



## President's Message: Love in Action

As I sat in my Memphis home on August 30, 2005, watching the horror of the broken levees unfold on CNN, I immediately knew where I wanted to be. I had been asked to help turn around a struggling food bank in California, so it took me until November to get down to the Joint Field Office (JFO) in Baton Rouge as the Feeding America representative.

I spent the next intense month coordinating response efforts with other voluntary organizations and getting a crash course in the chaos of disaster response from the surreal setting of a windowless grey concrete former department store. Working with urgency with the Red Cross, Catholic Charities, Salvation Army, Southern Baptist Convention, Seventh-day Adventists, Mennonites and so many others to provide food, shelter and clothing for hundreds of thousands of people struggling to get home and get started on rebuilding their lives. Shocked by the governmental dysfunction at all levels, we also faced the challenge that first winter of getting warm clothes to people living in their cars, in parks and in houses without power.

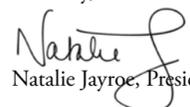
Upon arriving in New Orleans, my impression was of a city wounded unto death – everything seemed still, colorless, silent: Houses tumbled into each other, huge oak trees uprooted, flooded and ruined cars under overpasses, thousands of refrigerators and debris piled up in neutral grounds, and the smell of decay and mold. Even as I cracked the first of many windshields of my car and replaced tires punctured by nails and glass, I fell instantly, overwhelmingly and unalterably in love with the city and region.

Within 48 hours of the landfall of Katrina, Second Harvest staff had reassembled in Baton Rouge, even though many had lost their own homes. By January 2006, Second Harvest had become the largest food bank in the world, distributing more than 8 million pounds (or 6.6 million meals) in September 2005 alone after Hurricane Rita devastated the western side of our service area. Hundreds of food bank experts came from around the country, setting up logistics systems, driving trucks, operating forklifts. With little available housing, staff lived on the floor of the warehouse, in RVs, hotels and finally FEMA trailers.

For the first two years I could not stop myself from crying when describing the overwhelming obstacles people faced to rebuild their lives. But I also cried because there was hope. There was the courage to honestly confront the challenges the people of New Orleans and South Louisiana faced long before the storms, and the determination to make the most of the opportunities afforded by the devastation. If the New Orleans Saints could overturn decades of failure with a single play in the repaired domed building that had witnessed so much suffering, we could triumph over all adversity and build a better, stronger, fairer city and region.

With renewed and new partners, Second Harvest has worked to be part of the renaissance. We opened a branch in Lafayette to improve the outreach to Acadiana and Lake Charles. Moving into a larger Harahan facility allowed us to handle the more than 27 million pounds (22.5 million meals) we now distribute annually to 210,000 people across 23 parishes. Programs to help especially vulnerable people are in place, such as backpacks for children to take home food on the weekends, mobile pantries to deliver fresh food directly to rural areas, and school pantries that allow families to take home nutritious groceries. Our Community Kitchen now prepares and distributes 400,000 meals annually. We started teaching people to stretch their food dollars and cook more nutritiously, and also set up a hotline in which Wellness Coordinators help people sign up for SNAP benefits (including Disaster SNAP) and refer them to other lifelines.

For Second Harvest, hunger is always a disaster, whether it is felt by a single child going to school hungry, an elderly person choosing between food and medicine, or an entire region displaced by the largest natural and manmade disaster ever to befall the United States. Bolstered by the courage and commitment of the people of New Orleans and South Louisiana, and the compassion of so many across our country and the world, we have distributed more than 250 million meals since those darkest days of 2005. We are privileged to be part of the great lesson in love New Orleans and South Louisiana has shown to the entire world: honoring and cherishing our unique past, and helping to build a stronger, better and more resilient future.

Sincerely,  
  
Natalie Jayroe, President and CEO

# Got Produce?

Second Harvest is blessed to receive thousands of pounds of donated fruits and vegetables every month.

Thanks to back-yard growers and farmers alike, we are able to provide fresh, nutritious produce to families across 23 parishes of South Louisiana.

If you have fresh produce you'd like to donate, contact **Megan Nuismer at 504-906-5474**, or email [Mnuismer@secondharvest.org](mailto:Mnuismer@secondharvest.org).



## Tomorrow's Harvest: Help Fight Hunger for Years to Come

Legacy gifts ensure that Second Harvest can continue to lead the fight against hunger and provide assistance to the children, families and seniors who need it most. You can make a lasting impact by naming Second Harvest as a beneficiary of a will, trust, life insurance policy, or retirement or savings account.

If you have already included Second Harvest in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you, and include you in our legacy society, Tomorrow's Harvest.

Please contact Heather Sweeney, Director of Development, at [hsweeney@secondharvest.org](mailto:hsweeney@secondharvest.org) or (504) 729-2839.

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# FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Leading the fight against hunger and building food security in South Louisiana by providing food access, advocacy, education and disaster response.



## Kids Cafe: Delivering Hot Meals to At-Risk Students

Every day, thousands of South Louisiana students head straight from school to after-school programs. Many of the most at-risk students receive a hot meal while there, thanks to the Second Harvest "Kids Cafe" program.

Ariska Everett is the Director of the Sojourner Truth Community Center, one of the after-school locations participating in this nutrition program. Her volunteers help students with homework in a safe and structured environment.

"Many of these children haven't eaten since earlier in the day, so they're very hungry," Everett said. "Even for the ones who go home first, many of them have working parents and won't get a hot meal otherwise."

She has seen a dramatic

improvement in the students' performance once they started having access to the meals at her program.

"We know that when children are full, they think better. Once they get a meal, we find their energy levels go up, they are more focused and can concentrate, and we get more productivity out of them."

Every Kids Cafe meal prepared in our Community Kitchen meets USDA requirements for healthy standards, and includes items such as whole grain and whole wheat biscuits or rolls, fat-free milk, and vegetables.

On average, Second Harvest has cooked and delivered 1,800 meals per day to dozens of after-school program sites in Jefferson and Orleans Parishes. Our goal,

**"We know that when children are full, they think better."**

however, is to serve 2,500 students per day this year and to expand to more parishes. With the help of our donors, partner sites, and hundreds of volunteers, we think it's an attainable goal.

If you know of an after-school program that would like to receive free meals and snacks starting September 8, please contact our Children's Programs Coordinator Tanya O'Reilly at 504-729-2842 or [toreilly@secondharvest.org](mailto:toreilly@secondharvest.org).

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## After Katrina, Your Donations Made the Difference

It was one of the the worst disaster in American history: Hundreds of thousands of homes flooded, more than 1,800 dead, and millions of lives disrupted. Ten years after Hurricane Katrina, many areas of New Orleans and Southeast Louisiana have bounced back stronger than ever.

However, in other neighborhoods, hunger is a problem yet to be solved.

Gail Womack-Murray now runs Love In Action Ministries, a partner organization providing food and counseling for thousands of local families every month in Eastern New Orleans. In 2005, after Katrina's floodwaters devastated the area, Miss Gail (as she likes to be called) partnered with Second Harvest to help distribute the millions of pounds of donations that were streaming in.

"Our church where the pantry was got eight feet of water," she said. "Just a few days after people started coming back into the city, we had a massive tent set up on Chef Menteur Highway. Second Harvest 18-wheelers delivered food and supplies for the next 18 months."

Second Harvest President and CEO Natalie Jayroe recalls what it was like in the chaotic aftermath of the storm.

"We had relocated our operation to a former Walmart near Baton Rouge," Jayroe said. "With our partners at Feeding America, we became the largest food bank in history. The support from across the country and around the world was humbling."

For a time, it wasn't clear if New Orleans would be rebuilt. Many questioned why so many wanted to return to a city that had been virtually destroyed.

"When you get to know the people of South Louisiana, you get to know their resiliency, their courage, their love of a good time...and even their sense of humor that gets them through disasters large and small.

There really isn't a place like it in the world."

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who supported South Louisiana with their donations and prayers in the aftermath of this devastating event. Second Harvest is more prepared than ever to respond to the threat of the next emergency. In the meantime, we continue the fight against the everyday disaster of hunger in our communities.

**"Second Harvest 18-wheelers delivered food and supplies for the next 18 months."**

## Southwest Louisiana Bounces Back from Rita



Just weeks after Katrina's floodwaters devastated New Orleans and the Gulf Coast, Hurricane Rita slammed into Southwest Louisiana.

Deacon Edward Levine of Catholic Charities of Lake Charles recalls returning to the area after evacuating to Shreveport.

"It was devastation, no infrastructure. Some areas were without power for up to a month."

Within a couple of days after returning, the first of many Second Harvest Food Bank 18-wheelers started to arrive, filled with food and supplies. Deacon Levine joined forces with other churches, setting up staging areas at places such as the First Baptist Church of Johnson Bayou.

"Our church had been swept through by the storm, as had so many others," he said. "We worked together and went out to outlying areas delivering food and whatever money we had in our checking account to Deridder, Oakdale, and other hard-hit areas."

Deacon Levine remains grateful to the supporters and donors to Second Harvest for their generous support after the storm.

"We wound up receiving more than \$1.5 million worth of food during the crisis. If it happens again, it's good to know that Second Harvest will be there to help out our area again."

The Relief Center at the Greater St. Mary Baptist Church in Lake Charles is another community agency supported by your donations.

Coordinator Pauline Hurst found her way to Southwest Louisiana by way of Hurricane Katrina.

"We evacuated New Orleans to stay at the St. Mary Church in Lake Charles...and then, had to evacuate again when Rita hit."

After returning to Lake Charles, Miss Hurst coordinated efforts to aid families impacted by both Rita and Katrina.

"We had many Katrina families living on the church grounds, and so many local residents were hit hard as well. We set up five distribution centers for anyone who needed help."

Ten years later, Miss Hurst has set down roots in Lake Charles. She now oversees the Relief Center at St. Mary, one of hundreds of community organizations supported by Second Harvest. She misses New Orleans, but has felt at home in Lake Charles from the start, despite the circumstances.

"People welcomed us with open arms when we first arrived, and the community here in Lake Charles is very hospitable."



## Enjoy the Best Burgers, Bourbon and Beer in New Orleans!

### And Feed a Hungry Family at the Same Time.

The fourth-annual Burgers, Bourbon & Beer extravaganza is coming up on October 18th. Help us judge some of the best burgers in New Orleans in a head-to-head battle!

Best of all, you'll be feeding hungry families at the same time. The event at Generations Hall will showcase slider-sized burgers served by a some of New Orleans' hottest local restaurants, each paired with a specialty bourbon cocktail or Abita Beer.

Chefs will compete for "Best Burger" bragging rights decided by a panel of judges, and patrons will vote for their favorite burger to take home the "People's Choice" award.

Special thanks to our sponsors Abita Brewing Company and Glazers.

Get details on this 21 and over event at [www.no-hunger.org/events](http://www.no-hunger.org/events)!

## More Ways to Help



## Bringing Healthy Living to Those in Need

Second Harvest Food Bank has recently hosted health fairs in Orleans, Jefferson and Terrebonne Parishes. These events brought food, medical screenings, and healthy living services to hundreds of local residents.

"It's an amazing opportunity to reach out beyond our four walls and meet more of the people in our communities who struggle with hunger," said Second Harvest Client Services Manager Melanie McGuire.

"While these Health Fairs have helped hundreds of people get the extra care they need, in addition to providing nutritious food, there is still so much more to do."

One of the people who attended the Houma Health Fair was 59 year-old Vietnam Veteran Kenneth Whalen.

"This has been a real blessing," said Whalen, a Houma resident who now faces several major health challenges. "For this past year and a half, I've been going through Veterans health care. I can't work, and without the food bank, I'd be in trouble."

In all, the three health fairs have distributed more than 15,000 pounds of fresh food. Our mobile pantries at these events are stocked with thousands of pounds of fresh produce, given to residents in areas where the nearest grocery store may be miles away. And more health fairs are planned in the near future.

"Our next health fair will be in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans as part of the 10th anniversary commemoration of Hurricane Katrina," McGuire said. "We also have health fairs coming up in New Orleans East and on the Northshore. And we're also looking for anyone who would like to underwrite the cost of our health fairs, so that we can reach even more people in need."

95 cents of every dollar you donate to Second Harvest goes directly to programs like these. For more information about our Health Fairs, contact Melanie McGuire at 504-729-6340, or at [mmcguire1@secondharvest.org](mailto:mmcguire1@secondharvest.org).