

FEBRUARY 2022

food for thought



A Time
for Hope



 **SECOND
HARVEST
FOOD BANK**
FEEDING SOUTH LOUISIANA

 A MINISTRY OF
AGRICULTURE
NEW ORLEANS

 FEEDING
AMERICA



no-hunger.org

A Message *From Natalie* | A Spring of Love and Opportunity



It's hard to believe almost two years have passed since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 and Second Harvest's response to the sudden increase in hunger and food insecurity. As we look back with pride to what you helped Second Harvest accomplish in our communities, we continue to have our sights

on feeding as many families as possible in what we hope will be a post-pandemic world.

In the last two years, thanks to your donations, Second Harvest has provided more than 100 million meals to people in need across 23 South Louisiana parishes. We served a record number of first-time visitors at our partner food pantries, including people reaching out for help for the first time in their lives. This was also the first time we responded to four hurricanes in a two-year period, adding more challenges to our operations. And through it all, our staff and volunteers helped feed hundreds of thousands of neighbors all while dealing with the impacts of COVID-19 and the hurricanes in their own lives.

Spring normally finds us looking forward to Carnival, parades, and crawfish boils. Although many of us have the good fortune to return to these activities, we're mindful that hunger continues to be a struggle in every zip code of our service area, from Lake Charles to Lafayette, from Cocodrie to Covington. As we slowly return to something like normal, it is important to remember that thousands of families, children, seniors, and others will spend their spring trying to decide between healthy food and bills for other basic needs.

With your gifts of love, we will continue our year-round fight against the everyday disaster of hunger. In a state with so many spring blessings to come, you are the answer to the prayers of our neighbors facing hunger. Thank you for making Second Harvest's mission possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie J".

Natalie Jayroe
President & CEO

A Long Road Ahead for Mrs. Rosa

Born and raised in South Louisiana, Mrs. Rosa has survived her share of hurricanes as far back as Hurricane Audrey in 1957. But as Hurricane Ida bore down on her home in Lafourche Parish, she prayed for the best.

"After Ida passed, Mrs. Rosa temporarily relocated to Lafayette while her storm-damaged home was repaired. She visited our Lafayette facility in need of food and our team welcomed her with open arms," said Second Harvest Impact Manager, Brittany Bowie.

"When a hurricane hits one part of our state, so many people have to pull up stakes and live in a different part of Louisiana for a time. It can be a stressful time in an unfamiliar town, but we are here to show them that everything we have was a gift of love, and we're honored to be able to help someone like Mrs. Rosa."

Like so many others, she still faces a long road ahead in dealing with rebuilding and insurance while living many miles from her home. With your help, we will continue to help thousands of people like Mrs. Rosa who find themselves in need of help after a disaster or emergency.

Before she continued on her way, Mrs. Rosa asked to share a message for people who are experiencing loss and suffering for the first time.

"Keep the faith, God is with you always, we are all with you."



You're Helping Kids Learn on a Full Stomach



For children to thrive in school and at home, proper nutrition and having enough to eat is critical. Second Harvest helps thousands of children every year through our child nutrition programs, including Kids Cafe, Summer Feeding, School Pantry, and Backpack Programs. All of which are made possible thanks to your monetary donations.

Community Works is just one of many local organizations supported by our after-school Kids Cafe meal program. Community Works partners with schools and youth programs to provide a safe and enriching environment for students after the school day ends.

"With all the distractions and challenges faced by children these days, it is so important that they are supervised in the afternoons before their parents or guardians get home from work," said Todd Schaeffer, Site Director of the Community Works after-school program at the International School of Louisiana. We provide that structure, instruction, and encouragement while Second Harvest delivers the hot meals we serve to them every day."

Schaeffer says the cost of providing high-quality meals and snacks to hundreds of children would be a major impact on their ability to operate. **"Thank God Second Harvest provides these free meals, it frees up so much funding for other areas like hiring tutors."**

School-based food pantries are another way we help at-risk youths and their families. Second Harvest Community Nutrition Manager Kristen Wesley says these "miniature grocery stores" are especially helpful to working families. Second Harvest provides food for 16 school pantries at high-need schools across South Louisiana, including 4 new school pantries launched this school year in Lake Charles.

"Parents working to make ends meet can find it hard to find free time to visit one of our regular pantries," she said. "These in-school pantries allow a family to pick up food at times that are more convenient to their schedule."

Students also help stock and run the school pantries. "For these four pantries in Calcasieu and in all our other parishes, it helps educate children about hunger, and in a way that is respectful to families in need.

Second Harvest is Planting the Seeds by Supporting Local Family Farms

For Kevin Ardoin, learning how to farm from his grandfather is not just a fond memory, but a fundamental life skill.

Ardoin comes from generations of farmers and remembers how his grandfather taught him to plow two acres of land with a small rototiller. Farm life can be challenging, but Ardoin believes watching his grandfather is the reason he became a farmer.

"Being able to plant something in the ground and watch it grow is amazing," Ardoin says. "There's no better feeling than growing something beautiful to eat and seeing it put a smile on someone's face."

In 2019, Ardoin devoted his 43-acre Zydeco Farms in Evangeline Parish to growing fruits and vegetables.

Working alongside his brother, Jerry, they had success selling cucumbers, okra, and tomatoes at farmers' markets throughout Acadiana — then the COVID-19 crisis hit and many growers like Ardoin struggled to stay afloat as the farmers' markets and restaurants closed.

"I was banking on attending as many farmers markets as we could to sell my produce and get my name out," says Ardoin. "As a small farmer, my budget is tight and I was relying heavily on investors, but then the crisis came, and all my investors had to back out because of their own challenges from the pandemic."

In July 2021, Second Harvest partnered with Ardoin in an effort to create equitable outcomes for farmers. We pledged a financial contribution to help support a generational farm that he could pass on to his son and also help him overcome the challenges caused by the pandemic.



In return, Ardoin dedicated 5.25 acres of his land to growing 100,000 pounds of fresh produce like cabbage, okra, and broccoli for Second Harvest's programs.

Second Harvest is committed to building equitable, sustainable partnerships with more farmers like Ardoin. This initiative supports local food systems, and ensures that more people have access to fresh, local produce.

"I'm just over the moon about it," Ardoin says about partnering with Second Harvest. "I look forward to teaching my son how to farm just like my grandfather taught me."

ACADIANA

DUCK DERBY

**\$5,000
GRAND PRIZE**

**SATURDAY APRIL 9, 2022
MONCUS PARK**



Following another successful event at our New Orleans-area facility last fall, we are happy to announce an expansion of our Duck Derby fundraiser to Acadiana in 2022!

The Acadiana Duck Derby will be held on Saturday, April 9, at Moncus Park. All proceeds will help us fight hunger across Acadiana. Every \$5 duck entry is a chance at the grand prize of \$5,000, and every duck helps provide 20 meals to a neighbor in need. You can enter your ducks now, and winners need not be present to win!

ENTER TODAY!

Go to no-hunger.org/ducks for more information.

Tomorrow's Harvest:

Help Fight Hunger
for Years to Come

While we need your support today more than ever, planned gifts will ensure Second Harvest is here for decades to come. 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 us in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and include you in our legacy society, "Tomorrow's Harvest."

For more information, please contact Director of Development Heather Sweeney at hsweeney@secondharvest.org or 504-729-2839.

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To learn more or to make a donation
to Second Harvest Food Bank visit
www.no-hunger.org

