

FEBRUARY 2023

food for thought

Wayne has a heart
for helping others,
and he's thankful
for the help he
receives, too!

A Time
for Hope



 **SECOND
HARVEST
FOOD BANK**
FEEDING SOUTH LOUISIANA

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A Message From Natalie



I recently read that there were about 39.6 million Americans age 65 and up in 2009. That number grew to 54.1 million by 2019 — almost a 37% increase in just one decade.

That's just the beginning of the story. The 65-and-over population is projected to reach 80.8 million by 2040 and 94.7 million by 2060. *That's an*

increase of 139% in just 50 years!

Louisiana has the third highest rate of senior hunger in the nation, with 12% of seniors experiencing food insecurity. Many seniors face obstacles accessing and preparing food, including lack of transportation, food deserts, disability, and chronic health problems that make it difficult to safely cook or drive to a grocery store.

We in the food bank business are not caught off guard by these numbers, but there's still a lot of work to do. Too often,

seniors living on fixed incomes face impossible choices like: Do they pay for prescription medications or do they buy food? Do they pay their utility bill or buy groceries? These are choices none of us should have to make!

I'm sure you share my passion to ensure that our older neighbors do not go hungry in the coming years ... starting with this year!

We're focusing on seniors in this edition of *Food for Thought*. Please keep the seniors in your own life — including in your community — in mind as you read these stories ... and as you consider how to best help. You already know one way to help: by supporting Second Harvest Food Bank!

Remember: Every \$1 can help provide 4 meals. Thank you for your kindness.

Natalie Jayge
Natalie Jayge
President & CEO

"Thank You From the Bottom of My Heart"

After a lifetime of helping others, Wayne is grateful for your help!

Helping people has always been in Wayne's nature. For 28 years he worked as a nurse, until retiring in 2014.

After retirement, Wayne dedicated his time to volunteer work, including five years at the food pantry at Our Lady of Divine Providence in Metairie. They're a partner of Second Harvest Food Bank, helping so many neighbors like Wayne.

Unfortunately, since his retirement, Wayne's health has been on a bit of a downward spiral, especially after an accident involving a heavy cast-iron swing set. He had to have reconstructive surgery on his face as well as back and neck surgery. Now he can't stand for long periods of time.

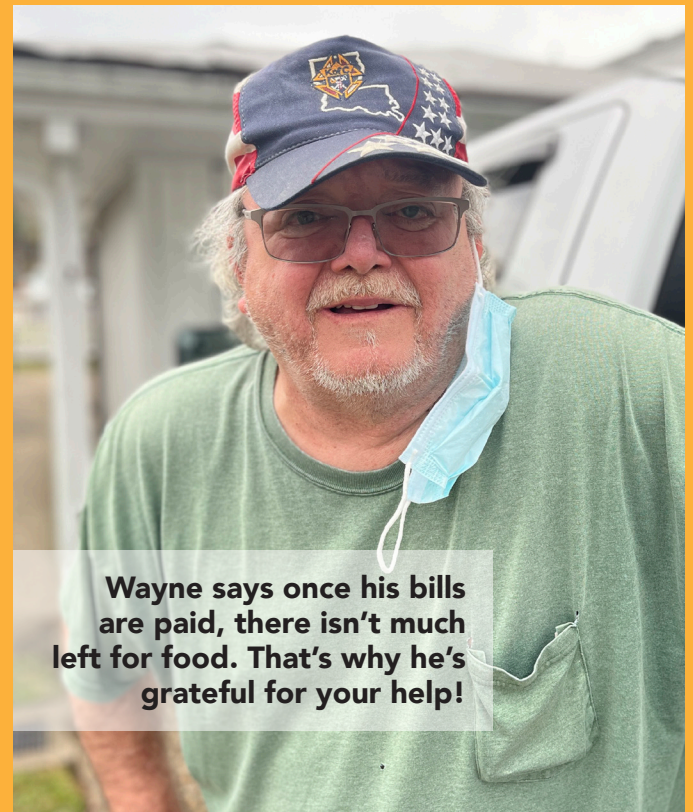
Recently, it became too much for him to continue his volunteering at the pantry, though he still helps other organizations, including one for children with special needs. Helping others is just who Wayne is.

But Wayne needs help, too, so he still comes to the pantry for our food distributions to relieve his food budget. His retirement income just doesn't cover everything Wayne needs to pay for. He says there have been plenty of times he's had to choose between food and other needs.

"My bills come first," Wayne says. "And God has blessed me with coming over here to the pantry to be able to get food."

When asked how the food helps him, Wayne says, "You just wouldn't believe how much it saves me. Especially at certain times of year. I don't know how people make it on Social Security. I barely make it. I really do."

Like so many other neighbors we've talked to, Wayne



Wayne says once his bills are paid, there isn't much left for food. That's why he's grateful for your help!

couldn't be more grateful for the help he receives. "Thank you from the bottom of my heart," Wayne says.

Thank you for your kindness and compassion for older neighbors like Wayne and so many others facing hunger. I hope you'll continue your support today!

"Good-Hearted People" Teri is thankful for help in hard times

After 33 years of working in the plumbing industry, Teri had to retire five years ago for health reasons. She suffers from COPD, kidney disease, heart disease, and thyroid disease. "My doctor says I have the lungs of a 90-year-old," she says.

Her litany of health issues means a lot of medical expenses. And with Social Security disability payments being her sole source of income, things can get a little tight. When we met Teri, she was visiting our partners at the Samaritan Center in Mandeville to help get her sister signed up for their food distributions, which support like yours helps make possible.

Teri says she knows how much the food helps because before she got her disability payments, she was really struggling to pay the bills and buy food. She worked little jobs here and there just to buy food until her Social Security came through.

"Places like this are a huge help," says Teri. "There are so many people who need it. People who donate to make this possible are good-hearted people. Thank you!"

Thank you for doing your part to help neighbors like Teri in hard times. Please continue your support today if you can.

Teri is so grateful for people like you who support Second Harvest!

volunteer spotlight For the love of helping others

Stacy volunteers every Tuesday at the Samaritan Center — a partner of Second Harvest Food Bank — doing whatever is needed to help her neighbors. It's her day off from her job at a local preschool, and she spends it helping others.

She first signed up to help with the center's special back-to-school programs and just kept coming back. Now you can find her every Tuesday helping with their food distributions, much of which comes from Second Harvest.

"I love working with people, seeing their needs, and being able to help them," Stacy says.

Stacy said she knows what it's like to live paycheck to paycheck and is happy to be able to do what she can to help others and to set that example for her 16-year-old daughter, who volunteers at the Samaritan Center's thrift store, Gran's Attic.

Stacy encourages others to get involved, too. "If your heart's in the right place and you really want to see a change that can be made for people, this would be a great place to do it," she says. "Some days are tough ... but it's worth it to keep coming back when you see all the gratitude."

At Second Harvest, we love volunteers! In fact, last year, volunteers contributed 70,000 volunteer hours — equal to 33 full-time employees! If you want to get involved, visit us online at no-hunger.org/volunteer.

Stacy knows how important serving others is, and certainly has a heart for it!





Yurris loves to cook, and with your help she's able to stretch her food budget all month.

"I Appreciate Y'all" **Yurris couldn't be more grateful for your help stretching her food budget**

Yurris is 77 years old and has been coming to the Kenner Food Bank for a few years to help her stretch her food budget. The Kenner Food Bank is one of hundreds of pantries across South Louisiana that receives food from Second Harvest. Yurris retired 14 years ago as a line server and has been living on a fixed income since.

Yurris lives on her own and often has a difficult time paying the bills and getting enough to eat. But with the help she receives at the Kenner Food Bank, she can make her food last all month. "I can make up a big batch of cabbage and some grits and stretch it pretty far," she says with a laugh.

Coming from a big family, Yurris learned about stretching food at an early age. "There were 16 of us,

and my mama struggled," she says. "But we had a hot meal every morning and never went hungry."

Those lessons are something she carried with her and ensured her kids — who are all grown now with kids of their own — never went hungry either. It helps that Yurris loves to cook. She even shares with others when she can as her way of giving back.

"I give a big thumbs up to this food bank," she says. "If I could give back, I would. I appreciate y'all!"

Remember, every \$1 you give can help provide 4 meals for older neighbors like Yurris and so many others facing hunger in our community.

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AMERICA



contact us

700 Edwards Ave.
New Orleans, LA 70123-3121
504.734.1322

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

