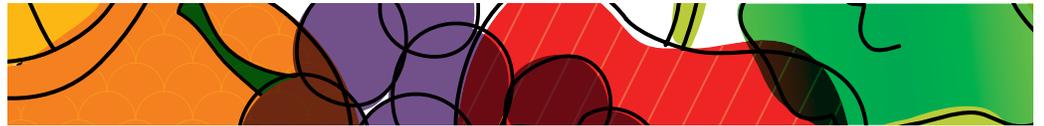




of SANTA CLARA and
SAN MATEO COUNTIES

SPRING 2015

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



“MY EXPERIENCE WITH HUNGER IS A PERSONAL ONE”: Meet Suzanne

My experience with hunger is a personal one. Two months after my younger brother was born, he got sick. What doctors diagnosed as a common cold was meningitis, and days later my brother passed away. In his grief, my father became addicted to drugs. We lost our company, we lost our home, we lost our family, we lost everything.

My mother and I moved to a shelter when it was no longer safe. It was scary. I missed my clothes and my toys and my home and my friends. As a picky eater, not being able to choose my snack was terrifying.

As a mother myself, I cannot fathom my mother's heartbreak and courage in taking this path. Her drive to have our basic needs met changed the course of our lives. For the next few years, we relied on food stamps.

My mother's nursing certification had expired while she helped run my father's business, so she wasn't able to find a job. We moved in with my grandparents, and my mother took shorthand classes in hopes of becoming an administrative assistant.

As grateful as I was, even at the age of 5, I felt embarrassed that the way we paid for food (food stamps) was conspicuously different. We shopped in two groups— must haves (milk and bread) and the rest (crackers and fruit). The worst was putting back the same much-needed item week after week. My mother would tear up. I felt ashamed and imagined I was to blame. I developed strong mental math skills to avoid emotional encounters at checkout.

Fortunately, my mother secured an administrative job at an allergist's office and worked a second, and sometimes third, job to support us. We graduated from food assistance, and I studied diligently to become the



first in my family to earn a bachelor's degree. Serendipitously, I joined Google.

For most of my life my father was homeless. I am profoundly grateful to those who fed him. Their generosity was the most impactful, precious gift I received. It would have been easy to view him as not worthy, or trust that our family could help when we couldn't. This generosity lessened the financial and emotional pressure on me so I could focus on school, and taught me the power of compassion.

Today, though I am fortunate to receive free meals at work, the fear and uncertainty of missing meals never feels far away. It's something that never really leaves. Only two years ago, I finally stopped sorting the items in my shopping cart. I am thankful each day that I can provide for my family, and feel privileged to do what we can to pay it forward.

One in three children here is at risk of hunger. In one of the most innovative and wealthiest communities in the country, if not the world, I believe we can do better. We can create the model that ends local hunger.

Suzanne Liu is a board member at Second Harvest Food Bank and Global Head of Cloud Deployment at Google.

From Our CEO: STANDING UP FOR KIDS THIS SPRING

For kids, spring can be full of pleasant distractions: playing soccer until dark, trying out for the softball team or school play, and, best of all, spring break. But a more serious distraction may worry one in three local kids: hunger.

What does hunger look like for a kid in one of the wealthiest regions in the country? She might devour her free school lunch because it's the only full meal she'll have all day. He might come home to watered-down milk and fast food – all his parents can afford. She might fall asleep in the middle of her math homework. Hunger robs kids of the energy they need to pursue their dreams.

Unfortunately, for too many parents in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, putting food on the table remains a struggle. It takes more than \$82,000 per year for a family of four to pay its bills and put food on the table in Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties, according to the Insight Center for Community Economic Development. Yet more than 84% of our client households make less than \$20,000 per year, which is the equivalent of a full-time job making \$10 per hour.



Hard-working families are suffering. Every day at Second Harvest, we see moms and dads cut corners to scrape by. But no parent should have to skip meals so that their kids don't have to go to bed hungry.

With your support, we're turning the tide on childhood hunger. Our Stand Up for Kids Campaign is in full-swing thanks to leadership from every corner of our community.

With the funds we raise from this important campaign, we are deepening our partnerships with local schools, which are – not surprisingly – some of the best places to help hungry kids and find out what their families need to put food on the table. Over the next year, our goal is to start 10 more school pantries to connect families to food. We've already seen amazing results from existing school pantries. For example, at Fair Oaks Elementary, where so many kids were struggling to concentrate in class because they didn't have enough nutritious food to eat, the entire student body and their families are now receiving food from Second Harvest.

“ Having seen how many kids who were coming into the office ‘in trouble’ were really just coming to the office hungry, has made me a huge believer that keeping kids well-fed is one of the best ways to keep them happy and learning in the classrooms. ”

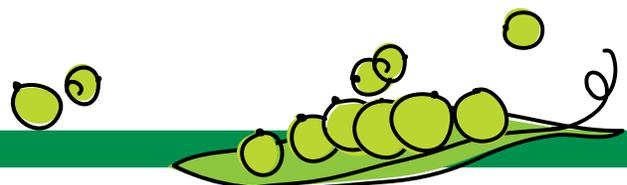
-Andrew Elliott-Chandler, Principal at Rocketship Si Se Puede

Building on last year's successes, we'll continue to connect kids with milk, protein, and of course, the fresh fruits and vegetables they need to grow strong. With your help, we're feeding nearly 100,000 local kids every month.

Good food provides the foundation for a healthy, productive life. Thanks for giving kids a fighting chance.

Kathy Jackson

Kathy Jackson
Chief Executive Officer,
Second Harvest Food Bank



“FOOD HELPS OUR BRAINS GET MOVING”: Meet Susana’s Family

My husband and I have been married for 24 years. He’s a truck driver for a hauling company, and he drives all the way down to San Jose and all the way up to Napa. We both cook for our family.

I’ve had to cut corners, to buy only what we really need. Instead of shoes or clothes for the kids, I buy my family food. But after we paid rent, water, and electricity, at the end of the month, we barely had any food. And, when the kids are home, they just want to eat and eat!



Susana’s children, David, Juan, and Lisette

About three years ago, a friend of mine told me about this program that was available for families. Since then, we’ve been receiving food from Second Harvest Food Bank. Once a week, I pick up food: fruit, veggies, and lots of snacks for my kids.

We receive CalFresh (food stamps), too, but what we get on CalFresh isn’t enough. If it weren’t for Second Harvest and CalFresh, we wouldn’t be eating anything! It’s helped so much, not only for me, but especially for my kids. I want to say thank you, because this is a really good program.

Luis, 13: The food we get is healthy, and it helps us save money. When we don’t have any food, it worries me. We have a big family, and there were some times we could barely eat. Food helps our brains get moving.

HOW HUNGER HURTS KIDS: A Pediatrician’s Perspective

Dr. Rhea Boyd is a pediatrician who works at Palo Alto Medical Foundation’s urgent care, as well as at Children’s Hospital Oakland’s teen clinic. She spoke to us about the impact that hunger has on children, and how local pediatricians are taking a stand against childhood hunger.

When kids come to the doctor for well-checks, we always ask about nutrition. Losing or gaining weight can be an early sign of illness in kids. During my residency, some of my patients were babies who weren’t gaining weight. I found out that many parents were watering down their baby formula.

Often, parents are trying to stretch formula because it’s so expensive, even when the family is participating in WIC (Womens, Infants, and Children, a public nutrition program for new mothers and children). But if babies aren’t gaining weight in the early months, they probably aren’t getting enough nutrients to build their brains, bones, and organs.

Some clinics in our region are fortunate to have wonderful social workers or even on-site food distribution sites for individuals or families who are in crisis. Other clinics that don’t have those resources may find it difficult to address their patients’ hunger issues. So the American Academy of Pediatrics is partnering with a tech nonprofit called OneDegree (www.1deg.org). We’ve created an app that helps health providers connect families with every social service they need, including food assistance. It’s expanding to Santa Clara County soon.



For kids, food is directly related to school performance, health, and their risk for chronic diseases. It affects their entire life trajectory. As pediatricians, we can help protect our children from hunger, which threatens their health and wellness.

DID YOU KNOW?

Second Harvest continues to build our partnerships with pediatricians. Thanks to our partnership with the American Academy of Pediatrics’ District One Chapter, **nearly 500 pediatricians** received a **“Nutrition Rx”** pad to refer patients to food bank resources, along with recommendations for **screening patients for hunger.**

Additionally, Second Harvest is a proud member of the East Palo Alto Food Security Collaborative, a public, private, and nonprofit partnership. The Collaborative hosts pediatricians to research and pioneer **solutions to childhood hunger.**

MUSIC HOLDS US UP: Student Band Fights Local Hunger

We sat down with members of RAGAn, a group of Bay Area high school students who perform classical Indian music, to discuss their fight against local hunger. The students attend different schools, but they recently united for a fundraising concert benefiting Second Harvest. RAGAn includes Raama, Ajay, Geeta, Nitin, and Akshay. Their instruments include mridangam, a South Indian percussion instrument, the veena, a string instrument, and their voices.



What gave you the idea for the concert?

AJAY: When we started, we wanted to do one concert as a fun event. Then we got an idea to do something better than that – we could not just do it to play music, but help someone.

NITIN: We got our inspiration from another group of musicians who held a benefit concert a few years ago. We thought we would take it up a notch and invite different schools to play.

RAAMA: We wanted audiences to be involved in what they were donating toward. So we invited them to perform and be an integral part of our battle against hunger.

With so many worthy causes, why did you focus on hunger?

GEETA: We were wondering what types of local problems there are here. We were oblivious to the fact that some basic needs, like food, aren't being met.

AKSHAY: It was shocking to hear that so many people are hungry here, in such an affluent area.

AJAY: ...and we wanted to strike light on that assumption and prove it wrong. In my old neighborhood, I saw poverty and hunger firsthand. I realized that is an issue that has to be taken on.

NITIN: Growing up in a middle-class family, I don't feel the hunger that a lot of people feel. Doing this concert opened my perspective to how a lot of people are living.

RAAMA: Literacy, shelter, and other types of problems are important as well, but they all don't threaten the lives of millions of humans across the world every single day, in the same way hunger does. Hunger is a problem that no matter how wealthy a nation is, some people face it. So if we put our own energy and time into helping to eradicate that problem, then it probably makes both us and them better for it.

Why did you select Second Harvest?

GEETA:

“They say if you're good at music, you're good at math. But if I forget to take my lunch to school one day, I get so hungry I can't focus in math class. I know food is so important.”

When I told my friends about the concert, they just took out their wallets and gave me five dollars to put it towards Second Harvest. I'm so glad we were able to help kids like us.

What would you say to other young people who are thinking about donating, hosting a fundraiser, or volunteering?

AJAY: Find a cause that you find moving. At the end of the fundraiser, you should be feeling satisfied and happy because it's meaningful to you.

NITIN: If you're passionate about something, you can pursue that and use that passion to help others. For me, Indian music is a great way to connect with my culture, express myself, and it's a great stress reliever. Music is always there to hold me up. Use whatever you have and make the most of it!

