SUMMER HITS HARD FOR KIDS WHO NEED SCHOOL LUNCH

Kristina works long hours serving low-income moms who qualify for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), a federal assistance program that provides health care referrals and nutrition for new moms. As a mom who used WIC for her own children, Kristina was familiar with the program, and that made her a great fit for her job. However, all is not well for Kristina and her four kids, who range in age from kindergarten to seventh grade.

Despite working so much, Kristina still finds herself getting extra food from Second Harvest’s Mobile Market to make sure her family has enough to eat throughout the month. She notices things are especially tight during the summer months. More than 76,000 kids in Spokane County alone depend on school meals to eat during the year.

Hardworking families like Kristina’s struggle to put food on the table, but sometimes it isn’t enough. Children living in food-insecure homes face higher risks of poor health and behavioral problems. Their parents often skip meals to feed them.

Kristina and her family appreciated when the Second Harvest Mobile Market visited her children’s school. Things still get tight during the summer, when her kids can’t eat lunch at school. “Everyone is hurting for services then. I really depend on those programs to help provide for them. The summer is harder for us.”

Things are harder, in part, because mothers and single mothers are often working so-called “pink-collar” jobs — professions dominated by women — that tend to pay lower wages and have lower upward mobility. The impact is even bigger when women in lower-paying jobs have families to care for. In a recent study by Oxfam on low-wage jobs (characterized by low job mobility, wages under $15 per hour, and little to no required training), researchers found women held 80 percent of these jobs.

According to a 2017 report on income from Housing and Urban Development, the median income in Spokane County is $65,700. By these numbers, a low-income family of four would have a household income of $52,550. A person earning an income of $36,800, or an hourly wage of $17.69, would be considered low-income in Spokane County.

“Getting out of poverty is really hard because there’s this point that you hit where the more money you make, you lose benefits,” she said. Money lost through benefits isn’t usually made up through low or mid-wage jobs, especially with a large family to feed.

We often think of people using food banks or low-income as the desperately poor, but that’s often not the case. Increasing costs of living make even mid-wage jobs into low-income jobs, and services like Second Harvest fill the gap for families like Kristina’s.

Karyn Holt, a school counselor at Grant Elementary, where approximately 60 percent of the student body qualifies for free and reduced-price lunch, said Second Harvest services are the reason many kids at Grant and other schools don’t go hungry, and kids feel the pinch in summer because it’s the longest break.

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Kristina loves her job; she works one on one with low-income moms and helps them navigate the state’s often complicated benefits system. But her work alone isn’t enough to keep the family afloat.

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“The need is so intense,” she said. “You can tell when we go into holidays, summer, spring breaks — they’ll ask for extra food.”

“I just cannot stress enough that what you’re doing works and it genuinely helps our family,” Kristina said. “We haven’t been in a serious position where I don’t know what I’m going to feed everybody today. I think I haven’t been in that position because of Second Harvest.”
In many areas, hunger isn’t caused by a lack of food, but a lack of access. Healthy food is grown all over Washington and Idaho, but many low-income families live in food deserts or lack cars or other transportation to get to the grocery store.

The WSU Master Gardeners, an all-volunteer program in Benton and Franklin counties, aims to change that. The organization is teaching people how to grow their own food. The gardeners have ambitious goals – feeding low-income families using potting soil, fertilizer and seeds. **One in every ten people in Benton and Franklin counties is hungry, and that number is higher for children – it’s one in five.** In partnership with Second Harvest, the Master Gardeners received a two-year allocation from United Way of Benton and Franklin Counties that will help fund new garden plots. Staff hopes to feed at least 100 families through gardening over the next two years.

Bill Dixon, who took over leadership, said he’s excited to see how many gardens have already been started with the United Way grant. “We’ve partnered with six garden sponsors and started worked on all six gardens,” he said. “All these are for low-income or disadvantaged people, and most are within food deserts.”

Many areas in Benton and Franklin counties are so-called food deserts – places where at least 20 percent of the population doesn’t live near a full-service grocery store or another source of fresh, healthy food. Many also don’t have ready access to cars or public buses.

Master Gardeners works with community organizations and stakeholders like schools, churches, government agencies, landlords and landholders, and apartment complex managers to help identify people who might want to garden and locate potential garden sites. The organization has trained more than 500 volunteers since 2012. These volunteers are training volunteers of their own, teaching classes and helping families start new gardens. Dixon said he’s in contact with four more garden sponsors who want to start plots in 2017.

The Master Gardeners group has already made a big impact in the Tri-Cities area. They helped bring the national Plant a Row for the Hungry program to Benton and Franklin counties. As part of Plant a Row, individuals and organizations reserve garden space to grow produce for hungry families. “We help over 500 gardeners produce over 50,000 pounds of fresh garden produce annually,” Dixon said. People who don’t live near a garden can participate as well – they can work with staff to set up a plot in the nearest available community garden, Dixon said, or help set up a new garden in their area.

**GARDEN PLOTS FEED HUNGRY PEOPLE IN GROCERY DESERTS**

**BY THE NUMBERS:**

**SOURCE: WSU EXTENSION**

- 521 Master Gardeners trained from 2012-2014
- 30,893 Master Gardener hours logged from 2012-2014
- 32 community gardens mentored from 2012-2015
- 24 new gardens developed from 2012-2015
Lake City Food Bank began out of a shed in a parking lot, says longtime volunteer and director Joyce Dexter. Today it helps feed 300 to 500 families a month and provides other services like health care and job search assistance. Dexter has been volunteering since 2010. The site used to house a thrift store, and she worked there before it became a food bank. “Honestly, before, it wasn’t a population I paid a lot of attention to,” Dexter said. “But as I got to know them and heard their stories, God changed my heart for them. When the store closed, I was asked if I wanted to transition to the food bank. I have been there since.”

Today, Lake City staff members work with volunteers and community programs to bring in life coaches, budget planners, mobile health clinics and other services for people in need. They’re currently implementing a client choice model to give families more say over what they take home.

“We try to have as many resources here to avoid them having to make multiple stops,” Dexter said. “Our mission is to treat people with dignity and respect.”

If you go:
Lake City Community Church
6000 N. Ramsey Rd.
Coeur d’Alene, ID 83814
(208) 676-0632

Jo Hayes, or Mama Jo, as she likes to be called, lives at Vintage at Spokane, a 55+ apartment complex on Spokane’s north side. She comes down to visit with Second Harvest’s AmeriCorps team as they bring fresh produce and bread on their monthly visits to the complex.

Hayes, 80, said she doesn’t always need the extra food, but she’s glad it’s there when she does. She knows it’s a lifesaver for some of her needier neighbors.

“I think it does a lot of people good. This is all that some of them get. It gives them something to look forward to. It’s fantastic,” she said. “For a lot of people, they don’t have money to go out and get food. They get left behind, and they don’t eat as well.”

More than 5 million seniors often skip meals or wonder where their next meal is coming from, according to research from Feeding America and the National Council on Aging. Low-income seniors are often eligible for things like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps, but less than half of eligible seniors are enrolled.

“This SNAP gap” exists for a variety of reasons, including “lack of knowledge about the benefit, misunderstanding the eligibility requirements, difficulty completing the application and the stigma surrounding participation in the program,” according to Feeding America.

Programs like Second Harvest’s Mobile Market help fill that gap for seniors in need. Without access to fresh, healthy food, many would just go without, or eat meals without the nutrition they need.

“I like the variety you have,” Hayes said. “As you grow older, you need as much balance in your food as you can get. A lot of seniors are just barely making it. We don’t have money for extra stuff.”
SPECIAL THANKS TO FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS
Meet some of our amazing supporters who helped feed hungry people this quarter in the Inland Northwest. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to learn more – and look for a picture of your volunteer group!

AECOM
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Bechtel National, Inc
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CHS Inc
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints
CenturyLink
Coca-Cola
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Ecova
Food Circle Group
Ford Motor Co.
Franz Bakery
Give a Gallon - Dairy Farmers of Washington, Dairy for Life, Yoke’s and Safeway/Albertsons
Gus Johnson Ford
Harvest Foods
Healing the Children
Hop Jack’s Kennewick
Huckleberry’s Natural Market
KAPP-KVEW ABC
Karts for Our Community Teams
KNDU NBC Right Now

KREM-TV
KVEW/KAPP Tri-Cities
KXLY
Lamb Weston
Microsoft Columbia DataCenter - Mobile Markets
Mid Columbia Libraries
Mondelez International
National Association of Letter Carriers
Progressions Credit Union, Spokane
Rosauers Supermarkets
Safeway/Albertsons
Snyders
Sodexo at Gonzaga University
Spokane Seed
Sunheaven Farms
Tree Top, Inc
Walmart
Washington River Protection Services
Washington State Army National Gard
Waste Treatment Plant
Wendle Ford
Western States Equipment Co
Williams Inland Distributors
Yakama Nation Legends Casino
Yakima Valley Pippins Baseball
Yoke’s Fresh Markets - What’s for Lunch?

This year’s Street Music Week raised more than $30,000 and drew 250 musicians to downtown Spokane, Coeur d’Alene and The Garland Business District.

More than 93,000 pounds of donated food was collected at this year’s Stamp Out Hunger food drive.
Second Harvest’s Pasco distribution center will host its Taking a Bite out of Hunger food and beverage tasting and auction on Wednesday, October 11, from 5:30-9:00 p.m.

This is the 12th year for the event, which features more than 25 top restaurants, wineries, breweries and other purveyors of fine food and beverages, as well as live and silent auctions with dozens of items up for bid.

Second Harvest is looking for donations of fun items; certificates for airfare, hotels, restaurants, golf and outdoor adventures; and tickets for sporting events, concerts and other entertainment for the silent auction.

To donate an item, contact Jean Tucker at 545-0787, ext. 201 or jean.tucker@2-harvest.org.

Tickets cost $75 each and tables are available for $600. Sponsors are needed to ensure that all proceeds can be put toward fighting hunger in the Columbia Basin and Yakima Valley. Sponsors at the $1,500, $3,000 and $5,000 levels receive recognition benefits. To find out about sponsorships, tables and tickets, contact Jean Tucker at 545-0787, ext. 201 or jean.tucker@2-harvest.org.

The second annual Hunger Run, a joint effort of Second Harvest and the Union Gospel Mission, was a big success. Despite course flooding that forced rerouting of the six-mile race, more than 600 runners and walkers turned out for 5K and 10K routes on April 1. Volunteer photographers James and Kathy Mangis donated their time to capture the run on film. Wade Pannell of Fleet Feet Sports Spokane acted as emcee and Fleet Feet Sports provided an arch and race equipment. Title sponsor Safeway Albertsons provided volunteers, post-race snacks, swag for runners and funding to help make the race possible.

The 23rd annual Taking a Bite out of Hunger was a resounding success. Thanks to 93 volunteers, incredible community sponsors, 55 food and drink vendors, and 1,100 guests, enough money was raised to provide 1 million meals for hungry people in our community. Thank you to everyone who helped make it possible!
This April, we asked "Why do you chose to volunteer at Second Harvest?" Lola told us, "Instead of sleeping in on Saturday mornings, I like to give back to the community by volunteering. Also, meeting new, positive people." Thank you, Lola!

We’ve had amazing volunteer teams at Pasco this spring! Our thanks to combined groups from Tri-Cities Laboratory and Hop Jack’s, who set a Second Harvest record!

Rhonda’s husband has been out of work due to a medical injury. “I work. It definitely helps,” she said. But the income from her full-time job in education wasn’t enough as the months stretched by and he couldn’t return to work. “The Mobile Food Bank has been a blessing,” she said.

### Faces of Hunger

**FACES OF HUNGER**

**July 1-31 – Tri-Cities**  
Independence from Hunger  
Grocery Outlet in Kennewick invites customers to purchase pre-packed groceries to donate. Cash donations of $1 or $5 can be made at the register for Second Harvest.

**July 11-Aug 9 – Spokane**  
Macy’s Shop for a Cause  
Shop for a Cause gives you the opportunity to give back to your community and to help Second Harvest fight hunger. Donate $5 or more at crowdrise.com/secondharvest and get an exclusive Macy’s savings pass.

### Events and volunteering

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
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<td></td>
<td>Sign your kids up four days of summer fun at secondharvestkitchen.org.</td>
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<td>Aug. 30-Sept. 4 – Spokane</td>
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<td>Enjoy a great Labor Day weekend tradition with live music and food vendors while supporting Second Harvest. Vendors will have donation cans at this event, held in Spokane’s Riverfront Park.</td>
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### Hunger Action Month

- **July 1-31 – Tri-Cities**  
  Independence from Hunger
- **July 11-Aug 9 – Spokane**  
  Macy’s Shop for a Cause
- **August 30-Sept. 4 – Spokane**  
  Pig Out in the Park
- **September – Spokane**  
  Alaska USA’s Annual Cash for Cans
- **September – Spokane**  
  Hunger Action Month
- **September – Spokane**  
  Spokane Association of REALTORS® (SAR) Food Drive
- **Sept. 7-8 – Spokane**  
  Spokane Association of REALTORS® (SAR) Food Drive
- **Sept. 22 – Spokane**  
  Night in the Warehouse
- **Oct. 11 – Tri-Cities**  
  Taking a Bite out of Hunger
- **Nov. 17 and 18 – Spokane**  
  Tom’s Turkey Drive
- **Nov. 18 – Tri-Cities**  
  Second Annual Tri-Cities Turkey Drive
- **Nov. 21 – Spokane**  
  Tom’s Turkey Tuesday

Learn more about these and other volunteer opportunities at 2-harvest.org.
Fighting hunger, feeding hope, Second Harvest brings community resources together to feed people in need through empowerment, education and partnerships.

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