

Second Harvest Food
Bank of Lehigh Valley
and Northeast Pennsylvania

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Save the Date!

Join us to recognize 28 years in the fight against hunger.

Empty Bowls: A Feast of Understanding



Saturday,
October 23, 2010

6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Featuring Dinner, Live Music and
a Silent Auction

SECOND HARVEST
Food Bank of Lehigh Valley
& Northeast
Pennsylvania

2045 Harvest Way, Allentown, PA
Attn: Sharon Lee Hall, Development Coordinator
(610) 434-0875 x 3307



A program of the
Community Action
Committee of the
Lehigh Valley

SECOND HARVEST
Food Bank
2045 Harvest Way
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& Northeast
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Food FOR Thought

Summer 2010

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF LEHIGH VALLEY &

NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

Growing Up Strong: The Importance of Child Nutrition

By Ann McManus

Right here in eastern Pennsylvania, nearly one out of every four children is facing food insecurity.

While hunger affects people of all ages, it is particularly devastating for children. Inadequate nutrition threatens children's health, growth, and capacity to learn. According to a recent Feeding America report, children from many low-income families receive less than 70 percent of the recommended daily intake of major nutrients. This deficiency translates into increased risk for serious and costly health problems, including anemia, impaired cognitive development, and stunted growth. Food insufficiency also hinders children's social development. Studies show that child hunger may be linked to behavioral problems, delayed social development, anxiety, and other emotional problems.

Adequate, nutritious food plays an important role in childhood development and the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004 exists to keep that nutrition available. This legislation addresses federal child nutrition programs including the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs, the Summer Food Service Program, the Child and Adult Care Food Program, and the Special Nutritional Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). The act, which expired in 2009 and was extended until September, 2010, is currently before Congress. Child nutrition comes up for reauthorization every five years to allow for needed changes and improvements to the many programs that fall under the legislation.

Locally, Second Harvest is addressing issues of childhood hunger in several ways. Backpack Buddies, a food program for at-risk children continues to grow and now provides 282 weekly food packages to area youth. We also recently launched a Nutrition Education pilot in cooperation with Community Services for Children (see p.2) to train young parents to cook quick and nourishing meals for their families. Finally, a new volunteer-driven Field Gleaning Project (see p.3) connects Second Harvest member agencies with local farmers who have excess fresh produce. You can learn more about these initiatives in this issue of *Food For Thought*. Many anti-hunger advocates believe that a strong Child Nutrition Reauthorization in 2010 will enable us to reach President Obama's goal of ending childhood hunger by 2015. You can take action by contacting your Member of Congress, Senator Specter, and Senator Casey to express your support for a Child Nutrition Act that emphasizes good nutrition. Use the search engine at <http://www.house.gov/> to find the contact information for your Member of Congress.



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 for Thought: Healthy Meals for Families

In today's fast-paced world filled with easy access to fast-food restaurants, and meals that need only minutes to prepare in the microwave, we seldom have time to enjoy the "art of cooking." Busy families are trying to juggle things like work, school, and transporting children from one activity to another. It's not surprising that many of these families are resorting to quick meals, usually eaten "on the go." The concept of the "family meal" and using food as a tool to foster relationships is lost in the hustle and bustle of everyday life and the convenience of prepared meals.



Community Services for Children employee, Shakira (R), helps participant Evelyn (L) make chicken stir-fry at a recent session of Food For Thought: Health Meals for Families.

This phenomenon is complicated further among low-income populations where parents may be working multiple jobs and access to and time for purchasing, preparing, and eating healthy foods is limited. The high density of fast-food restaurants and corner stores found in the inner cities makes it convenient to turn to these sources for food.

At Second Harvest, we understand the daily challenges that low-income residents across the Lehigh Valley face. We wanted to develop a program that empowers its participants to use the resources available to them to make healthy meals for themselves and their children while also lowering dependency on fast-food and fighting hunger in the Lehigh Valley.

Food for Thought: Healthy Meals for Families, a pilot program co-sponsored by Second Harvest and Community Services for Children (CSC), launched on Tuesday, June 15th, at CSC's Donley Campus in Allentown. The program consists of six cooking classes covering a range of topics such as general nutrition, basic cooking skills, meal planning and budgeting, and the importance of eating together as a family. Kati Fosselius, a dietitian with the Allentown Health Bureau, and Todd Saylor, Executive Chef at Sodexo, have volunteered to teach the program. The pilot program will also provide information about the many food assistance resources available to low-income people and we will help participants sign up for those programs.

The program is being offered to parents who are currently enrolled in the Early Head Start Program, a free educational program for low-income pregnant women or families with children from infancy to three years of age. Ten participants attended the first class where they learned about the nutritional value behind healthy snacking and desserts and were taught how to make a number of tasty treats including cheese quesadillas and a frozen fruit smoothie. Watch for future articles with an update on the program and its participants!

Volunteer View: Field Gleaners

Thanks to Food Bank volunteer Diane Giffels, some of Second Harvest's member agencies will soon begin receiving fresh produce through a new Field Gleaning project. Gleaning is the process of collecting leftover crops from farmers' fields after they have been harvested.

Volunteers will be visiting different farms in Lehigh and Northampton counties to pick leftover crops from the fields. Other volunteers will be picking up the extra produce that growers do not sell at the local farmers' markets and do not want to haul home. The food will be delivered directly to participating member agencies for distribution to families in need.

Diane said that many of the farmers she approached were excited to be able to participate in the program. "Nobody likes to see the things they grow go to waste. It's like connecting the dots. There are farmers that would like to donate, there are volunteers that would like to pick, and there are people that need the food. So, that's how I see my job; I connect the dots," she said.

Some fresh produce was recently delivered to New Bethany Ministries, a member agency that distributes food to families in need and hosts a soup kitchen serving hot meals. Field Gleaners dropped off approximately 150 pounds of bananas, turnips, and lettuce. According to Fiona Byrne, Assistant Director of the Mollard Hospitality Center at New Bethany, their clients were excited to see fresh produce in their food baskets because many of them are unable to afford these items. "The produce really makes the baskets nutritious and helps to reeducate our clients' food interests," Fiona said. Any produce items that were not distributed in the baskets were used for meals in the soup kitchen, so nothing went to waste.

For more information about the Field Gleaning project or to volunteer, please email Diane Giffels at fieldgleaning@gmail.com.

Local Letter Carriers Collect 135,000 Pounds of Food to Stamp Out Hunger!

Local members of the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) volunteered their time to collect more than 135,000 pounds of donations left by the mailboxes of their postal customers on Saturday, May 8th. The contributions, ranging from food items such as pasta, soup, and canned vegetables to personal care products like soap and toothbrushes, were delivered to Second Harvest and many of our member agencies for distribution to our hungry neighbors.

This is the 18th consecutive year for the food drive and the event would not be possible without the dedicated efforts of city and rural letter carriers, Teamsters Local #773, and volunteers from Second Harvest's member agencies, area churches, schools, and civic groups. Thanks to the generosity of these partners, local families in need will receive the basic food items that they may not otherwise have been able to afford.

Second Harvest Food Bank is grateful for the outpouring of support from the community and our partners in the NALC, Teamsters Local #773, and the hundreds of volunteers who make this annual event a success.



September is Hunger Action Month

To commemorate Hunger Action Month this year, Second Harvest is encouraging you to help "30 ways in 30 days." Some of the daily things you can do include:

- Organizing a food drive,
- Calling your local legislator, or
- Telling a neighbor or friend about hunger issues

Check your mailbox in the coming months for your calendar of daily ways to become a hunger advocate for the Food Bank!



A New Home for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program and Back Pack Buddies

Two of Second Harvest's assistance programs, the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) and Back Pack Buddies, are growing and on the move! Both programs have seen an increase in participants over the past year, growth that requires more space than the Food Bank has for storage and packing. To allow for this, Second Harvest has leased warehouse space a short distance away from our current facility.

The rented site, located at 7046 Snowdrift Road in Allentown, provides the Food Bank with an additional 4,800 square feet of storage and a permanent assembly-line set-up. The building also comes with a dock door for truck access, the use of a forklift, and a large lot for volunteer parking on CSFP and Back Pack Buddies pack days.

The federally-funded CSFP program provides a monthly box of staple food to registered, nutritionally at-risk, low-income seniors, children, and new mothers. In the past months, Second Harvest has added 500 new participants to the program so that we are now distributing 1,809 boxes every month.

Back Pack Buddies also saw a recent increase in caseload. This program, which provides at-risk, school-age children with nourishing food for the weekends when they do not have access to the free or reduced-priced school breakfasts and lunches, is now serving 282 children each week – a 60% increase from 2009.

With the addition of the new space come new opportunities for our current facility. The space that was being used for CSFP and Back Pack Buddies can now be used to store more donated food. We are also looking into using the space to expand our refrigeration capacity in the warehouse for a Fresh Food Initiative to distribute more fruits and vegetables. Stay tuned for future updates on the ever-growing Food Bank!



In June, volunteers from First Niagara Bank and Lehigh Valley Plastics got to work at the new site when they packed enough bags to last Back Pack Buddy participants the whole summer.



Warehouse worker and driver, Terry Pemsley, cleans up the assembly line after a recent Back Pack Buddies pack at the new site.