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SECOND HARVEST LEADS EFFORTS TO CONNECT KIDS TO FOOD THIS SUMMER AS THOUSANDS LOSE ACCESS TO SCHOOL MEALS

Mobile feeding sites, lunch at the library, and other efforts reach kids and families where they live and play

4 out of 5 eligible kids don't participate in summer meal programs, depriving them of the nutrition they need to succeed

SAN JOSE, Calif., June 7, 2018 – Summer is here and that means thousands of local kids will lose access to the free and low-cost meals they depend on during the school year. About 85 percent of those who are eligible for the school meal program don't participate in the summer meal program, putting them at risk for the consequences of hunger, which include physical and emotional issues as well as the possibility for "summer slide," where they lose ground academically when school is out of session.

There are a number of barriers that keep kids and families from accessing summer meals, including lack of transportation and conflicts with work or child care. Some families simply don't know these programs exist or they are too embarrassed or afraid to ask for help.

"We want to make sure everyone knows there are free meals available for kids, no questions asked," said Leslie Bacho, CEO at Second Harvest Food Bank of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties. "Second Harvest is leading local efforts to tackle some of those barriers and expand summer meals in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Any child who needs a healthy meal should be able to get one."

The federal government provides some funds for these [summer meal programs](#) so kids can eat during the summer. There are about [120 open sites](#) in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties where any child or teen 18 or younger can obtain a free lunch. Some of the sites also offer free breakfast and an afternoon snack.

Families who need help finding a summer meal site or other food resources 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.

Reaching More Kids

Second Harvest is building on the work it started last year with the Children's Nutrition Coalition, a collaboration with high-need school districts, libraries, youth groups, social services agencies and other organizations throughout both counties.* The organization formed last year to ensure that kids have

access to nutritious food year round, particularly during the summer months when school is out. Coalition members are hoping to provide 800,000 meals this summer, up from 667,913 last summer.

In an effort to reach more kids and families where they live and play this summer, Second Harvest is working with partners like the Eastside Union High School District, Santa Clara Unified School District and the Mountain View Whisman School District to provide mobile feedings at parks, youth centers and low-income housing complexes where kids and teens gather. This is in addition to the meals they serve at neighborhood schools.

East Side Union High School District will be expanding to six community sites, including mobile sites at three housing complexes, the Rita Chavez-Medina Family Resource Center, and Welsch Park, as well as ten sites at local high schools in San Jose. Mountain View Whisman is expanding on the mobile feeding program it piloted last summer when its mobile food vans began delivering meals – all prepared from scratch by the school district – at Rengstorff and Klein parks. This year, the district will also be delivering meals to a few housing complexes and plans to reach out to more people who live in their vehicles

“There is a lot of great work happening by the coalition, but we need to make sure families know food is available,” Bacho said. “Second Harvest launched a public awareness campaign so families know where they can get food.”

To reach more kids this summer, the Food Bank collaborated with its coalition partners to understand how it could leverage an awareness campaign to better reach kids and their families in the neighborhoods where they live. As a result, Second Harvest created fliers, posters, banners and other materials its partners can use to promote the summer meal sites to families. Second Harvest also developed promotional door hangers that were delivered to nearly 70,000 households in selected areas where incomes are low.

Preventing 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.

To address this summer slide, Second Harvest works with partners like San Mateo County’s [Big Lift Inspiring Summer program](#), libraries and YMCA summer camps, which offer enrichment programs while also providing the nutrition kids need. Second Harvest has been partnering with libraries for several years and collaborates with partners to pay for the adult meals at participating libraries and targeted sites so that parents and caregivers can eat with their kids.

“Every child deserves the opportunity to succeed, and that starts with nutritious food,” Bacho said. “Childhood hunger is huge in Silicon Valley, so we have to optimize every available resource. That’s why collaboration and public-private partnerships are so critical.”

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 almost any other food bank in the country, through a network of 300 nonprofit partners at 905 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 advocates for anti-

hunger policies and 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.

*** Children's Nutrition Coalition Participants:** Alum Rock Union Elementary School District • Boys & Girls Club of Silicon Valley • Cabrillo Unified School District • CalWorks • Cathedral of Faith • Children's Discovery Museum • Dairy Council of California • EAH Housing • East Side Union High School District • Franklin McKinley School District • Gardner WIC • Gilroy Unified School District • Indian Health Center of SCV • Jefferson Elementary School District • La Honda Pescadero School District • 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 • Peninsula Family Service • Ravenswood School District • Redwood City Library • Redwood City School District • Sacred Heart Community Service • Samaritan House of San Mateo • San Jose Parks, Recreation & Neighborhood Services • San José Public Library • San Jose State University • San Jose Unified School District • San Mateo County Libraries • Santa Clara County Library District • Santa Clara County Office of Education • Santa Clara County Public Health • Santa Clara County Social Services Agency • SC WIC Program • 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

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