



**Contact:**

Diane Baker Hayward  
408.921.4611 - Mobile  
dbakerhayward@shfb.org

## **SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK SUPPORTS MOBILE FOOD TRUCK TO FEED HUNGRY KIDS**

Food Bank explores innovative ways to connect families to food this summer because  
4 out of 5 eligible kids don't participate in summer meals programs

**SAN JOSE, Calif., July 6, 2017** – Second Harvest Food Bank is exploring innovative ways to connect more kids and families to food this summer, including a mobile food truck that delivers meals to two parks and a library. Summer is a tough time for local families struggling to put food on the table because their kids lose access to the free and low-cost meals they get during the school year. Unfortunately, more than 80 percent of Silicon Valley kids who are eligible don't participate in summer meal programs, putting them at risk for the consequences of hunger, which include physical and emotional challenges as well as the possibility for "summer slide," where they lose ground academically.

There are a number of barriers that keep kids from accessing summer meals, including a lack of neighborhood summer feeding sites, families don't know the sites exist, transportation issues, and time constraints related to work and other commitments. In addition, the meals are for kids only at most sites and kids sometimes feel uncomfortable that their hungry parents or caregivers can't eat with them.

Second Harvest is leading local efforts to tackle some of those barriers and expand summer meals in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. The Food Bank is collaborating with other members of the newly formed Children's Nutrition Coalition to raise awareness of summer meals programs and to provide food to more people who qualify. Focused on strengthening the summer meals network, the coalition includes high-need school districts, libraries, youth groups, social services agencies and other organizations throughout both counties.\*

"Too many kids in Silicon Valley aren't getting summer meals, so we have to look at innovative ways to reach them and get them the help they need," said Cindy McCown, vice president of community engagement and policy at Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. "That's why Second Harvest is collaborating with school districts and other organizations to provide free summer meals for kids at more sites and in ways that are more accessible to them. Hunger can have devastating consequences for kids because food is the foundation for a healthy, productive life."

In an effort to reach more kids and families where they are, Second Harvest is partnering with organizations like the Mountain View Whisman School District this summer to explore new ways to break through the barriers that prevent access to summer meals. For the first time, a mobile food truck is delivering meals to kids and their families who already gather daily at Rengstorff Park and Klein Park. Once a week, the Mountain View Public Library is hosting a barbeque, which recently drew over 400 people. The library also has lunch on other week days. The meals, all prepared from scratch by the

school district, are also picked up by the Mountain View Police Department, YMCA of Silicon Valley and the city's parks and recreation department for distribution at summer camps and youth programs.

In San Jose, Second Harvest is also pursuing innovative approaches by partnering with organizations like Project Access, which is delivering meals directly to several apartment complexes that house a number of high-risk youth.

The federal government funds these [summer meal programs](#) so that kids can eat during the summer. There are more than [150 sites](#) in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties where any child who is 18 or younger can get a free lunch. Some of the sites also offer free breakfast and an afternoon snack. Any family who needs help finding a meal site or other food resources this summer should call Second Harvest's multilingual Food Connection hotline at 800-984-3663, text "food" or "comida" to 877-877, or visit [www.shfb.org/getfood](http://www.shfb.org/getfood).

### **Summer Meals Help Prevent Summer Slide**

[Studies](#) show that kids who don't get enough nutritious food to eat have trouble concentrating, are sick more often, and are more likely to suffer emotional and physical effects that can last a lifetime. Also troubling is that over the summer months, these same kids are more likely to "lose" what they learned during the school year, making it even more difficult to succeed academically. It's called the "summer slide."

To address the summer slide, Second Harvest supports programs like San Mateo County's [Big Lift Inspiring Summer program](#) and in Santa Clara County the Lunch at the Library programs that offer enrichment programs while also providing the nutrition kids need. The Food Bank also connects kids and families to [additional sources of food](#).

In addition, Second Harvest pays for the adult meals at participating libraries and targeted sites so that parents and caregivers can eat with their kids. This summer the Food Bank is expanding its efforts to reach kids and families at their public library. It has added more libraries to the list and this year a bookmobile will deliver meals to San Martin in South Santa Clara County.

"We need to get more food to the places where kids and families already are," McCown said. "That's why collaboration and public-private partnerships are so important."

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).

**\*Children's Nutrition Coalition Members:** Alum Rock Union Elementary School District • Boys & Girls Club of Silicon Valley • Cabrillo Unified School District • Cathedral of Faith • Children's Empowerment, Inc. • Children's Discovery Museum • County of Santa Clara • Dairy Council of California • EAH Housing • East Side Union High School District • Gilroy Unified School District • Indian Health Center of SCV • Ken Yeager • La Honda Pescadero School District • Loaves and Fishes • Mid-Peninsula Housing • Milpitas Unified School District • Morgan Hill Unified School District • Mountain View Whisman School District • Mt. Pleasant Elementary School District • Oak Grove School District • Pediatric Healthy Lifestyle Center • Project Access • Ravenswood School District • Redwood City Library • Redwood City School District • Sacred Heart Community Service • San Jose Parks, Recreation &

Neighborhood Services • San José Public Library • San Jose State University • San Jose Unified School District • San Mateo County Human Services Agency • San Mateo County Libraries • Santa Clara County Library District • Santa Clara County Social Services Agency • Santa Clara County Employment Connection • Santa Clara County Neighborhood Safety/Services Unit • Santa Clara County Office of Education • Santa Clara County Public Health • Santa Clara County Social Services Agency • Santa Clara Unified School District • South San Francisco Unified School District • Stanford School of Medicine, Pediatrics • Sunnyvale School District • YMCA of Silicon Valley • Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties

###