



Program Spotlight: DaBackyardfarms

What started as a small pandemic-era project has grown into something huge

When Nina and Derek first saw empty shelves during the pandemic, they panicked, especially with two young children to care for. “We started in my backyard,” Nina recalls, determined to grow what they couldn’t find in stores. A few crops quickly turned into a mission to help their community.

DaBackyardfarms quickly expanded as their neighbors offered unused land. “A lot of people gifted us their lots because they didn’t want us to leave the community,” Nina says. With nine lots in Harvey now under their care, they grow a wide variety of organic produce, from mustard greens to squash to okra, ensuring that local families have access to fresh, healthy food.

The couple’s partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank was a turning point in their business.

Second Harvest’s commitment to purchasing their produce allowed Nina and Derek to make a bigger investment in their farm. “We have a truck, a tractor, and two employees now,” Nina explains. Their small backyard farm has grown into a community-driven project that’s tackling food insecurity, one lot at a time.

For Nina and Derek, it’s about more than just farming — it’s about giving back, creating healthier options, and building a resilient, self-sustaining community right in the heart of Jefferson Parish. Second Harvest is proud to support this local business and provide fresh, local food to families and seniors experiencing food insecurity.

We couldn’t do it without you! Thank you for making stories like Nina and Derek’s possible.

MAY 2025

food for thought



CARING FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR OTHERS

Parents like Xiomara need all the help they can get, especially during the summer

See the story on page 3.

\$1 CAN HELP PROVIDE 3 MEALS!

SECOND HARVEST
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contact us

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

Second Harvest’s email addresses have changed from @secondharvest.org to @no-hunger.org. For questions about donations, contact us at givetoday@no-hunger.org.

A Time
for Hope



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“I Hope This Will Continue for Many Years”

The Mickey Mouse Head Start Center in Morgan City is like a “village” that makes life a bit easier for families like Falon’s.

Falon is a hardworking mom juggling a full-time job and child care. Her two children spend their days at the Mickey Mouse Head Start Center while she’s at work, and they receive meals and snacks provided by Second Harvest.

When Falon picks them up, she can also visit the on-site food pantry, which is stocked by Second Harvest. She can “shop” for essentials that her kids love — without stretching her already tight budget to the breaking point.

“The pantry bags I get have always been really helpful for my kids and me,” says Falon. “My kids especially enjoy the sweet treats and applesauce, and I love that the oats and fruit are included. I hope this will continue for many years to come for all parents. Thank you!”

Falon’s story reflects the challenges many hardworking families face. Despite working a full-time job, it’s a struggle to meet her children’s needs on a single income. Thankfully, through Second Harvest’s partnership with the Mickey Mouse Head Start Center, Falon’s children have access to meals in a safe, nurturing environment.

Child nutrition is an even more critical need during the summer months. Summertime, which should be a season of joy and exploration for kids, often brings extra challenges. For many, the absence of school-provided breakfast and lunch means a financial strain that can lead to impossible choices between rent and groceries or gas and dinner.



However, through the village of community members and donors, families like Falon’s can count on having meals and groceries to get them through the summer and beyond.

Thank you for being part of our village, which empowers families to focus on creating a brighter future for their kids to grow, thrive, and succeed.

caring for Those Who Care for Others

As a single mother of two young sons, Xiomara makes every decision in life with her children’s futures in mind.

To provide for her sons, Xiomara juggles multiple jobs. She cleans homes during the day and washes dishes at night. “I’m mother and father for my sons,” she says. “I take care of everything at home.”

In today’s economy, missing even one day of work isn’t an option. “Every day I don’t work, it’s a problem for me because I pay everything for my house,” she explains.

For families like Xiomara’s, rising costs often make it difficult to keep up, and household budgets are even more strained during the summer months when kids are out of school. Families have to spend more on groceries when their kids don’t have breakfast and lunch provided at school.

Accessing food through Second Harvest partner food pantries and other programs can provide vital relief.

“The money I don’t spend on food, I can use to pay the rent, pay bills, and provide for my sons,” Xiomara says.



Even with two jobs and two kids, Xiomara still finds ways to give back and strengthen her community. She shares food with her sister who works long shifts at a hotel, delivers supplies to a homebound friend, and volunteers whenever she can. “This is a big support to families,” she says. “Whenever I can, I help, too.”

Xiomara’s story shows how acts of caring and generosity can create a network of neighbors helping neighbors, strengthening our entire community.

Your generosity is no exception! Thank you for all you do to help neighbors like Xiomara.

“It Means a Lot” You help ensure that no senior in our community faces hunger

At just 15, Florence began a lifetime of hard work in catering and hospitality, a path that carried her through decades of providing for her family. Born and raised in New Orleans, Florence balanced demanding jobs all while raising four children on her own.

After spending some years away, Florence returned to New Orleans in 2016, drawn by the city’s sense of home and her strong connection to family. Today, she receives food assistance through Second Harvest, a resource she greatly appreciates. Each month, Florence receives a box of food intended to help seniors living on fixed incomes meet their dietary needs. Staples like pasta, rice, cheese, beans, cereal, vegetables, and fruit help her

make ends meet on her limited income.

“It means a lot because it saves me money. I don’t get any kind of food stamps or anything,” she says.

Having navigated life’s challenges with resilience, Florence believes that determination is key. “You can do anything you want to do if you put your mind to it,” she says. Her journey exemplifies the power of resilience, showing how perseverance and dedication can overcome life’s challenges and create a lasting impact.

You can make a difference, too. By donating to Second Harvest, you help ensure that seniors like Florence get the nutrition and support they need. We appreciate your support.



Plan Today How to make an even bigger impact

The 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 can ensure 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 Julie Borsch at 504-390-9109 or jborsch@no-hunger.org.**