BRINGING FARMERS MARKETS TO SENIORS

A man carrying a loaf a bread and a sack of potatoes weaves his way between crowded tables at the Cathedral Plaza apartments, looking for a place to set down his newly acquired food. “This is amazing,” he said, looking at the stacks of produce piled high around him.

“Take as many as you want,” said Kaelyn Hinch, community impact coordinator with Second Harvest. Cathedral Plaza is part of a pilot program targeted at low-income senior living apartment complexes in the Spokane area. Workers will visit clients already served by the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and drop off additional loads of fresh and seasonal produce. Phase two of the program began in August, and phase three is planned for January 2017. Currently, the program has served more than 850 people, Hinch said.

Ultimately, Second Harvest plans to have produce drops at all 12 senior living complexes it serves, said Owen Esperas, community impact director with Second Harvest. Produce drops at complexes so far, implemented in a farmers market style, have gone well, Hinch said.

CSFP serves about 600,000 people throughout the United States each month, mostly low-income seniors. With one in 12 senior households nationwide at risk of hunger, it’s a badly needed service, Hinch said. Twenty percent of Second Harvest clients are over the age of 50, and approximately 1,270 seniors a month are served through the senior food program in Spokane and Whitman counties. The waiting list is more than 100 people long, Hinch said.

About a third of Cathedral Plaza’s apartments are Section 8, or low-income housing, said Jamie Butler, assistant property manager. However, the Second Harvest distribution is open to anyone in the building. The on-site location is especially advantageous to seniors, even if they aren’t extremely low-income, because many may have mobility or transportation issues.

“You don’t know how much this helps contribute to grocery allowance on a monthly basis,” one senior said at a recent produce drop.

Older Americans face a unique set of challenges when it comes to hunger and poverty. They’re more likely to pay higher medical costs, for one. Health care costs for people 65 and older are three to five times higher than those for younger adults. They’re also living on fixed incomes. The annual median income in the U.S. for a person between 65 and 74 was $24,644. (*Baby Boomers and Beyond: Facing Hunger after Fifty,’ Feeding America, 2013).

These challenges have only increased since the Great Recession; food insecurity among seniors has nearly doubled since 2007, and more people are becoming seniors every day.

Programs like CSFP and Second Harvest’s produce drops are helping fill this gap, but many seniors are still hungry. Today at Cathedral Plaza, though, there’s plenty to go around. Judy, who just moved in to the apartments in March, is one of the first residents to the basement to wait for a sack of produce.

“Sometimes you’ve got to get there at 5 in the morning to get in line,” she said. She shares recipe ideas with friends while she waits. “You can make potato soup, shepherd’s pie – I’ve got a mess of cookbooks upstairs if anyone wants some.”

The produce is a big help to Judy’s small food budget. “I only get $112 a month in food stamps and it’s tough,” she said.

However, she loves the community at Cathedral Plaza. She often comes to the basement to play bingo and cards with the group. It’s clear she’s already made friends in the short time she’s been here. “If you need apple recipes I’ve got a lot upstairs,” she said.

Donna, who lives in a subsidized HUD apartment, has been at Cathedral Plaza for six years. “It’s like a family,” she said. She’s volunteered at nonprofits like Our Place Community Ministries before, but as a senior on a fixed income, has also had to take advantage of meal services. She loves the fresh produce and the farmers’ market setup of today’s distribution, she said. She quickly dives in to help, handing out bags of bread, apples and potatoes to her neighbors and helping the Second Harvest workers stack empty boxes.

“We’ve got some more here. Who wants potatoes?”
DEAR FRIENDS,

As we look ahead to the new year, I’d like to take a minute to look back on this holiday season and remember how many amazing people have donated their time, talent and resources to help their hungry friends and neighbors. One volunteer stands out to me – he and his family have spent years giving back to Second Harvest. He sorts food several times a week, helps at food drives, and much more. This year, we wanted to honor him with the Kay Porta Founders award.

This award honors those who have gone above and beyond in helping to feed hungry people. In 1971, Kay Porta got a group of volunteers together to talk about hunger in Spokane and what could be done about it. Forty-five years later, Second Harvest is feeding thousands of people every week in Eastern Washington and North Idaho, and it’s happening because of hardworking volunteers like Xavier Zielinski, the winner of this year’s award.

“I grew up as a member of a working poor family, and I experienced hunger firsthand. I know, especially during the holidays, how hard it is when you don’t have food,” Zielinski said in a recent interview. Zielinski’s father died when he was just 2 years old, leaving his mother to provide for five hungry children. As a little boy he vividly remembers the milk and cheese delivered to his home. Today, Zielinski pays it forward by regularly volunteering at Second Harvest.

We couldn’t do our work here without people like Xavier and his family. This year, I’m inspired by the example of people like him and what he and so many of you do to help your neighbors in need.

Thank you,
SPECIAL THANKS TO FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Here is a snapshot of some of the amazing supporters over the past few months who helped provide thousands of meals to feed hungry people in the Inland Northwest.
**BEEF HELPS FILL NUTRITIONAL GAP**

On Dec. 7, Agri Beef and local beef producers marked an important milestone in the Beef Counts program. Volunteers distributed the 1 millionth serving of beef to a family in need during the monthly Mobile Food Bank at Grace Lutheran Church in the Yakima Valley. The very first beef roasts donated through the Beef Counts program were distributed at the site in December 2010.

“It’s meaningful that we recognize this milestone here, where the first Beef Counts donations reached the community,” said local rancher Justin Waddington. “When we can provide a beef roast along with these other donated ingredients, we are empowering families to put a balanced, protein-rich meal on the table.”

“When the program started, it was really just a way to make it easy for farmers and ranchers in Washington to get food to local food banks,” said Bridget Coon of the Washington State Beef Commission.

Today, the beef industry’s support includes providing volunteers for Mobile Food Bank distributions. They visit with clients, help them fill boxes with food and assist them to their vehicles. In addition to beef roasts, families in need receive other fresh food items such as potatoes, apples, onions and bread products.

**FIGHTING HUNGER WITH CROCK POTS**

Each June, dairy farmers across the state and the country celebrate Dairy Month. Established in 1937 as National Milk Month, the tradition continues today as a way to mark the contributions the industry makes to the world.

As part of their initiative, local farmers from Deer Park and Colville traveled to Fred Meyer in Spokane to collect donations for Second Harvest. Inland Northwest Dairy Ambassador Ashley Hanson and Coyote Country DJs also joined the group. Hanson was recently awarded a scholarship to Oklahoma State University, and plans to major in agricultural communications.

Steele was joined at Fred Meyer by Julie Lovell, a dairy farmer from Colville and a board member of the Washington State Dairy Products Commission, Ashley Hanson, dairy ambassador, and Stephanie Littrel and Kima Simonson, dairy farmers from Deer Park.

Lovell is currently working with other dairy farmers to host community cooking classes in Colville, in conjunction with the WSU Extension, the Stevens County Farm Bureau, Inland Northwest Dairy Women and the Dairy Farmers of Washington. The group decided to start a crock pot cooking class to teach healthy cooking skills to low-income students and families.

“Kids come to the class with their parents and take ownership of the cooking. They’re asking to learn to cook things themselves,” Lovell said.

The classes, advertised at food pantries and on social media, have become a community effort, Lovell said. Produce is donated by local farmers’ market growers. The WSU Extension program provided a refrigerated truck to pick up the donated produce.

Each participant gets a crock pot, and the classes focus on healthy cooking, nutrition and the benefits of eating together as a family. They’ve had a few classes so far, and plan to hold more, Lovell said.

“It’s been fun to see it. It’s been very rewarding,” Lovell said. “I think it was a combination of a lot of really caring people looking outside the box, seeing the need and putting something together. They really stepped up.”

“We count on the meat donated through the Washington beef community to give families a complete, nutritious meal at no cost,” said Julie Humphreys, community relations manager at Second Harvest. “Beef is a much-requested food at our mobile food distributions and thanks to the generosity of area farmers and ranchers, vulnerable families, children and the elderly have access to the same wonderful foods we all want and deserve.”

Funds to provide beef through Second Harvest Mobile Food Banks are raised throughout the year by Washington cattle ranchers. These donations add to Agri Beef’s commitment of at least $50,000 worth of beef each year.

February 4 – Spokane
Chilly Ice Bowl benefiting Second Harvest
This year’s Super Ice Bowl Blowout is Saturday, Feb. 4 at the Highbridge Disc Golf Course. Early entry fee is $30 and 5 cans of food. Day of event sign up is $35 and 5 cans of food, available at 8am. To pre-register, go to 2-harvest.org/chillyicebowl or call Kevin S. at 216-4929.

February 14 – Spokane and Tri-Cities
Dutch Luv
Dutch Bros. will donate $1 to Second Harvest for every drink sold at Dutch Bros. locations on Valentine’s Day.

February 23 – March 4
Inlander Restaurant Week
Enjoy delicious entrees at over 100 participating local restaurants in Spokane and North Idaho. Post a rave review about your meal and raise money for Second Harvest to feed a family in need. More information at inlanderrestaurantweek.com.

March 1-20 – Tri-Cities
CHS Inc. Harvest for Hunger Food and Fund Drive
Watch our website for details on how to donate food or cash for this CHS annual event.

March – Tri-Cities
Guard Against Hunger
The Washington Army National Guard is encouraging state high school students to collect nonperishable food items for their local food banks.

Date TBD – Spokane
Friendly Sons of St. Patrick’s Parade and Food Drive
Bring the family to check out this traditional fun parade. While you’re there, donate some food or funds to the Friendly Sons, who are raising resources to feed hungry people.

April 1 – Spokane
The Hunger Run
Two charities, one cause: Second Harvest and Union Gospel Mission are working together to raise funds a healthy way with The Hunger Run, a 5K and 10K family-friendly race set for the first Saturday in April in the Spokane Valley. Register now at thehungerrun.org.

Date TBD – Spokane
Bulldog Jog
The date will be announced soon for Spokane’s 12th annual Bulldog Jog, sponsored by Gonzaga University’s Alpha Kappa Psi, to benefit Second Harvest. Watch for additional updates at 2-harvest.org.

May 13 – Spokane and Tri-Cities
Stamp out Hunger Food Drive
Letter carriers will collect shelf-stable food donations during their annual Stamp out Hunger Food Drive. Volunteer opportunities will be open soon at 2-harvest.org.

May 17 – Spokane
Taking a Bite out of Hunger
Taking a Bite out of Hunger, now in its 23rd year, is a culinary adventure that includes microbrews, wines and nonalcoholic beverages, and a silent auction. To donate auction items or to participate as a restaurant vendor, contact Shannon at 252-6242 or shannon.kinney@2-harvest.org. For sponsorship opportunities, contact Chris at 252-6280 or chris.houglum@2-harvest.org.

LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE AND OTHER VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT 2-HARVEST.ORG OR CONTACT JILL WILSON IN SPOKANE (252-6257 OR VOLUNTEER@2-HARVEST.ORG) OR LAMAR CLOY IN THE TRI-CITIES (545-0787 OR TCVOLUNTEER@2-HARVEST.ORG).
Fighting hunger, feeding hope, Second Harvest brings community resources together to feed people in need through empowerment, education and partnerships since 1971.

Board of Directors
Carla Altepeter, Chairperson, Numerica Credit Union
Mark Bray, Vice Chair and Audit and Finance Committee Chairperson, Lydig Construction
Kevin Rasler, Past Chairperson, Inland Empire Paper Company
Jason Clark, President and CEO, Second Harvest,
Jennifer Milnes, Secretary/Treasurer, Second Harvest
Paul Bridge, BDO
Paul Davis, Lukins & Annis, P.S.
Mike Dunford, Insurance Agent
Michael Gadd, Clearwater Paper Corporation
Pastor Craig Goodwin, Millwood Community Presbyterian Church
Alex Jackson, Providence Sacred Heart and Holy Family
Colleen McMahon, Gonzaga University
Bruce Nelson, Agricultural Producer
Carl Sohn, Northwest Farm Credit Services
Ray Sprinkle, URM Stores, Inc.
Kimberly Thielman, Asuris Northwest Health

Hunger Solution Centers
Spokane: 1234 East Front Avenue
Spokane, WA 99202
(509) 534-6678

Tri-Cities: 5825 Burlington Loop
Pasco, WA 99301
(509) 545-0787

This newsletter is published quarterly. Volume 25, Edition 1. To remove your name from our mailing list, please call (509) 252-6261 or (509) 545-0787.