



2014 HUNGER STUDY



of SANTA CLARA and
SAN MATEO COUNTIES

HUNGER

in our own backyard

MEMBER OF **FEEDING AMERICA**



From Our CEO

When you think of Silicon Valley, you probably don't think of hunger. Words like technology and start up may come to mind, but not hunger. Yet here, at the epicenter of innovation, one in 10 people depend on Second Harvest for food every month. That's almost a quarter of a million people, from nearly every neighborhood.



This Hunger Study, developed in partnership with Feeding America, offers a glimpse into the lives of the people Second Harvest serves. It shows us how people are surviving each day, the sacrifices they are making, and some of the real barriers preventing them from putting nutritious food on the table.

How important is having enough nutritious food to eat? **Food is medicine:** It helps to prevent chronic disease. **Food is fuel:** It energizes the workforce. **Food is the foundation for success:** It powers kids through classwork, sports, homework, and play.

We know food is especially critical for kids' growing minds and bodies.

Recently, I spent some time with one of our nonprofit partners, Jim Gallagher from Cathedral of Faith's Pantry, Reaching Out. Jim had just met with the administrators at Canoas Elementary School, a small school in San Jose just five minutes from our Curtner facility, to discuss starting a monthly food distribution at the school. Jim brought over a case of oranges to show the freshness and quality of the food Second Harvest provides, but the principal was unsure about the need.

During the meeting, a little boy came into the office, his eyes brimming with tears. The principal asked what was wrong. "I'm so hungry!" he sobbed. Jim immediately offered him one of the oranges. "What is it?" he asked. Jim explained that it was a piece of fruit, like an apple. So he tried to take a bite!

The adults intervened, peeled the orange, and when that little boy tasted his first-ever orange segment, his face lit up and he said, "This is 'licious!" At that point the principal said: "We have 350 families with kids in our school that qualify for free or reduced-price lunches. When can you start distributing food?"

No one should feel the pangs of hunger in one of the most prosperous regions in the country. **With your help, we can ensure that anyone who needs a meal should get one.**

Kathy Jackson
CEO, Second Harvest Food Bank



The Face of Local Hunger

Most of the people who are receiving assistance from Second Harvest never imagined that they would be standing in a food line. The vast majority of the Food Bank's clients are not homeless, uneducated, or living on the fringes of our community.

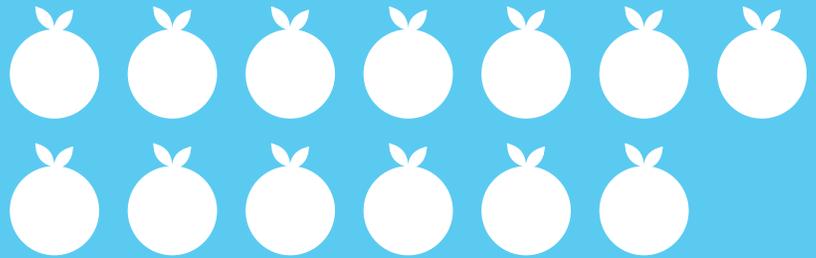
Many are employed, often working multiple jobs just to keep the lights on and a roof over their heads. More than a quarter of our clients (28%) have a college degree or have taken some college courses, 89% live in permanent housing, and 58% rent or lease their homes.

Without Second Harvest's support, many of our clients would be stranded, making too much to qualify for public benefits, but too little to make ends meet in an area where apartment rents average more than \$2,300 per month. On average, our clients in Santa Clara and San Mateo County receive assistance from the Food Bank 13 times per year, compared to the national average of eight times. This is no doubt a reflection of the high cost of living in the Bay Area.

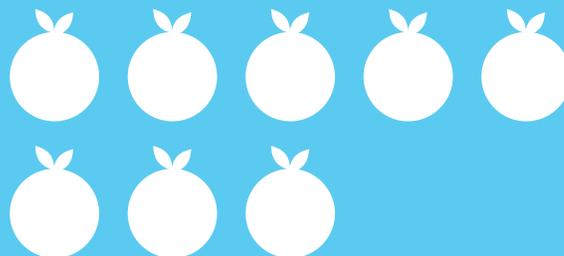
"I've worked as a telephone operator at a hotel for seven years. Before getting food from Second Harvest, I was behind with my bills. I had to choose food before my bills— food comes before anything else. Now that I'm getting help from Second Harvest, I'm on time with my bills. I don't have to worry about what we're going to eat tomorrow."

Frances, Client and Volunteer

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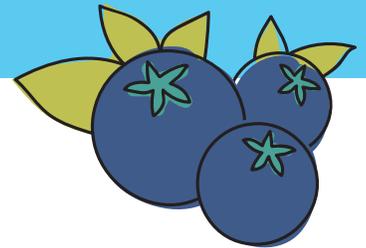


compared to
the national
average of
8 times
a year.



The majority of our clients
earn less than
\$20,000 a year.

It takes an annual income of more than
\$82,000 *for a family*
 of four to pay their bills and
put food on the table.



What's Driving the Need?

Low Wages, Underemployment and Unemployment.

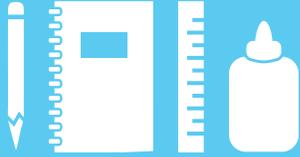
Despite the booming local economy, Second Harvest Food Bank continues to see staggering need. Many still have not recovered from the Great Recession. The rising cost of living in Silicon Valley and on the peninsula is also making it difficult for those who are still unemployed, working low-wage jobs, or living on a fixed income.

A large number of our clients are either unemployed or underemployed. In nearly three-quarters of client households (74%), the member who worked the most is now unemployed. Three-quarters of those who are unemployed (75%) have been out of work for more than a year. Among clients who work, more than half (54%) work 30 hours or less per week which suggests that many people can't find full-time employment.



“I worked at a dry-cleaning business for 28 years. I managed 33 employees. But two years ago, I got laid off. I knew I had to get food for my kids. When I asked for food for the first time at my church, I was crying. I put on my hat to cover my head, I was so ashamed. But after that, I saw a lot of people who were going through the same thing. I felt comfortable.”

Sandra, Client and Volunteer



47% choose
between paying
for Food
or paying for
Education
expenses



50%

EXPIRED

eat food past
its expiration
date

35%



water down
food and
drinks

23%



sell or pawn
personal property
so they can eat

Making Tough Choices

What if you lost your job or faced a catastrophic illness that shattered the stability of your family? If you had to choose, what would you fill—the plates on your table or the gas tank to get to a job interview one hour away?

That is the situation too many of our clients face, with 68% reporting that they had to choose between paying for food or paying for transportation, and 47% reporting that they had to choose between paying for food or paying for education expenses.

“If I have to give them less in school supplies to make sure they have food in their stomach, then that’s what I have to do.”

“Getting supplies for my children when they return to school can be tough, and my two daughters sometimes have to wait to get the supplies they need for school. The struggle is that I can’t get it all at once. I have to make sure there is food on the table first.”

I worry: Is she going to be the only kid without her P.E. uniform? I don’t want my children to feel embarrassed or be nervous that they will ‘get in trouble’ for not having the required school uniform shirt the first week of school. My husband works in a restaurant, but the hours can be sporadic. I’ve been out of work for five years. It’s been hard finding a job so we struggle to make ends meet.

If I have to give them less in school supplies to make sure they have food in their stomach, then that’s what I have to do.”

Arletta, Client, Milpitas



Finding a Way to Cope

One of the most heartbreaking takeaways from the Hunger in America study was learning about some of the coping strategies people use to feed their families. We discovered that about two-thirds of our clients (67%) purchase cheap, unhealthy foods to make ends meet. That's why Second Harvest has put so much emphasis on providing nutritious food to the community, including an abundance of fruits and vegetables. More than half the food Second Harvest distributes is fresh produce.

In addition to buying unhealthy foods, 50% of our clients report eating food past its expiration date, 35% water down food and drinks, and 23% sell or pawn personal property so they can eat. It's not unusual to hear from the children of our clients that they worry about the health and well-being of their parents, who often skip meals so they can have enough to eat.

"We went through a rough patch which is mostly behind us, but for a while, hunger disrupted our daily lives. It affected not only our moods and our health, the whole house was impacted—it just upsets the family dynamic."

Irene, Client, San Mateo County

"Our mom acts like it's not a big deal, but we know what she's given up for us. Sometimes she wouldn't eat so that the rest of us would have enough food."

Cheyenne and Dakota, Irene's daughters

Almost **2/3**
of our clients have
high blood pressure



More than **1/3**
of our clients have
diabetes



That's why Second Harvest is focused on increasing the amounts of fresh fruits and vegetables we provide our clients. In fact, Second Harvest distributes more fresh produce than any other food bank in the nation.

Where Chronic Hunger and Disease Intersect

You're hungry and there's nothing to eat. You're working two jobs, rely on a bus to get to your next job, and don't have much time to prepare something healthy for your family. You have a choice: A 20-minute bus ride will get you to a market that has healthy, fresh food, or you can walk to the fast food restaurant that's just around the corner.

For Second Harvest clients, nutritious food is not only unaffordable, but also sometimes out of reach. We know that many of our clients want to provide their families with healthy food, but they often lack transportation or time, and junk food is cheap and filling.

Chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension are often diet-related, and tend to be disproportionately high among those seeking food assistance. For example, 63% of our client households report a family member with high blood pressure, compared to the national rate of 31%, and 33% report that someone in the household has diabetes, compared to a national rate of 9%.

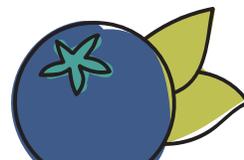


“Who would ever think peanut butter and jelly would be a luxury?”

“My oldest son Christopher had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and the foods I was feeding him were negatively impacting his condition. Through a nutrition class, I learned that the types of processed foods I was feeding him, the only ones I could afford, were affecting his ADHD. I wanted to feed my sons healthier foods, but I just couldn’t afford fresh produce. I remember going to the grocery store and picking up grapes, which were \$7 a pound, and peanut butter, which was \$5 per jar. Who would ever think peanut butter and jelly would be a luxury?”

The fresh fruits and vegetables I received from the Food Bank changed all that. My son’s condition is improving and we’ve actually all lost a lot of weight, which is funny because we’re actually eating more! We’re not hungry as often and we are snacking on things like broccoli, which get us through to the next meal.”

Amanda, Client, South San Francisco



More and Better Food

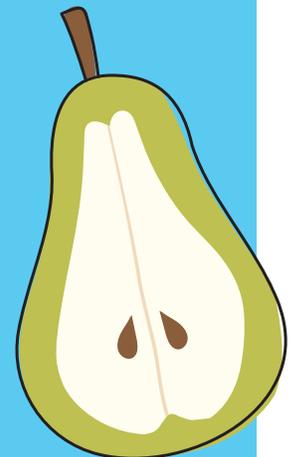
It's hard to believe that one in 3 local children may not know where their next meal is coming from. But the fact is 100,000 kids rely on Second Harvest for food every month. At the beginning of this report, I told you about a boy so hungry that he was sobbing for food at his neighborhood school. That school is only five minutes away from one of the Second Harvest facilities.

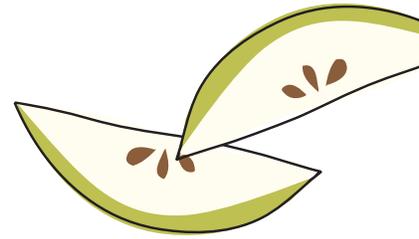
For that little boy and the other kids and families who depend on Second Harvest, we'll keep focusing on providing more and better food. We're working to ensure that everyone has access to the nutritious food they need to thrive, by improving existing programs and investing in new innovative efforts that have the potential to reach more of our hungry neighbors than ever before. We hope that "Hunger in Our Own Backyard: 2014 Hunger Study" sheds a light on local hunger and inspires you to take action.



Kathy Jackson

CEO, Second Harvest Food Bank





Methodology

Hunger in America 2014 is the largest study of charitable food assistance ever conducted. It provides demographic data about the people who receive food from Second Harvest (clients) and some of the choices and challenges they face. The national report is based on more than 60,000 face-to-face client interviews across the United States. In Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, 385 in-depth client interviews were conducted during the summer of 2013.



About Second Harvest Food Bank

Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties is the trusted leader dedicated to ending local hunger. Since its inception in 1974, Second Harvest has become one of the largest food banks in the nation, providing food to nearly one quarter of a million people each month. The Food Bank mobilizes individuals, companies and community partners to connect people to the nutritious food they need. More than half of the food distributed is fresh produce. In fact, Second Harvest provides more fresh fruits and vegetables than any other food bank in the United States. Second Harvest also plays a leading role in promoting federal nutrition programs and educating families on how to make healthier food choices. Visit SHFB.org to get involved.

Families who are struggling to put food on the table should call Second Harvest's Food Connection multilingual hotline at **1-800-984-3663** to learn about food-assistance programs that can help, including CalFresh (food stamps).



About Feeding America

Feeding America is a nationwide network of 200 food banks that leads the fight against hunger in the United States. Together, they provide food to more than 46 million people through food pantries and meal programs in communities throughout America. Feeding America also supports programs that improve food security among the people they serve; educates the public about the problem of hunger; and advocates for legislation that protects people from going hungry. Individuals, charities, businesses and government all have a role in ending hunger. Visit feedingamerica.org to learn more.



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