

Second Harvest Food Bank of Lehigh Valley and Northeast Pennsylvania

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Save the Date:

Stamp Out Hunger on May 14, 2011



Mark your calendar now for the 19th annual National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) *Stamp Out Hunger* food drive on May 14, 2011. On this day, Letter Carriers across America will collect non-perishable food donations from their regular postal routes and deliver them to local food banks for families in need.

This single-day food drive is the largest in the nation with a record total of 77.1 million pounds of food collected in 2010. In its 18-year history, *Stamp Out Hunger* participants have donated over one billion pounds of food to those in need across the nation! Locally, Letter Carriers delivered more than 140,000 pounds of food to Second Harvest and its member agencies last year. *Stamp Out Hunger* donations provide a critical boost for the Food Bank in the summer months, a time when supplies are low and school lunch programs are not available for area youth.

To participate in the food drive, leave donations of non-perishable food items like pasta or canned soup, fruits, or vegetables next to your mailbox before the time of your regular delivery on May 14th. Be sure to put everything in a sturdy bag that is clearly marked so your Letter Carrier knows to collect it. Also, donations should be in non-break-

able containers such as boxes or cans – no glass please. In the weeks before the food drive, you should receive a post card announcing your area's participation. If you're unsure whether or not your Letter Carrier is participating, you can always contact your local post office.

For more information about *Stamp Out Hunger*, visit www.helpstampouthunger.com or call Sharon Hall at Second Harvest, 610-434-0875. The Food Bank will also be welcoming volunteers in the weeks after the food drive. For information about volunteering, contact Lindsay Deemer at 610-434-0875.



A program of the
Community Action
Committee of the
Lehigh Valley

2045 Harvest Way
Allentown, PA 18104-6793
SECOND HARVEST
Food Bank
of Lehigh Valley
& Northeast
Pennsylvania

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
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Bethlehem, PA
Permit No. 111

Food FOR Thought

Spring 2011

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF LEHIGH VALLEY &

NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

Early Beginnings: A Brief History of Today's Food Distribution Programs

By Ann McManus

Recently, I have had the privilege of speaking to several groups about Second Harvest and the role we play in food distribution for our region. I have included in these talks information about our administration of The Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, two programs that provide commodities to low-income people. I remember, as may some of our readers, when the United States Department of Agriculture began including processed cheese and butter as part of its commodity distributions in 1982. The Emergency Food Assistance Program and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program evolved from these programs. Actually, food distribution programs trace back to the early 1930s.

The first hint of a food distribution program began during the Great Depression as a result of policies designed to help American farmers. Because of the economy, many individuals could not afford to buy crops to feed their families and the prices started to drop with the decreased demand. With the hope of earning a living, farmers began putting more acres into production. This only increased the surplus of crops and caused prices to drop even further. Millions of people were out of work and had no means of supporting their families. Malnutrition among the nation's children was widespread.

In 1933, the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) was established to allow farmers to get loans using their non-perishable crops as collateral. When the farmers were unable to repay the loans, they could forfeit their crops to the government, which in turn began to sell and distribute them to prevent waste. The Agricultural Act of 1935 made money available to purchase those surplus crops and distribute them through specific outlets such as schools, summer camps for children, charitable institutions, and families in need.

After World War II, the School Lunch Act of 1946 was enacted, not only to provide a market for agriculture, but also to improve the health and well-being of the nation's youth. Subsequent agriculture legislation led to further expansion of commodity programs. During the period from 1935 to 1960, over half of all foods distributed by the USDA went to families in need. In 1961, an executive order issued by President Kennedy mandated that the commodities donated for households in need have a greater variety and be more nutritious. This order represented a significant change in the goal of food distribution programs. The purpose was no longer to eliminate surplus crops, but instead to provide more nutritious food to families in need.

Another program instituted during the Kennedy Administration was a Pilot Food Stamp Program that eventually evolved into the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) that we know today. SNAP benefits are made available via a debit card and allow low-income households to select and purchase food in most places where it is sold. Second Harvest is pleased to be able to assist eligible people in applying for SNAP by appointment over the phone through our "Food Stamp Hotline." To learn more about SNAP benefits and the difference it has made for one household, see the story on Page 2.

Today, Second Harvest is able to help thousands of people in need through these food distribution programs. The Emergency Food Assistance Program allows us to provide food assistance to more than 32,000 of the 63,000 people our member agencies serve every month. Through the Commodity Supplemental Food Program, we provide nearly 1,900 registered, low-income senior citizens with a box of food each month. Combined, these programs represented nearly 1.6 million pounds of food distributed last year, approximately one-third of what we distributed in total for the year.



Volunteers pack boxes for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) a food distribution program for low-income senior citizens. This program would not exist today were it not for the passing of early farm policies during the Great Depression.

2045 Harvest Way
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Phone 610-434-0875
Fax 610-435-9540
www.shfbv.org

SHFB distributes food and grocery product to more than 63,000 people in need in six counties through a network of more than 200 member agencies. These include emergency pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and child care and rehabilitation centers. Last year, Second Harvest distributed 5.4 million pounds of food through these organizations

Advisory Board Members

SHFB is privileged to be guided by a group of individuals who make up the Advisory Board.

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The Second Harvest Food Bank of Lehigh Valley and Northeast PA is registered with the Bureau of Charitable Organizations through its parent organization the Community Action Committee of the Lehigh Valley, Inc. A copy of the official registration and financial information can be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling, toll free, within PA, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. This Program was financed in part by a grant from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

Food Stamp Outreach at Second Harvest



Kathryn Hoffman, Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator, operates the Food Bank's toll-free 'Food Stamp Hotline' to help individuals, like Susan, apply for SNAP benefits.

The Food Bank uses its "Food Stamp Hotline" to help more people sign up for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to receive the benefits for which they are eligible.

Last year, Susan, a resident of Easton, was a divorced, single mom supporting herself and her 13-year old daughter. Her only income was from her part time job as a visiting nurse. Susan's total income for the year was \$11,000. Because she could get only part-time hours, she was also ineligible to receive benefits from her employer.

Susan was having trouble paying her bills and was forced to start charging necessities, like groceries, on her credit card. Once a month, Susan and her daughter visited the Easton Salvation Army emergency pantry, one of Second Harvest's member agencies, to supplement the food they could afford. On one of those visits, Susan noticed a bright gold flyer that accompanied the three-day supply of groceries.

"I happened to see the 'Food Stamp Hotline' slip. What caught my eye was the line about 'new income guidelines,'" she said. A couple of years earlier, Susan had applied for Medical Assistance; though her daughter was approved, she was denied because her income was too high. She also assumed that she would not be eligible to receive Food Stamps.

Assistance; though her daughter was approved, she was denied because her income was too high. She also assumed that she would not be eligible to receive Food Stamps.

"It doesn't hurt to try," Susan said, so shortly after receiving the flyer, she called the "Food Stamp Hotline." "I called and spoke to Kathryn [Hoffman], who was so nice." Kathryn is the Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator at the Food Bank and the staff person who operates the "Food Stamp Hotline." She thought Susan might be eligible to receive SNAP benefits, so she set up a phone appointment for her to apply.

"We went over my bills and income. Then I made copies of my information to send to the County Assistance office," Susan said of the application process which took her about 35 minutes over the phone.

Once an application for SNAP benefits is submitted, the County Assistance office has thirty days to respond with a determination. In the time after applying, as she was waiting to hear if she was eligible, Susan began looking up information about SNAP. "I had no experience with Food Stamps so I did research online." She learned about how the funds would be given to her and what items she could and could not buy with the benefits.

Then, during one of the many snowstorms that hit the area in January, a caseworker from the County Assistance office called Susan to let her know she was eligible to begin receiving SNAP benefits. Susan picked up her preloaded debit card at the County Assistance Office. Once a month, the card is recharged with funds to assist her in paying for food for her and her daughter.

"It's a huge help to me, and you just can't imagine how helpful this has been," Susan said. "I still have some trouble paying my bills, but now there is less stuff that I have to put on my Visa." Even though Susan is now receiving extra help, she hasn't splurged on lavish food items. "I'm still careful. I'm not buying shrimp or steak. I don't take it for granted," she said.

Of the application process through the Food Stamp Hotline, Susan said, "People don't know what to do. There are a lot of people who get frustrated with the process. [Kathryn] was wonderful. It's a wonderful program and I'm very, very grateful."

As for visits to the Salvation Army, Susan said they have not gone back for groceries since they started receiving Food Stamps. She doesn't know if she will go in the future, "but it's nice to know that it is there."


The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly known as Food Stamps) helps low-income people and families buy the food they need to support a healthy and nutritious diet. SNAP benefits come in the form of a debit card that can be used to buy products at most grocery stores and some farmers' markets.

Unfortunately, it is estimated that up to one-third of those eligible for SNAP benefits are not receiving them. To help those that have not yet applied for SNAP benefits, Kathryn Hoffman, Second Harvest's Food Stamp Outreach Coordinator, operates a "Food Stamp Hotline" for the six counties in our service area.

If you think you or anyone you know might be eligible to receive SNAP benefits, please have them call our Food Stamp Hotline at 1-866-203-3323. Kathryn will ask a few preliminary questions about income and expenses. Then, if the caller is eligible, she will schedule a phone appointment to apply for benefits over the phone. The appointment takes between 30 minutes and an hour depending on the household size.

Second Harvest Food Bank
Food Stamp Hotline

1.866.203.3323



If you or someone you know might be eligible or would like to apply for SNAP benefits, call toll-free today.

Plant an extra row for the hungry this year

As spring and the warm weather draw near, you may be planning your summer garden. As you map out your plots of fruits and vegetables, we ask you to consider planting an extra row or two in your garden for donations to Second Harvest. With the recent installation of a new 4,300 cubic foot cooler, we are now able to accept more donations of fresh foods.

Once your plants start to produce, pick the items you want to donate as early as possible. This will give us time to distribute the produce to our member agencies before it spoils. We can accept all types of fruits and vegetables.

You can even make it a fun project for your whole family! Have each person choose a different type of plant to be responsible for. It will be rewarding to nurture and watch your produce grow into something that will help to feed those in need.

Please note we can accept produce from your garden only when it is fresh. For safety reasons, we are unable to take anything that has been home canned or prepared.

Happy gardening!



Plant an extra row in your garden this year and donate the crops to Second Harvest!

CHECK-OUT HUNGER REGISTERS \$143,000 FOR SECOND HARVEST!

In the fall, we asked you to keep an eye out for the annual Check-out Hunger campaigns kicking off at your local grocery stores. You listened, and we are pleased to announce that your support helped area stores raise more than \$143,000 for Second Harvest Food Bank!

Check-Out Hunger is a supermarket-based fundraiser that makes it easy for shoppers to donate to the Food Bank. Placards with coupons in \$1, \$3, and \$5 denominations are set up at each register station. Shoppers take a coupon and give it to the cashier to scan with the rest of their shopping order. The coupons are coded so that the amount indicated is added to the total purchase and is then automatically credited to Second Harvest.

Thanks to all the store managers and employees who conducted Check-Out Hunger, to the volunteers who helped set the stations up in the stores, and to our donors who helped to make this year's effort one of the most successful ones yet!



THANK YOU
to the stores that participated in the
2010 Check-Out Hunger campaign:

- ✓ Foodtown of East Stroudsburg
- ✓ Pathmarks of Bethlehem and Walnutport
- ✓ PriceRites of Allentown and Bethlehem
- ✓ ShopRites of Brodheadsville, Mt. Pocono, and Stroudsburg
- ✓ 21 Wawa stores in Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, and Monroe counties
- ✓ Wegmans of Allentown, Bethlehem, and Easton