

# Food Matters

## Truckloads of fresh produce arriving daily!

Changes in our produce procurement program at Second Harvest North Florida have resulted in a drastic improvement in fresh produce donations. In the past,

most of the produce we received came from grocery stores and farmers markets that donated produce they had not sold. This produce was often ready to turn and had to be distributed immediately or it would spoil.

Since February, we have been focused on developing relationships with local farmers

and identifying other sources of fresh produce for the food bank. The work is already paying huge dividends.

Between February and early July, we have been able to procure 710,286 pounds of fresh produce for distribution to the agencies we serve. To put this in perspective, in the same period of time last year, we received 46,383 pounds of produce. This is a 1,431 percent increase!

How are we doing it? By spending time making new friends for the food bank. We have spent days driving through the Hastings and Palatka area meeting directly with farmers to talk about the need for fresh produce and discuss how they can help. The response has been overwhelmingly positive. Many of these farmers are very aware of the hunger issues and want to help, but have lacked a vehicle to do so. Now the process is easy. Just give us a call and we will send a truck!

We have also been strategizing with other large food banks throughout Florida about sharing excess produce, and we are developing a closer relationship with the local Society of St. Andrew, a group of volunteers that glean farmers' fields after harvests for fruits or vegetables that machinery leaves behind.

The increase in fresh produce is significant, but just as significant is the increase in quality. We are now receiving fruits and vegetables directly from farms and can distribute it while it's still at peak freshness. Thanks to the farmers now supporting us directly, truckloads of fresh produce have been a welcome addition to meals at homeless shelters, senior citizen homes and kids' camps this summer.

More produce coming in means we need more ways to get produce out into the community. This month we



Mobile pantry at Household of Faith Church



have initiated a new mobile pantry initiative. Staff and volunteers will be taking fresh produce, bakery and other food items into neighborhoods that are not being adequately served by food pantries or even grocery stores -- helping families put healthy meals on the table means kids get the good nutrition they need. ■

## Letter from the executive director

I was asked to speak recently at the headquarters of a local company, Black Diamond Consulting. Black Diamond is doing some terrific philanthropic work in our community by leading the way in developing a model for businesses to create a culture of giving within its workplace. The company's goal, as I perceive it, is to encourage within each staff member and the company as a whole the importance of giving back to the community. Instead of just writing a check or creating some hackneyed program, they are developing a model that



will live long past any one date or issue and that is built on a platform that can endure forever. I could not have been more impressed with all the folks there. The enthusiasm was palpable and contagious. My thought in leaving them was what a healthy organization they've created.

During their all-employee meeting, the Black Diamond folks asked themselves what the definitions of charity and philanthropy are. There were many

responses given ranging from giving, helping, sharing and caring to helping those in need and looking out for the less fortunate – all good words and very worthy definitions. While listening, I found myself thinking what my answer might be, and here's what I came up with: philanthropy and charity are community. Here's my logic. We are all but a part of a greater whole. Helen Keller once said, "The welfare of each is bound up in the welfare of all." This creates a community, and when we are a part of a community, that means we fully invest in the whole. The extent to which we are good at this, whether in our own family or in a community, means that the health of the entire group is enhanced. Philanthropy is defined as an activity performed with the goal of promoting the wellbeing of fellow man. A community is at its best when it concerns itself with the wellbeing of all.

Against this backdrop, I think, inevitably, of the great partnerships we are forging to build a better community. Whether it is a partnership with a grocer like Winn-Dixie who is increasing its food donations into the millions of pounds or Household of Faith Church that is staging mobile pantry drops for fresh food in one of our poorest zip codes, this is community at its best. And, it's charity at its best. All together now ...

Best regards,



Thomas Mantz

Executive Director, Second Harvest North Florida

## September is Hunger Action Month

Throughout the month of September, Second Harvest North Florida will join in a massive nationwide initiative, as part of the Feeding America network, to educate communities about the realities and impact of hunger.

We are planning lots of hunger awareness and volunteer activities throughout north Florida. Go to [www.WeNourishHope.org/hunger-action-month](http://www.WeNourishHope.org/hunger-action-month) to find out how you can become involved. Here is a sample of what's going on:



### Hunger Caravan

Beginning in late August, the Second Harvest Hunger Caravan will hit the road to distribute food throughout the 18 counties we serve. We will work with local member agencies to provide emergency relief, especially in rural areas.

### 30 Ways in 30 Days

Visit the Hunger Action Month page on our website to view a list of 30 ways you can help fight hunger during the 30 days of September. Here are a few of the ideas:

- **Help serve a meal at a local shelter**
- **Donate a grocery store gift card to a local food pantry**
- **Look for 2-for-1 specials when grocery shopping and donate the extra item**
- **Sign up for the Second Harvest monthly e-newsletter**

### Be A Hero Food Drive

Help make this year's food drive hosted by First Coast News even more successful than last year's record collection! Bring food donations to St. Johns Town Center or the Orange Park Mall on Sept. 24 and 25. ■

We Nourish Hope.



The mission of Second Harvest North Florida is to distribute food and grocery products to hungry people and to educate the public about the causes and possible solutions to problems of domestic hunger.



## Paula Deen “Hams it up” at Second Harvest North Florida

Food Network TV star Paula Deen paid a visit to the Second Harvest North Florida warehouse in June to help bring local attention to the issue of hunger. Deen arrived with 30,000 pounds of ham, courtesy of Smithfield Foods and its “Helping Hungry Homes” initiative.



Deen, well known for the folksy Southern charm she displays on her television cooking show, is the spokesperson for the Smithfield program, which is designed to provide important, high-protein resources for families in need of food assistance.

Fans of Paula Deen know that before she became a famous chef and TV celebrity, she struggled as a single mother to put food on the table for her own teenage sons.

“I have been so close to hunger before that I could smell it for my family,” Deen told the crowd at the food bank. “I have been in a position before where I needed that ham. Thank goodness I had a helping hand back then.”

The ham products donated by Smithfield Foods equated to more than 100,000 servings of protein – a key nutritional element that makes for healthy minds and bodies. Smithfield plans to donate and deliver more than 20 million servings of protein across the nation through this program, which began in 2008.

Deen said that while 30,000 pounds of food is significant, she knows that more is needed to help meet the needs of those families who are hurting. She encouraged individuals to make a special effort to support Second Harvest in the fight against hunger.

### Save These Dates!

**Second Harvest Appreciation Event:**  
 Aug. 26, 2010, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
 RSVP to 904.730.8226

**LSS/Second Harvest Annual Meeting:**  
 Sept. 23, 2010, 6 p.m. – 8 p.m.  
 RSVP to 904.730.8226

**26th Annual Empty Bowls Luncheon:**  
 Nov. 16, 2010  
 Watch for more information in our October newsletter.