

MAY 2020

food for thought

DISASTER
RELIEF

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to our
neighbors
in need



 **SECOND
HARVEST
FOOD BANK**
FEEDING SOUTH LOUISIANA

no-hunger.org

A message *from Natalie*

How the COVID-19 Disaster is Unique

On behalf of our staff, Board, volunteers, and those we serve, let me personally extend our deepest gratitude. Our team has helped thousands of our neighbors in need thanks to everyone who has donated time, money, food, and resources over the past weeks and months.

Second Harvest has responded to dozens of disasters and emergencies in our four-decade history. We work year-round to have disaster supplies on hand, and revise our strategy after each disaster to better respond to the next one. Most of these have been weather-related events — hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and freezes. Some have been man-made disasters, such as the BP oil spill.

But for us, this crisis is extremely different. Not only for us, but for the entire nation.

For weather events, we have been able to deploy disaster supplies to serve a limited geographic area. Even with the massive 2016 floods flooding more than 4,000 square miles in Acadiana and Baton Rouge, we were able to mobilize donations and resources from across the country.

With COVID-19, that disaster response model went out of the window. This is an emergency impacting every square mile of Louisiana, and every zip code of the U.S. Our normal supply chains of food from industry and other partners were, for a time, cut off. Vital donations from our local retail partners fell to near-zero, as grocery stores struggled with issues of supply themselves.

Our staff's training and experience gave them the flexibility to start immediately working around these problems. And key lobbying by local, state, and federal government partners allowed us to distribute millions of pounds of



USDA food, paid for by the American taxpayer, to help our fellow citizens in their time of need.

The Second Harvest Community Kitchen, which normally produces about 800 meals a day, has ramped up over the past weeks to now produce more than 10,000 meals a day for children and seniors. We have innovated our distribution model to deliver thousands of emergency food boxes directly to individuals isolated in their homes. And our staff of 90 continues this fight, even as many of them face challenges in their own homes due to the shutdown and economic downturn.

I could not be prouder of the Second Harvest team of staff, volunteers, and supporters. There is always more to do, and I promise we will continue to make the best use of every donated dollar, pound of food, and prayer that comes our way.

Sincerely,

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

Natalie Jayroe
President and CEO



Duck Derby Will Return!

Our annual **Rubber Duck Derby** usually takes place the first weekend of June. But like so many other public events, we have postponed this year's Derby out of an abundance of caution.

But, the Derby will roll, or float, on! This is one of our biggest fundraisers of the year, and we hope to return to Big Lake in City Park this fall. We look forward to seeing you again, and we will announce a new date on social media, by email, and on our website at no-hunger.org/events.

Our Response: Helping Thousands Thanks to Your Donations

Since March, the lives of millions in Louisiana have been turned upside down. Countless neighbors are suddenly out of work, thousands of families are at home with their children and without a paycheck, and senior citizens need meals and groceries at a time when they must stay isolated.

The Second Harvest response is on a scale as that following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, according to CEO and President Natalie Jayroe.

"After Hurricanes Katrina and Rita fifteen years ago, our staff and volunteers distributed millions of meals to people in the Greater New Orleans and Lake Charles areas," she said. "For the COVID-19 crisis, we have been providing meals and support to residents of every community in our 23-parish area."

The food bank has seen unprecedented expenses during this crisis not seen in previous disaster responses.

"We have had to purchase more food than ever, because of the impact this shutdown has had on our normal donation supply chains. Transportation costs have risen dramatically at the same time.



We have tripled our kitchen staff to operate 24 hours a day, and we have purchased new equipment and even new trucks to help fill the need."

Every \$1 donated helps provide four meals to someone in need, both during an emergency response, and year-round.



"A monetary donation is by far the most effective way to support our mission," Jayroe said. "Our deepest gratitude goes out to everyone who makes this response possible, and who also helps us fight the everyday disaster of hunger in our communities."

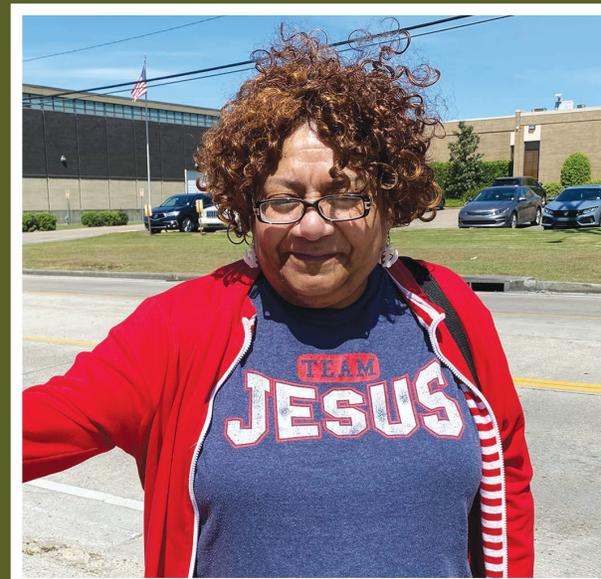
Miss Elaine Thanks You for Your Support

Since the emergency lockdown of our communities began in March, hundreds of thousands of our South Louisiana neighbors suddenly found themselves in need of food assistance, often for the very first time.

Miss Elaine is 66 and lives in Metairie. We met Miss Elaine at one of the hundreds of emergency food distributions our staff and volunteers have held across our service area. She told us she found herself suddenly facing a food shortage in her household, at a time when she was going through personal financial struggles.

"I lost my home in Katrina and have been in an apartment since, and rents keep going up. When the virus hit, I was in the middle of moving to a smaller place on the Westbank."

Countless times since March, and throughout the year, we hear so many echo Miss Elaine's words: "I never thought I'd need to visit a food pantry. But God is good, and we will all get through this. Thank you for this Blessing."



Hometown Heroes: The National Guard Comes Through



From the very outset of Second Harvest's response to the COVID-19 emergency, the support of the Louisiana National Guard has been essential.

Second Harvest Communications Director, Jay Vise, says the response by the guard was near-immediate.

"After we made the request, twenty Guard members were in our Jefferson Parish facility within 24 hours," he said. "For most of the staff

who didn't know they were coming, it was an emotional moment. They'd all been working so hard and feeling overwhelmed, and to see these young men and women in uniform walk through our doors brought some tears."

The Guard has been incredibly helpful with supporting all parts of the food bank's response to this emergency. "They have been helping in the kitchen to prepare thousands of meals,

packing and distributing emergency boxes, and in many other areas," according to Lt. Amos Jenkins, who oversees the work of the 30 Guard members at the Second Harvest facility near Harahan.



Additional Guard members are serving at

the Lafayette Second Harvest facility as well. Jenkins noted that most of the members of these National Guards units are from the local community.

"Most of them are about 22. They've never been through anything like this and many also saw their civilian jobs shut down because of the crisis. Every one has said how proud they are to be in a position to be able to help their hometown and region at this critical moment of need."

Our thanks go out to these young heroes and for everything they and their fellow Guard members are doing for all of us.

One Community, One Kitchen



In normal times, Second Harvest prepares hundreds of meals a day in our 6,500 square-foot Community Kitchen for after-school and summer feeding programs. These programs help at-risk children get the key nutrition they need every day.

When schools abruptly closed and thousands of families and seniors suddenly found themselves homebound, our kitchen staff and volunteers immediately shifted into high gear.

"Community Kitchen staff and volunteers have done tremendous work in past disasters," said Crystal Harris, Director of Community Outreach. "But this emergency is like nothing we've ever seen."

Normally producing between 800 and 1,000 meals a day, the kitchen is now on pace to produce more than 10,000 emergency meals a day. Every day, the meals and snack packs are delivered to multiple locations, such as low-income senior housing, assisted living facilities, Councils on Aging, and sites like NORD recreation centers and playgrounds where families can safely pick up meals for their children.

"We've added additional shifts to produce meals round the clock, and thanks to monetary donations, we have been able to hire additional staff and purchase important equipment to help us dramatically feed more people. **There is no way we could have done this without the incredible support of our donors,**" Harris said. "A million thank-yous to everyone making this possible."



Second Harvest works in partnership with:



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

