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Contact:

Diane Baker Hayward

408-266-8866 x368

DBakerHayward@shfb.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Summer Food Program “SUN Bucks” Will Help Families With Children Purchase Food This Summer

Second Harvest is urging families to file a “free and reduced-price meals” form at school—an easy way to become eligible

With the launch of the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s new anti-hunger **Summer EBT program, known as SUN Bucks in California**, an estimated 5.1 million school-aged children in California will receive money for nutritious groceries when schools are closed for the summer and children lose access to school meals.

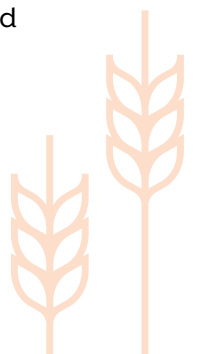
As part of Second Harvest of Silicon Valley’s commitment to connect kids and families to food assistance resources, the organization is shining light on this benefit and alerting Silicon Valley families to be sure they have provided their income information (often via a “free and reduced-price meal” form) and current address information to their child’s school. Children from low-income households will be eligible for SUN Bucks. (Children who are age 6 - 18 years and already get CalFresh, CalWORKs, or Medi-Cal are also automatically eligible).

“We know that nutritious food is essential for children to learn and grow, and that need doesn’t stop during the summer,” said Tracy Weatherby, Second Harvest’s VP of Strategy & Advocacy. “Families who meet the income thresholds can receive \$120 on a debit card for each child to help pay for food during the summer. This support can help family budgets during the months when children are not getting meals at school.”

SUN Bucks can be used to buy healthy food at places like grocery stores, farmer’s markets, and some online retailers. Families who haven’t already filled out an income information form, such as a “free and reduced-price meal” form or “alternative income” form, can inquire with their child’s school. Using SUN Bucks benefits will not affect a family’s immigration status.

“One in three children in Silicon Valley is at risk of food insecurity,” said Susan Ellenberg, president of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. “We know that food insecurity contributes to negative health and academic outcomes. SUN Bucks is geared to help fill the gap during the summer. The program will make it easier for families to provide the nourishment kids need today and contribute to a brighter future tomorrow.”

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In addition to helping families learn about SUN Bucks, Second Harvest can connect people to a variety of food resources, including free grocery distributions in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties and assistance applying for federally funded food assistance programs like CalFresh. Anyone who needs food should call Second Harvest's multilingual Food Connection hotline at 1-800-984-3663, Monday – Friday, 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Staff speak English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin and Tagalog. Three-way interpretation is available for other languages. Second Harvest also offers an easy-to-use food locator tool on its website at shfb.org/get-food where users can search by address, city or zip code to find food nearby.

About Second Harvest of Silicon Valley

Founded in 1974, Second Harvest of Silicon Valley is one of the largest food banks in the nation and a trusted nonprofit leader in ending local hunger. The organization distributes nutritious food through a network of nearly 400 partners at more than 900 sites across Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Due to the prohibitively expensive cost of living in Silicon Valley and the dramatic reduction in pandemic-era government support, Second Harvest is serving an average of about 500,000 people every month. Second Harvest also connects people to federal nutrition programs and other food resources, and advocates for anti-hunger policies on the local, state and national levels. To learn more about how Second Harvest is responding to the incredible amount of need in Silicon Valley, visit shfb.org

If you are covering issues related to hunger in Silicon Valley, we can provide expert spokespeople who can talk about the local landscape. Please contact Diane Baker Hayward at dbakerhayward@shfb.org or 408-266-8866, ext. 368.

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