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**FUNDING GAP PUTS SECOND HARVEST IN DANGER OF CUTTING SERVICES**

Emerging trend of rising need, coupled with a plateau in giving,  
signals looming Silicon Valley hunger crisis

SAN JOSE, Calif., December 21, 2016 – Second Harvest Food Bank is sounding the alarm that without a surge in financial giving this holiday season, it will be forced to defer the launch of critical services to feed the hungry. An emerging trend of rising need from populations threatened by hunger in Silicon Valley, combined with signs of a plateau in Food Bank donations, signal a potential hunger crisis. If this emerging gap in need versus giving continues to grow, it will result in rising numbers of residents going hungry in one of the wealthiest areas of the country.

“This is a new and extremely worrisome development, and we’re turning to the public to ask for help,” said Kathy Jackson, CEO of Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. “The rising cost of living in Silicon Valley is resulting in more people needing our help. We are seeing an incredibly diverse range of people across all ages and backgrounds threatened by hunger. Far too many are choosing between paying rising rents or buying groceries. As if that isn’t worrisome enough, we are suddenly seeing signs of a plateau in financial donations, especially from individual donors. We are almost \$7 million behind in our holiday fund raising goals. Unless we fill this shortfall, we are going to be forced to defer the launch of desperately needed new services. More alarming is that if this trend of rising need and plateauing donations continues, we are looking at a looming hunger crisis in Silicon Valley.”

The trend of growing numbers of people in Silicon Valley needing help to feed their families is well established. Second Harvest served an average of almost 253,000 people a month in 2015—an increase of almost 10,000 people a month over the previous year. More recently, this last November saw a new monthly record of almost 300,000—an increase of almost 18,000 from the same month last year. It’s a disturbing local hunger trend that shows no signs of abating.

Second Harvest relies on holiday giving to support its programs and services year round. But from November to mid-December, the amount raised is down \$1.9 million versus the prior year, while

the number of gifts and givers is down approximately 2100 gifts and 1700 donors. This decline in the giving base is a sign that in the future, giving in Silicon Valley may no longer keep pace with an escalating need to feed the local hungry.

The harmful impact of a gap between need and funding could begin unfolding over the next few months. The amount and quality of food Second Harvest is able to provide could be impacted. Among the planned services now lacking needed funding are five planned school pantries and four new food pharmacies projected to serve 1,400 hungry families a month.

To keep these services on track and meet the growing hunger challenge in Silicon Valley, individuals, corporations and organizations can help by donating to Second Harvest Food Bank and by encouraging friends, family and others to donate. Every \$50 donation is the equivalent of 100 meals, and will help Second Harvest feed people all year long. For more information about how to donate or support the campaign, visit [SHFB.org](http://SHFB.org) or call 866-234-3663. Anyone who needs food should call Second Harvest's multilingual Food Connection hotline at 800-984-3663.

Based in Silicon Valley, Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties is one of the largest food banks in the nation. Currently providing food to more than one quarter of a million people every month, Second Harvest is a trusted community-based organization that was founded in 1974. Despite the immense wealth in Silicon Valley, and partly due to the high cost of living, hunger and malnutrition are pervasive. The Food Bank distributes nutritious food, including more fresh produce than any other food bank in the country, through a network of more than 320 nonprofit partners at more than 850 sites. Second Harvest is pursuing innovative efforts to increase access to food resources as it seeks to feed an additional 100,000 hungry people each month. To reach more people, it connects those in need to federal nutrition programs and other food resources. To learn more about how Second Harvest is building a hunger-free community, visit [SHFB.org](http://SHFB.org).

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