

MAY 2021

# food for thought



A test of  
**OUR  
STRENGTH**



 **SECOND  
HARVEST  
FOOD BANK**  
FEEDING SOUTH LOUISIANA

[no-hunger.org](http://no-hunger.org)

# A message *from Natalie* | Returning to a new "normal"

During the past year, Second Harvest staff and volunteers have witnessed countless neighbors impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic emergency. Thousands have been people who have never visited a food pantry and they tell us, "I never thought I'd need help with food for my family."

**Thankfully, we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, with vaccines, businesses reopening, and grandparents able to hug their grandchildren after what felt like a lifetime apart. But as Louisiana and our nation slowly return to something like "normal," some parts of our economy like the tourism and convention business will take many more months to recover. And hunger will remain an everyday emergency for so many people in our communities.**

While Second Harvest is experienced in responding to disasters and emergencies like the pandemic, for nearly forty years our main focus has been the day-to-day job of helping hundreds of thousands of people access food and better nutrition. Thanks to you, that mission will continue as it has since 1982.

**So many people who are seeking help with food are going through a difficult life event. One 77-year old woman from Lafayette told us recently, "We lost my husband to cancer, and all our savings went to his treatments before he died." Often, seniors like her**

**are living on fixed incomes and only qualify for less than \$100 a month in food stamps. Thousands of people suddenly find themselves in the same boat every week of the year.**

The past year has been a test of our strength as a community, and you have made a difference by helping Second Harvest respond during these extraordinary circumstances. We will face more challenges to come in hurricanes, storms, freezes and flooding. Absolutely everything Second Harvest does in "normal" days and during emergencies is because people like you donated time, money, food, and prayers. On behalf of everyone we serve, thank you for your trust in our mission and your generosity.

Sincerely,



Natalie Jayroe  
President and CEO



Thank you for your trust in *our mission* and *your generosity.*

## *Your Impact:* Second Harvest's COVID-19 Response

As the pandemic that took more than 10,000 lives in Louisiana slowly winds down, we'd like to take a look back at what you made possible since March 16, 2020, the first official day of the emergency declaration in our state:



### FOOD

In any regular 12-month period, Second Harvest usually distributes about 35 million pounds of food. In the 12 months since our response began in March 2020, Second Harvest has distributed nearly 70 million pounds of food.



### PREPARED MEALS

Our two kitchen facilities in Lafayette and Jefferson Parish normally produce 1,200 meals a day for seniors and children. For several months during our emergency response, that total went up to more than 10,000 meals a day.



### VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the backbone of our operations. Over the last 14 months, Second Harvest volunteers have logged nearly 80,000 hours in regular operations, COVID-19 response, and hurricane relief.



### MOVING THE FOOD

Our fleet of trucks logged more than 620,000 miles over South Louisiana roads to deliver food to those in need.



### PEOPLE IN NEED

We saw a historic number of people reaching out for food assistance for the first time in their lives. More than 50,000 new faces visited our pantries and emergency COVID-19 distributions.

Every single donation goes on to help the children, families, and seniors who need just a little bit of help with food to make ends meet.



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## Thank You for Helping Seniors Like Ms. Carole

Seventy-seven-year-old Carole R. of Lafayette receives regular assistance from the First Assembly of God Church food pantry, one of the hundreds of community partners supported by truckloads of food from Second Harvest's facilities.

**"It is a tremendous help. I live alone, one daughter is in Lafayette and the rest of my children are around the country. The food is wonderful, meat, vegetables, and sometimes organic food."**

Ms. Carole hasn't always needed the help. She spent her life working as a nurse, and kept working well past retirement age because her husband's illness depleted their life savings. He passed eight years ago, and she kept trying to work until she was 75.

"I kept trying and trying to stay on as a nurse, but I have back issues and the doctor finally told me I had to stop and stay home." Ms. Carole now relies on a limited government Social Security check to get by.

She told us about getting the courage to ask for help. "It was hard to go the first time. I've never asked for help in my life, and the volunteers at the church were so nice and hugged me. After they put all these groceries in my car, I cried all the way home, it was overwhelming."

Now, she drives her next-door neighbor with a disabled son to the church to get assistance as well.

Stories like Ms. Carole's are unfortunately not unique in our state. One in four seniors struggle with hunger in Louisiana, and we have one of the highest rates of senior hunger in the country. Thousands of seniors struggle every day and have tough decisions to make between food and other basic needs like healthcare and housing. Hunger puts their often precarious health at greater risk.

There are limited public services available for seniors, and for programs like Meals on Wheels, there are long waitlists. Second Harvest Food Bank and our partner food pantries are a lifeline for so many seniors, and your generosity helps keep our pantry shelves stocked.

**It's the mission of Second Harvest to reach as many Ms. Carole's in South Louisiana who need our help. This is only possible because someone like you made a gift of love to Second Harvest. Every single donation goes on to help the children, families, and seniors who need just a little bit of help with food to make ends meet.**

# The Lasting Legacy of #9

**For fifteen years, Quarterback Drew Brees led the Saints to victory year after year. As he leaves the football field to start another career, our thanks to Drew and his wife Brittany for their years of support for Second Harvest's mission.**

The Brees Dream Foundation has supported many charitable organizations across our area. But when the COVID-19 pandemic began just over a year ago, Drew and Brittany made a generous gift to Second Harvest and other partners to help feed children and seniors who were most impacted. Thanks to support from the Brees Family and

donors like you, Second Harvest staff and volunteers were able to ramp up meal production from 1,200 meals a day to more than 10,000 meals a day during the peak of the COVID-19 emergency.

Their gift will have a lasting legacy for Second Harvest's mission across South Louisiana. Equipment upgrades at our Community Kitchen in New Orleans and the St. Joseph Diner kitchen in Lafayette will help provide more meals to those in need month after month, for many years to come. The generous support from all our donors, just like you, will make these meals possible.

Our deepest thanks to Drew and Brittany for all they have done, and will continue to do, for Louisiana, and for bringing our community together over the last 15 years.



**SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK**  
FEEDING SOUTH LOUISIANA

Second Harvest works in partnership with:



*contact us*

700 Edwards Ave  
New Orleans, LA 70123-3121  
504.734.1322

215 East Pinhook Road  
Lafayette, LA 70501-8533  
337.237.7711

To learn more or to make a donation to Second Harvest Food Bank visit [www.no-hunger.org](http://www.no-hunger.org)

