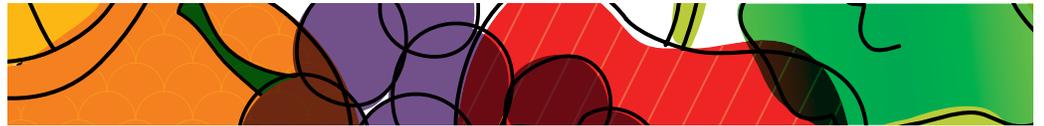




of SANTA CLARA and  
SAN MATEO COUNTIES

WINTER 2013

# FOOD FOR THOUGHT



## HUNGER AND OBESITY: INTERCONNECTED?

When many of us think of hunger, we tend to think of starving children with protruding stomachs living in third-world countries. In the U.S., the images of hunger that come to mind are often homeless adults standing on street corners with cardboard signs.



The reality is quite different. The hungriest people in our community may not be sickly thin, but actually tipping the scales. Hunger, obesity and malnutrition are intricately connected in the United States.

Low income families not only struggle to earn enough money to put food on the table, but many low income neighborhoods don't even have full-service grocery stores where healthy food options are available - these areas are often referred to as "food deserts." Instead families often shop for groceries at corner convenience stores or resort to eating at inexpensive fast food restaurants.

Fast food restaurants are not only prevalent in impoverished areas, but fast food is an inexpensive way to feed a family while also making sure that no-one is left "feeling hungry."

**"When you're hungry and struggling financially, you're going to get what you can afford and fills you up," said Eddie, a Second Harvest Food Bank client. "It's hard when you work long hours and sometimes feel like the deck is stacked against you."**

One example of this ironic co-existence between hunger and obesity is in Mississippi, the state with both the highest hunger rate (19%) and the highest obesity rate (35%).\*

At Second Harvest our first priority is to feed hungry people in our community. However we also don't want to compound the diet related health issues that many of our clients face. Therefore we have gone out of our way to prioritize the distribution of healthy foods such as fresh fruits and vegetables. Fresh produce is viewed as an unaffordable luxury by our most financially strapped neighbors. We are proud to report, that last year more than half of what the Food Bank provided was fresh fruits and vegetables.

Senior Director of Programs and Services, Cindy McCown, was the first Nutritionist to ever work for a food bank. She was hired on at Second Harvest nearly 30 years ago. "The link between hunger and obesity is subtle," she says. Under her leadership, Second Harvest helps by distributing healthy foods to low-income households while our Nutritionists educate our clients about healthy eating, providing them with simple recipe cards so that they can learn how to prepare some of the new foods they are trying for the first time.

\* Feeding America Fact Sheet, "Food Insecurity, Health and Diet-Related Disease." (2012)

## THE FACE OF HUNGER MAY BE YOURS



My name is Henry. I never imagined I would need a helping hand. In fact, my wife and I were once Silicon Valley professionals during the peak of the high-tech boom. We both made good money and were on the verge of having it all. Then the unexpected happened. My health went bad. In 2007, I suddenly went into shock and woke up in the hospital. I was told I had terminal liver disease. My wife was diagnosed with cancer just 8 days later. We both quit our jobs and cashed out our life savings.

“ This food basically saved my life. ”

But before we could complete our bucket list, my wife died. I never recovered from the depression and eventually lost my savings, my home and all of our possessions. I was alone. And I couldn't get back on my feet as my own health continued to decline. The medical expenses were overwhelming. I barely paid bills. I cut back on food...until I got hungry.

Today, I've moved into my father's home. But my dad is a senior on a fixed income and we both struggle for food and basic necessities. The food I get from Second Harvest is what keeps me going. I know how hard it is to ask someone for help, but this food basically saved my life. If it weren't for the Food Bank, I'd be panhandling for money. I'd be asking for spare change. I'd be on my knees begging for food. To everyone who donates, please know how much I appreciate it. Don't stop.

## RANDY LEADS BY EXAMPLE

My name is Randy and I've been proud to volunteer for Second Harvest Food Bank for nearly a decade. As a food sort team leader, I organize dozens of volunteers by providing training, guidance and other logistics at Second Harvest's Bing Center in San Carlos. I regularly recruit members of my Kiwanis Club and other civic groups to participate in this integral part of the Food Bank's mission.



I've also had the pleasure of serving as a Food Bank Ambassador through the Speaker's Bureau. I have the honor of representing Second Harvest at dozens of engagements every year which helps to generate donations of food, money and time while greatly alleviating the demand on staff time. My passion for the Food Bank's work has led to strengthened relationships with local schools, organizations, and corporations. One of my other passions is photography which I've also been able to help the Food Bank with during special events. I know it helps save costs while keeping the quality high – it all translates to every donation going further to feed even more people.

Volunteers are fundamental to every step of the food banking process. I can vouch for the incredible “return on investment” that volunteers like me provide: thanks to the nearly 300,000 hours that I and many others from all walks of life put into the Food Bank's daily operations, we are able to do the work equivalent to 143 full-time staff. Our collective efforts mean that more food can get into every neighborhood, to the people who need it most. But the “ROI” doesn't stop there: my personal growth, wellbeing and connection to our community is reciprocated every time I help sort bins of carrots, speak at a corporate fair, or inspire someone else to take on the cause of ending hunger. Best wishes for a year of service and meaningful contributions that make our communities thrive. The fact that you're willing to show up to help others matters!

## MARY CONNECTS TO SECOND HARVEST'S RESOURCES



My name is Mary and I'm the Executive Director of CALL Primrose in Burlingame. Our program started in 1983 as an information and referral service which grew, over time, into a food pantry that also serves as a "drop-in" site to assist those needing emergency food and financial assistance. We've been Food Bank partners for as long as I can remember. We are one of the rare food pantries that can provide food twice a month for the families we serve. At least 60% of the food we give out is from Second Harvest so there's literally no way we could operate without their support.

The home-like atmosphere of our pantry is important to us so that everyone who walks through our doors feels welcome. Every Thursday, a Food Bank truck pulls up with several pallets of produce, canned goods and other staple foods. Through Second Harvest's Grocery Rescue program, we are able to expand the variety of food we provide to the 1,500 people we feed each month to include meat, dairy and eggs. This innovative program connects us directly with a nearby grocery store, and we pick up the food that would otherwise be thrown out. Our clients love the variety!



We also get to "shop" for our families each Tuesday at the nearby Produce Hub, which functions like a farmers' market, where we can take whatever produce we can handle from a central neighborhood location. This way we don't have to drive to the Food Bank, or have them deliver to all of us "smaller" agencies around the Peninsula. Second Harvest's wide-ranging support to agencies like ours even goes beyond the food itself. We know we can always get advice from Food Bank staff on everything from what to do with unfamiliar produce, to how to explain to our clients the benefits of enrolling in CalFresh. It's like having a whole back office without the payroll!

**“ We couldn't operate our pantry without Second Harvest's support. Thank You! ”**

People are often shocked to realize that so many of our neighbors go without food on a regular basis. We're always reminding our volunteers and others in the community that people right in front of you could be hungry and you'd never know it. A man named Mike came to us after experiencing major upheavals in his life stemming from a divorce and becoming a single father overnight. He always reminded us that he would "give back" once he could donate again. He eventually got a job in the transportation industry and has been a loyal donor and volunteer ever since. There are countless stories just like his - someone who never thought they would need food assistance, had the courage to reach out for help, and then returned the gifts they had been given to make sure no one else is hungry. Thank you for all that you do to make these success stories possible each day.

## CAROLEE LEARNS THE MEANING OF “PAYING IT FORWARD”

On August 11th, 2009, Jenni Ware found herself stranded at the Menlo Park Trader Joe's checkout line - her wallet was gone. Her already hectic day had just taken a turn for the worse. As a knee-jerk reaction, I approached the distressed Jenni and offered to pay her \$207 bill. Jenni gratefully accepted and promised to repay me. Once home, I posted on Facebook what had transpired, adding that I was “vacillating between feeling really good and very, very stupid”. Friends reassured me that I had done the right thing and good karma was sure to follow - I have wonderful friends.

The next day a check arrived from Jenni for \$300, with a note thanking me for my generosity and trust, and recommending I get a massage with the extra money. Uncomfortable with keeping the \$93 “thank you”, I turned to my Facebook friends and asked what they would do with the money. Several people suggested giving it to charity, which I really liked and decided to do. Touched by Jenni's honesty, I matched the \$93 and turned to Facebook for suggestions on where the \$186 should go. One person tossed out Second Harvest Food Bank, since the events had occurred at a grocery store. Another friend, inspired by the story, matched with \$93 of his own money. So did another. And another. And another.

Jenni and I reconnected after a week and I told her the massage money had become \$2,000 through the spontaneous generosity of Facebook friends. Jenni then posted the story to her Facebook page and her friends began making donations as well. The total donations soon swelled to \$10,000. Children donated 93 cents of their allowance.



One single mom, working 20 hours a week while in grad school, offered \$9.30, because she couldn't afford \$93. The media picked up the story and donations poured in. Many chose to give \$93 to their local food banks in states spanning the country.

“ I Know that Every Person, Every Action - Large or Small - Makes a Difference. ”

Since our chance meeting, the 93 Dollar Club has raised almost \$150,000 to benefit Second Harvest Food Bank of San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties and another \$45,000 for food banks around the country. Every dollar provides 2 meals, so the money raised locally has provided almost 300,000 meals. With help from posting and reposting on Facebook, our “pay it forward” story has traveled around the globe and continues to move people to spread goodness and help fight hunger. Every person, every action - large or small - makes a difference.

**A special matching grant of \$93,000 from Genentech will help push the our fundraising total over \$200,000! Stay tuned to [SHFB.org](http://SHFB.org) and their Facebook page in February to learn more.**

Does your company match gifts?  
Double the impact of your donation!  
Learn more at  
**[SHFB.org/Match](http://SHFB.org/Match)**

