Margaret is now legally blind. She lives on less than $12,000 a year. She used to pick up a box of emergency food from the Watson Community Center every month, enough to get her through a few days, but since she lost her license she’s had trouble finding transportation.

Margaret is also a SNAP participant. SNAP stands for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as food stamps. These benefits help her make it through the month on her fixed income. When Charlotte, one of our Social Service Coordinators, told her that Congress was debating potential cuts to the program, Margaret said:

“Please do not cut the program. There are too many Americans who are in the same situation I am, who really need the benefits from the SNAP program. I’m thankful that I receive food stamps.”

Margaret’s right. There are too many Americans, too many Louisianans, who are in the same situation. In 2011, almost 10% of Louisiana seniors were at risk of hunger. Nationally, the number of older Americans experiencing food insecurity has more than doubled since 2001. These numbers underscore the magnitude of the challenge we face as a society. But we only need to hear Margaret’s story to realize that this is not a problem we can ignore. Hunger is not something that only exists in other countries or other communities. It exists here, in our state, our neighborhoods, sometimes in our family or household. And too often we have no idea; too often hunger is silent, and the impact is that much worse for the silence.

I’d like to thank Margaret for sharing her story with us, and allowing us to share it with you. At Second Harvest, we would like to help share the stories of individuals and families who have struggled with or are currently struggling with hunger. Together, let’s tell the truth about hunger. It starts with one person. One story. If you’ve experienced what it means to be hungry, tell us, tell your friends, tell your family. One is simply too many.

Natalie A. Jayroe, President & CEO

SNAP Cuts Make it Harder for Louisiana Seniors to Put Food on the Table

Melanie McGuire, Social Services Supervisor

Sixty five-year-old Emilia Uribe is one of the many Louisiana seniors who put food on the table with the help of SNAP (formerly known as Food Stamps).

Emilia lost her job in home health care in 2012, and has been unable to find employment since. “I used to make good money, $20.00 an hour. I never needed government benefits,” she said.

Now, her weekly unemployment check is insufficient to cover even her most basic living expenses. Emilia finds herself having to choose between paying her utilities and buying food. “Who would think I would have to make these kinds of sacrifices each month? I rarely eat three meals a day anymore.”

For most SNAP recipients, SNAP benefits, which average less than $1.40 per person per meal, are usually exhausted by the third week of the month. Individuals like Emilia must visit a local food pantry monthly in order to supplement their family’s basic food supply.

On November 1, Congress enacted legislation to reduce SNAP benefits to Emilia and millions of others. She now has even fewer resources to cover her essential expenses, including food and health insurance. “I do not like to ask for help, but without a job these services are necessary to make it each month,” she said.

We are working with Emilia and thousands of people like her in an effort to ensure that they have access to three meals a day, because in a country, a state, and a community with the resources that we have, no one should go hungry.

Together, We Can Solve Hunger

By helping Second Harvest provide food and services to our network of partner agencies, community supporters give thousands of individuals in need the help they need to sustain their lives. We are extremely grateful for the generosity of the following foundations and businesses:

Abita Brewing Company, LLC
Chevron
CDS of Louisiana, Inc.
The Davis-Molony Fund
Drago’s Seafood Restaurant
Feeding America
The Feinstein Foundation
First NBC Bank
Goldring Family Foundation
GPOA Foundation
Mary’s Corporate Services
People’s Health Network
Rent-A-Center
Rotary Club of New Orleans Riverbend
Touro Infirmary
United Way of Southeast Louisiana
United Way of St. Charles
The Walmart Foundation
Woolard Family Foundation

As of July 1, 2013 - September 30, 2013
The work of Second Harvest would be impossible without the generous and sustained effort of the dedicated volunteers who participate in a variety of ways. Sixteen thousand volunteers generously contribute their time and energy each year, many working in either the Repack Room or Commercial Kitchen. Retirees Eris and Al Marse are one such couple. Having volunteered at Second Harvest since 2011, these avid cooks look forward to their volunteer stints, preparing hot meals for Louisiana children at risk of hunger.

“It’s real hard work compared to being in a regular kitchen,” Eris said. “But it’s the need that keeps bringing us back.” She told us that she and Al are happy do anything and everything in our Community Kitchen, even the cleaning.

She also said they keep coming back to Second Harvest because they find the work rewarding and feel truly needed. They enjoy the company of the other volunteers, many of whom are also seniors. They are regulars in the kitchen every Wednesday and have donated more than 250 hours of their time to prepare meals for children.

We simply would not be able to operate without the countless efforts of people like Mr. and Mrs. Marse, people who give freely of their time and talents every day. Volunteers are engaged in every aspect of our organization, from sorting and packing food boxes, to preparing hot meals, teaching nutrition education classes, providing public assistance enrollment support, and implementing fundraisers. Solving hunger is a community effort, and nobody exemplifies that better than our volunteers.

For more information about volunteering at Second Harvest, please contact Lauren Robinson at larobinson@secondharvest.org.

New Partnership Provides Hot Meals for Local Seniors

Jay Vise, Communications Specialist

One of the primary aims of Second Harvest is to provide hot meals to local seniors. Five days a week, our staff and volunteers cook and deliver hundreds of meals to places like the PACE Senior Center in the Bywater, a location where elderly residents from across the metro area come for medical assistance, advice, counseling and food.

Gina Melia, Director of Second Harvest Food Bank’s Community Kitchen, says the production of hot dishes for the elderly requires special consideration, ingredients and recipes. “We stay in constant contact with PACE to get feedback about quality control and menu variety,” Gina said. “Our production of meals for seniors requires far more planning and preparation than meals for younger members of our communities.”

Kitchen specialists must take into consideration factors such as the special dietary needs of the elderly and the need to limit sodium and sugar in some dishes. All the extra attention to detail also leads to higher costs, because some of the specialized labor and equipment used at Second Harvest cannot be managed by volunteers.

However, the additional effort and expense is worthwhile for Gina and the dedicated specialists and Second Harvest volunteers who prepare and deliver these senior meals. For many of the visitors to the PACE senior center, this is the only hot meal they will have all day. This is an important component in maintaining good health through proper nutrition.

To learn more about Second Harvest’s senior and other programs, please contact Lisa Abel at label@secondharvest.org.

Dedicated Couple Keeps Coming Back to Prepare Meals for Community Children

Melanie Hoeman, Volunteer Services Supervisor

The work of Second Harvest would be impossible without the generous and sustained effort of the dedicated volunteers who participate in a variety of ways. Sixteen thousand volunteers generously contribute their time and energy each year, many working in either the Repack Room or Commercial Kitchen. Retirees Eris and Al Marse are one such couple. Having volunteered at Second Harvest since 2011, these avid cooks look forward to their volunteer stints, preparing hot meals for Louisiana children at risk of hunger.

“It’s real hard work compared to being in a regular kitchen,” Eris said. “But it’s the need that keeps bringing us back.” She told us that she and Al are happy do anything and everything in our Community Kitchen, even the cleaning.

She also said they keep coming back to Second Harvest because they find the work rewarding and feel truly needed. They enjoy the company of the other volunteers, many of whom are also seniors. They are regulars in the kitchen every Wednesday and have donated more than 250 hours of their time to prepare meals for children.

We simply would not be able to operate without the countless efforts of people like Mr. and Mrs. Marse, people who give freely of their time and talents every day. Volunteers are engaged in every aspect of our organization, from sorting and packing food boxes, to preparing hot meals, teaching nutrition education classes, providing public assistance enrollment support, and implementing fundraisers. Solving hunger is a community effort, and nobody exemplifies that better than our volunteers.

For more information about volunteering at Second Harvest, please contact Lauren Robinson at larobinson@secondharvest.org.
When Congress Cuts SNAP, Charity Can’t Fill the Gap

Mike Kantor, Director of Public Affairs and Community Engagement

On November 1, every household in Louisiana on SNAP (food stamps) lost a portion of its monthly SNAP benefits – a staggering blow for so many families in need. A household of four saw an average reduction of $36 per month. One of these households is the Webster family.

Elizabeth Webster lives in Metairie with her two teenage daughters and husband, a part-time tow truck driver. Kenny’s salary is not enough to make ends meet, and the family relies on SNAP to help put food on the table. According to Elizabeth, a $36 monthly reduction is more than “three days of food for our family.”

Stories like the Webster’s are playing out among hundreds of thousands of families across the state. The cuts to SNAP will mean that Second Harvest Food Bank, and pantries, churches and shelters throughout south Louisiana will see an increased demand for food. Unfortunately, organizations like ours cannot fill the gap. For Second Harvest to replace the lost meals, we would need to double the amount of food and funds we receive from donors every year. Meanwhile, more and more people in Louisiana are going hungry now.

Ultimately, the solution to hunger is a strong economy with well-paying jobs. While we work together to improve the economy and create those jobs over time, we first have to make sure that Louisianans are not going hungry today. Meanwhile, Congress is currently debating further cuts to SNAP, which would take more food off the table when struggling families need it most.

Solving hunger in our community requires a strong public-private partnership. Private charity cannot do it alone. Today, we encourage you to stand with Second Harvest and ask Congress to be a partner in solving hunger.

To learn how you can get involved and reach out to your elected representatives, contact me at mkantor@secondharvest.org or 504.729.6351.

A Holiday Gift that Pays it Forward

The holidays are fast approaching, and we have the perfect gift for everyone on your list. Give the gift that gives back: a Holiday Tribute gift to Second Harvest Food Bank on behalf of someone special. Hunger doesn’t take a holiday. But with your Holiday Tribute gift, you will help to ensure that a family, senior and/or child at risk of hunger has a brighter season this year.

To make a Holiday Tribute gift, contact Don Pike at 504.729.2858 or dpike@secondharvest.org. You can also make your donation on our website: http://www.no-hunger.org/donate. When you make your gift, simply include the name(s) of those you wish to honor for the holidays and include an address for mailing a personalized holiday gift acknowledgement card.

2013 Board of Directors

Jan M. Hayden, Chair
Andrew Favret, Vice Chair
Regina B. Tempel, Treasurer
Shyle Starkes Fantaci, Secretary
Rory Zuppardo, Past Chair
Sr. Anthony Barczykowski, D.C.
Stephen H. Bohl
Amy Bowman
James Carter
Karl J. Connor, JD, LL.M.
Dave Ducote
John Eckholdt
Frances Fayard
Perry Fontenille
Anna Frachou
Nick Karl
Philip R. May
Minh T. Nguyen
Brenda Darler Reichlin
Sheila Sandford
Elivia Broussard Sheridan
Dane Sneedgrass
Bruce L. Solis
Cheryl Teamer
Veronica Torres
D. Althea Tuffa
Joel Vilmenay
Bruce Wainer
Patrice E. Weeks
Bishop Roger Morin, President Emeritus
Natalie A. Layme, President & CEO

Inside this issue...

A Proud Partner in the Fight Against Hunger
Let’s Tell the Truth About Hunger
SNAP Cuts Make it Hard for Louisiana Seniors