

2nd HARVEST — FOR — food thought

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PARTNER
FOOD BANK OF
**FEEDING
AMERICA**

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Pictured: A volunteer sorts pears.

Behind the Scenes: Sourcing Nutritious Food Year-Round

ERIC WILLIAMS

Second Harvest's weekly grocery list starts at more than 16 semitruck loads a week.

Last year we distributed 35 million pounds of food, which is the equivalent of 16.8 truckloads per week. Importantly, when we say, "we distributed," that's the royal we working together: Volunteers doing everything from sorting produce to picking up grocery rescue, farmers and processors donating large volumes, businesses and organizations conducting food drives, plus the local food banks and pantries serving their communities, just to name a few.

That amount — **35 million pounds** — is basically the same amount we distributed in 2022, and more than in pre-pandemic 2019. Calendar years 2020 and 2021 saw distributions spike, primarily due to surges in government-provided food. Under more normal non-pandemic circumstances, **roughly 90% of the food we distribute is donated**. That, too, is provided by a broad array of partners, including food company distribution centers, grocery stores, farmers, ranchers and processors.

While 35 million pounds is a lot of food, it's not enough. Sadly, demand continues to outstrip supply. The Department of Agriculture recently reported that 12.8% of households (17 million) across the country were food insecure in 2022. That's worse than the 10.2% (13.5 million) in 2021 and the 10.5% in 2020.

The fact that 90% of the food we receive is donated is great news for us. But that also means our variety is somewhat limited. Indeed, with our service territory of 21 counties in Eastern Washington and five in North Idaho, we receive and distribute a lot of apples,

potatoes, onions, lentils, cherries, and beef, all grown or produced in our region.

When we talk to people at our sibling food banks in the Feeding America network, whether in Seattle, New York, Florida, Ohio, or Oklahoma, they all say something akin to, "You are so fortunate to have so much great produce and protein. We wish our region was so productive."

Consider lentils for a moment. The Palouse region on

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Pictured: Jorian loading pallets of food.

Pictured: The Mobile Market bus



Senior Hunger Likely to Increase

VIRGINIA THOMAS

Food insecurity is a concern for many seniors, who are at higher risk of health consequences stemming from poor nutrition. Several factors are creating an environment in which more seniors are likely to face hunger, and those pressures are unlikely to ease in the next couple of years.

In Washington, 3.7% of seniors — people age 60 and older — are food insecure, according to the most recent data from national hunger relief network Feeding America. Of seniors living in Idaho, 5.4% don't have enough to eat.

Feeding America finds that several causes contribute significantly to the rate of senior hunger, including health conditions, social isolation, access to reliable transportation, and fixed incomes.

Yvonne is a resident of a subsidized housing community for seniors in Spokane; including utilities, residents pay no more than 30% of their income. However, Yvonne's income is limited. She's used Mobile Market free food distributions to help ease pressure on her grocery budget many times over the years.

"They definitely help me get through the month," Yvonne says. "There's always good things... that we can use. We always get tuna, which is a favorite because there are so many things you can do with tuna."

Thirteen percent of people who receive food through Mobile Market distributions are seniors.

Nicole, one of Yvonne's neighbors, says she's not living on a limited income, but she doesn't qualify for supplemental nutrition assistance programs. Grocery prices take a significant toll on her budget.

"We have a little food pantry here, and everybody brings whatever they can," Nicole says. "That helps a lot of people; even I use that."

Most seniors who are food insecure have incomes above the poverty line, according to Feeding America; of those who report income, 3 in 4 food-insecure seniors have incomes above the poverty line.

Hunger rates are higher among Black and Hispanic seniors, Feeding America says, and for seniors who live in a household with grandchildren or someone who has a disability.

Food insecurity among seniors is likely to increase, Feeding America asserts, due to several causes. Those factors include the elimination of pandemic-related emergency assistance as part of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits in nearly half of the states in the U.S., inflation on everyday necessities, and declining equity markets. Rates of food insecurity among seniors have not returned to pre-Great Recession levels, and seniors who were already struggling to pay for food are likely to face increased pressure on their budgets.



Pictured: Yvonne

To find a Mobile Market near you, visit:
2-harvest.org/food-near-me-wa.



Pictured: Making bone broth

In The Kitchen: Ramstead Ranch

KATHY HEDGCOCK

A savory aroma wafted out of Second Harvest's teaching kitchen as Eileen Napier, co-founder of Ramstead Ranch in Ione, led a recent bone broth cooking class.

Ramstead Ranch, which raises grass-fed meats on 240 acres in the rural Pend Oreille Valley, joins Second Harvest in the belief that everyone deserves nourishing food. They partner with The Kitchen at Second Harvest to teach people another way they can put their health into their own hands by preparing protein-rich bone broth.

"Bone broth is what all of the other broths wish they were," Eileen smiled. "We call it liquid gold. It's almost like medicine."

Twenty-five people turned out for two free bone broth classes. Step by step, Eileen demonstrated the process of transforming leftover beef bones straight from their ranch into a nutrient-dense broth. The simple recipe produced a wholesome, comforting broth perfect for sipping on its own as a restorative tonic or using as a base for soups, stews and sauces. Eileen described how turning bones that otherwise would be wasted into a broth that extends the nutritional value of their livestock reflects Ramstead Ranch's passion for how they raise their animals and honor the abundance that nature provides.



Pictured: Eileen teaching in The Kitchen.

"They've given their lives to provide us nutrition and nourishment, and one of the best things about broth is that it's a great way to truly utilize the whole animal," Eileen explained. "We're not just sending a bunch of bones off to be trash in a landfill somewhere. They can become nourishing food."

Although a pressure cooker or Instant Pot are great for cooking bone broth, more common and simple kitchen tools like a crockpot or a stove top pot are all that's needed. At its simplest, bone broth needs only two ingredients: animal bones and water. Besides the beef bones that Ramstead Ranch used for the class, other options are chicken, turkey and pork. Eileen encouraged using a variety of bones.

"You can mix it up and that's great. It will enhance the flavor – give you a different flavor profile," Eileen told class participants.

Eileen said bones can be saved from meat used and stored safely in the freezer. For people who are food insecure, using leftover bones for broth allows them to save money that they can use for other nutritious ingredients for meals.

Ramstead Ranch also donated bones from their harvested beef to Second Harvest. Several were shared with Thrive International in Spokane, a partner nonprofit serving refugees from many different cultures. One of the grateful recipients shared that the bones would be expensive in her country, where they commonly eat bone marrow.

Several participants in the free classes expressed interest in incorporating bone broth into their diets after learning about the health benefits.

"It's a cup of health," Eileen said of bone broth. "Good food is so simple and delicious on its own."

To learn more about The Kitchen, please visit: secondharvestkitchen.org.



Pictured: Broth samples served during class.



2023 Turkey Drives: Generosity in Action

To everyone who shared their time, financial support and food to support November's turkey drives, Second Harvest thanks you.

Your generosity helped provide 6,800 Thanksgiving meals to families in need in Spokane, the Mid-Columbia and Yakima Valley.

This year's meal box distributions were different than years past. To better serve people facing hunger, we met them in their neighborhoods. Instead of distributing thousands of Thanksgiving meal boxes on a single day in one location, 24 partner food banks distributed them over several days, closer to recipients' homes.

"This is a big thing for us, because inflation is so bad that we are running low on everything," Ivonne shared before picking up a turkey drive box at Second Harvest partner food bank St. Vincent de Paul in Pasco. The ingredients provided more than just a meal for her family of five, they also provided a sense of community during a challenging time. "Thank you so much, Second Harvest," Ivonne said. "It means a lot to us, and we are so, so thankful for all the people that have contributed to make this possible for all the people that need it, like my family."

Pictured: Contents of a KREM Cares Tom's Turkey Drive meal box



Pictured: Volunteers helping to make our turkey drives successful.



John, who visited the KREM Cares Tom's Turkey Drive distribution at the Medical Lake Food Bank, said inflation has forced him and his wife to make tough choices. The meal box made a difference. **"This helps immensely," John explained. "Instead of going out and spending the money on a turkey, I can put it toward something else that my kids and my wife need. I've been on the other side, so this has been a humbling experience for me. Being humbled is good."**

We thank our community of volunteers, food pantries, agriculture partners, donors and the sponsors listed below who generously joined hands to support the turkey drives.

KREM Cares Tom's Turkey Drive Sponsors:



Mid-Columbia and Yakima Valley Turkey Drive Sponsors:



RDO Equipment, Domex Superfresh, Dairy Farmers of WA, Tree Top, Umpqua Bank, Les Schwab

Pictured: KREM Cares Tom's Turkey Drive meal boxes.

Finding Hope in Hard Times

BRANDON VASQUEZ

While visiting a Spokane area food bank, Jennifer learned about the opportunity to sign up for a KREM Cares Tom's Turkey Drive meal box. She made sure to secure a time slot for pickup, knowing how meaningful it would be to provide a Thanksgiving meal for her family.

"I was looking at prices of the turkeys last week and I cried; I don't understand why they're so high. It's just very expensive. You can forget about the other ingredients, 'cause the turkey's like the main thing. But if you can't afford a \$50 to \$60 turkey, that kind of puts a hinge in your heart, you know, with your family trying to have something loving and meaningful."

Keeping up with bills and groceries for her family has been a struggle for Jennifer, who works part time but is looking to return to full-time work.



Pictured: Jennifer

"I really pretty much get groceries for my kids, and I probably just eat maybe once out of the day. I kind of skip a meal. But as long as my kids eat, I'm not so much worried about me."

Despite recent struggles, Jennifer expressed gratitude and hope for things to get better. It's a hope shared by many neighbors who are struggling to get by.

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both sides of the Idaho-Washington border is one of the best areas for growing pulses: lentils, chickpeas, dry peas and dry beans. So, we sometimes get substantial pulse donations. However, many folks aren't familiar with how to prepare them. That's where The Kitchen at Second Harvest plays an integral role. In our teaching kitchen, trained nutrition educators teach food bank recipients how to make an incredible variety of dishes using pulses and other ingredients they may receive.

That is one way we mix several ingredients — locally grown food, nutrition expertise, cooking skills, and thriftiness — to help our neighbors across the region stretch their food dollars while preparing hearty, tasty meals.

If you or someone you know would like to donate food to Second Harvest, please visit:
2-harvest.org/givefood.

Pictured: Lentil curry



Mission Moments: Serving People Facing Hunger

More people are facing hunger. According to the Department of Agriculture, 12.8% of households are food insecure — more than during the pandemic.

While stats are helpful to understand the growing need, they only tell part of the story.

People, not numbers, are the reason we're here. And we're seeing more people in our community facing hunger. Folks like Jennifer, who shares her experience on page 5.

"I really pretty much get groceries for my kids, and I probably just eat maybe once out of the day," Jennifer told us. "I kind of skip a meal. But as long as my kids eat, I'm not so much worried about me."

Thanks to our resilient community of hunger crusaders, there's hope for Jennifer and other hardworking neighbors.

From the team of volunteers, food producers and partners who help source and distribute the 35 million pounds of food that's shared by local food pantries, to farmer Eileen teaching free cooking classes in The Kitchen at Second Harvest, we see people stepping up to support neighbors when they're down.

As you'll read on Page 2, that matters to seniors like Yvonne who rely on Mobile Market free food distributions.

"They definitely help me get through the month," Yvonne said after picking up pantry staples at a Mobile Market. "There's always good things...that we can use."

People serving people to build a hunger-free community. That's Second Harvest. Thank you for being part of our team.



Jason L. Clark
Chief Executive Officer

Scan here to see the newest episode of Jason's Hunger Crusade.



Basic Food: Get Help Today



If you or someone you know needs help accessing monthly benefits for food, please visit 2-harvest.org/basicfood.

Applying for SNAP, or Basic Food, may not be as complicated as you think. Second Harvest strives to build healthier communities by increasing access to nutritious food for people in need. Our goal is to connect more people with the Washington State Basic Food Program (commonly known as food stamps).

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