

Food Matters

We nourish hope by feeding kids

Recently, a third grade school teacher told us this story.

“Earlier this week one of my students was having a particularly difficult time concentrating on his math assignment. I asked him if he had eaten a good breakfast before coming to school and, though I anticipated that his reply would be no, his response surprised me. His answer to my question was ‘No, ma’am. It was not my turn to eat this morning.’”

For many parents, it is getting increasingly harder to provide an adequate, healthy diet for their children. As they face issues like lost jobs and income and the rising cost of nutritious food, parents are forced to make tough choices every day. They are forced to balance buying food with paying the rent, paying the utility bills and getting to work. Food is one expense that can be reduced by limiting the number or size of meals and buying less expensive, but less nutritious foods. In some neighborhoods there are no large grocery stores with well-stocked fresh vegetables and fruit sections and lower prices, so they have to settle for what is available and convenient.

When these situations arise, the children suffer. It’s not just a matter of a child occasionally going to bed hungry – the ramifications are much larger for the family and for the community.

A new report finds that children from low-income families are three times more likely to be obese than those from higher-income households. The study showed that roughly one-quarter of children living in households earning less than \$25,000 a year are obese, compared with only eight percent of children from households earning \$75,000 or more.

Families on tight budgets who are trying to stretch their food dollar will buy bulkier, less nutritious foods that are high in calories and carbohydrates. They fill children’s stomachs today, but create issues in the future. Childhood obesity increases the risk of developing serious chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and adult obesity. It creates low self-esteem often resulting in low

motivation to succeed. Obesity is an epidemic in our country that starts with our children.

Poor nutrition also has a profound effect on a child’s physical and mental readiness for their school day, significantly impairing their ability to learn. Educators agree that hungry or malnourished children tend to be irritable, apathetic and lethargic, conditions that interfere with learning.

Second Harvest North Florida is attacking the problem of hunger and poor nutrition among children in our community through three proven, successful programs:



- **Kids Cafe** delivers nutritious snacks to agencies that provide after school programs.
- Our **BackPack Program** sends nutritious food home with school children on Fridays to help their families through the weekend when subsidized school meals are not available.
- **Summer Lunches** delivers nutritious lunches and snacks to agencies that provide summer camp programs.

These programs are critical to the health and well-being of hundreds of children in north Florida today and help teach them about the importance of eating healthy, nutritious food. By keeping them healthy, bright and strong, we are helping to shape their futures and the future of our community.



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Letter from the executive director

The world in which we live today is a funny one. We live in a place and time where we can virtually lift up and save a country like Haiti that has been besieged by the worst imaginable disaster. The energy and resources necessary to provide relief for the devastation of the earthquake offer us a great hope for our collective potential to help. As heartbreaking as the story has been to watch, it is equally uplifting to consider how a world

can come together in love and service to those in need.

The world we live in is also one that pays an athlete \$25 million dollars a year and a teacher \$25,000. We live in a world where economic realities all too often drive our lives instead of humanitarian ones. **The world we live in today is one where 1 out of every 5 children in**

America is hungry. The community we live in, Jacksonville, Florida, has children who will not be able to eat enough today to nourish mind, body and spirit. Their chances are less than average to become a contributing member of our society. Could any of us have imagined this was possible? How can this be so? More importantly, can we do something about it?

Yes, we can. If our world can come together and lift Haiti out of its despair, we can also lift our children out of hunger. Our collective will and capability is more than enough to solve this problem. At Second Harvest we have programs to move nutritious food to expectant mothers, to youngsters in after-school care and to their families on weekends when school meal programs are not available. We are working our way to the root of the problem, seeking ways to stop the cycle of hunger's devastating effects before they begin. There is enough food for all of us; we just have to align our resources so that we can make sure everyone has a place at the table - especially our children.

Best regards,



Thomas Manz

Executive Director, Second Harvest North Florida

How you can help

Join in the move to "Stamp Out Hunger"!

Every year on Mother's Day weekend, the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) sponsors the largest one-day food drive all across the United States. This year's event is set for May 10 and we need this to be the most successful NALC drive ever held in northeast Florida!



Last year was a record breaking year, so we have our work cut out for us. In 2009, letter carriers collected 325,000 pounds of food. That equates to about 254,000 meals. This year our goal is to collect 425,000 pounds of food which would let us put together about 332,000 meals!

With the highest demand for food that we have ever seen, we need this food drive to be wildly successful, and for that, we need your help.

Please make a special effort to leave nonperishable food donations in bags or boxes by your mailbox on the morning of May 10. Rally your neighbors, friends and co-workers to participate too! Send emails, tweet your friends and post the date on Facebook. If enough people get the word out and encourage others to participate, we can celebrate another record breaking year in 2010! ■

We Nourish Hope.

What do parents do when they have to choose between a sick child and food? They pay for their child's medicine.

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.



Golf tournaments go all out to support local charities

The Birdies are back!

Second Harvest North Florida will be partnering with THE PLAYERS Championship to raise funds through the Birdies for Charity contest again this year.

Here's how it works. Between April 5 and May 5, make a pledge of two cents or more for each birdie that will be made by the entire player field during THE PLAYERS tournament, which takes place May 3-9. As a point of reference, in 2009, 1,502 birdies were made during the four-day event, so your pledge of two cents per birdie would have resulted in a \$30.04 contribution to Second Harvest Food Bank. 100% of your pledge benefits Second Harvest.

Your pledge also makes you eligible to win a fabulous trip to New York for the FedEx Cup playoff event, August 26-29, 2010!

The prize will go to the person getting closest to guessing the actual number of birdies made by professional golfers during THE PLAYERS.

You can make your pledge online at PGATOUR.COM/THEPLAYERS starting April 5th. Just select Second Harvest North Florida in the drop down menu.

PepsiCo TICKETS Fore CHARITY™

A new national golf tournament is coming to Jacksonville and your tickets can benefit Second Harvest North Florida!

The PGA Tour and Winn-Dixie, a Second Harvest North Florida partner, have announced a new golf open at The Dye's Valley Course at TPC Sawgrass.

The Open will take place October 18-24, and all four tournament rounds will be broadcast on the Golf Channel, October 21-24.

Purchase your tickets from Second Harvest North Florida and we will keep 100% of the proceeds!

This is another way that the PGA Tour and Winn-Dixie are giving back to this community. Tickets are on sale now at www.wenourishhope.org.

