

SEPTEMBER 2022

food for thought



Two years later Valerie Jenkins, Director of Pantry of Hope in Lake Charles, and her daughter are still helping their community recover from Hurricanes Laura and Delta.

A Time for Hope



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A Message *from Natalie* | New Facilities Will Transform How We Serve Thousands in Need

This fall is an exciting time for Second Harvest, with major renovations and expansions to our warehouses, kitchens, offices, and volunteer spaces in the works or nearing completion. As we commemorate our 40th year of service in 2022, the need has never been greater to improve our infrastructure and capacity to serve South Louisiana. These critical upgrades have been more than a decade in the making, and are a shining example of what is possible in the next 40 years thanks to friends like you.

Jefferson Parish: A \$15-million upgrade at our Harahan-area facility is nearly complete. We launched a capital campaign in 2018 and began the renovation in December 2020 to completely revamp our 200,000 square-foot operations center. We now have larger and improved areas for volunteers, climate control in the warehouse, dozens of new office workstations, a massive new roof, and a long list of additional improvements. The funding for these capital upgrades was provided by Gayle and Tom Benson, Cathy and Morris Bart, and many other generous donors.

The Bayou Region: Even before the devastation of Hurricane Ida, we have long needed a local warehouse, trucks, and equipment to better serve Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. We are continuing to respond to an increased need for food as our neighbors recover from Hurricane Ida and now face higher bills for food, utilities, and groceries. We are partnering with Catholic Charities and the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux to make this local food bank facility a reality.

Lake Charles and Southwest Louisiana: Similarly, a new Second Harvest warehouse and office space dedicated to

serving Southwest Louisiana will open soon. For decades, our drivers have made the long trek from our Lafayette and New Orleans-area warehouses to deliver food and supplies to the 4-parish region. This new Lake Charles property will allow us to accept, store, and deliver food to dozens of community partners year-round, and will be a vital asset in responding to future disasters in Southwest Louisiana.

A New Commercial Kitchen for Acadiana and Southwest Louisiana: Second Harvest has been producing and delivering meals from our New Orleans-area Community Kitchen for the past 10 years. We now have additional kitchen facilities in Lake Charles thanks to our partnership with McNeese State University, which will allow us to deliver hot meals daily throughout Acadiana and Southwest Louisiana. The kitchen will be a teaching and learning lab for students enrolled in McNeese's Nutrition and Dietetics programs. These meals are helping thousands of our neighbors through programs for children and seniors, and the new commercial kitchen will be critical when responding to hurricanes, floods, and other emergencies.

These new offices, warehouses, and kitchens mark one of the proudest stages of our 40-year history, as we continue to grow and expand to meet the need in our communities. Thank you for your trust that makes all of this possible.

Natalie Jayroe
President & CEO



One Year Later, Thousands are Still Facing the Expense of Hurricane Ida

Bridget H. never thought she'd find herself at a food pantry.

"In 2020 I was starting a new business on my own. It was a struggle when everything got shut down by COVID, and then things started to turn around in 2021," she told us.

"Then Hurricane Ida took my roof off."

Bridget's Lakeview home is one of many in her neighborhood still sporting a blue tarp a full year after Hurricane Ida's category-4 winds swept across Southeast Louisiana. As she recently picked up food from a Second Harvest pantry, she became emotional telling us about her struggles twelve months later.

"I never thought I'd have to get a lawyer just to get my house repaired, and I never thought I'd have to go to a food bank. I've worked all my life. This is hard."



After dealing with the pandemic and then the storm, Bridget and her family are now facing the cost of almost everything rising sharply, month after month. It's even more difficult to make ends meet when the cost of fuel, utilities, and groceries continues to increase.

"Some days I wonder, what's going to happen next? But as bad as we have it, I know so many more people completely lost everything."

You Can Help Second Harvest Prepare for the Next Disaster



Time after time, Second Harvest staff and volunteers have answered when emergencies large and small impact South Louisiana. We are often asked what the best way is to support our work after hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and other emergencies.

"We absolutely do need the donations of food, water, and emergency supplies," according to Second Harvest's Chief Operating Officer Elisha Darcey-Pike. "Equally important are monetary donations to keep our trucks prepared to roll any time they're needed."

The year-round operations of the food bank currently include two facilities in Jefferson and Lafayette parishes with more than 230,000 square feet of operations, and we'll be bringing two additional warehouses online in the coming year. "Just paying the utility bills and fuel for nearly thirty trucks during blue skies is quite an expense. With the recent inflation spikes, the cost of absolutely everything is way up."

That means a spike in the cost of disaster preparedness as well.

"We are committed to doing everything necessary to be ready for the next emergency to come our way," Darcey-Pike said. "Storms are getting stronger and coming earlier and more often. Monetary donations are essential to making sure our team has the tools we need to respond at a moment's notice."

Making it Day to Day

Sulphur resident Bradley M. says it was hard for him to walk into a food pantry for the first time.

"I was a welder in the plants. Everything was going good and then everything fell apart at the same time.

I lost my dad, and then I got into a bad wreck and got an aneurism in my stomach and wasn't able to work. So, I lost my insurance, and it started getting rough."

Bradley paused for a moment. "And then my marriage fell apart."

At his lowest point, he sought help at Care Help of Sulphur one of hundreds of community food partners supported by Second Harvest.

"Somebody referred me to this place and thank God they did. It's been such a big help," he said.



"It's like a pride issue. You want to be more in control of things than you are. But I've come to the realization that we all need help at some point from somebody. And I realized there's nothing wrong when you need help."



Right now, Bradley is taking it day by day.

"Without these people, I know I wouldn't have been able to make it this far. People might not say it, but I'll say it: It saves lives. It does make a difference."

Thank you for helping Bradley and so many others going through similar experiences in our community.

Tomorrow's Harvest Society

Tomorrow's Harvest Society celebrates supporters who are committed to leading the fight against hunger in South Louisiana. When you join the Tomorrow's Harvest Society, you impact the future of Second Harvest by including us in your legacy giving plans. By thoughtfully arranging your gift now, you are ensuring a tomorrow that sees fewer neighbors with food insecurity. Interested in making a planned gift to Second Harvest or learning more about your options? **Contact Heather Sweeney at 504-729-2839 or hsweeney@secondharvest.org.**



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