

Second Harvest Food
Bank of Lehigh Valley
and Northeast Pennsylvania

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A Note About the Cornucopia Society – From Empty Bowls to Full Plates

This past summer a budget delay in Harrisburg impacted the distribution of money for the State Food Purchase Program, a substantial source of funding to purchase food for Second Harvest (food that is merged with the product that has already been donated by industry and individuals). When funding is adversely affected this way, it is reassuring to know that we have generous individual donors providing crucial financial resources to support our essential food programs.

We invite you to join the Cornucopia Society – a group dedicated to increasing awareness of food insecurity right here, right now, and to addressing its causes and effects in our area. Society members are those who make annual contributions totaling \$1,000 or more. Besides helping the food bank accomplish its important work, admission includes an annual informal get together in a social setting where you'll meet some of the people who share your concern.

This year the Cornucopia Society will again gather in Allentown at the home of Howard and Linda Epstein for a Cinco de Mayo themed evening. The Cornucopia Society welcomes all interested donors and we encourage existing members to help us grow. For more information, or to find out about the upcoming event, please contact Sharon Hall at the food bank.

Thank you for all you do.

Sincerely,
Linda Epstein
Cornucopia Society Co-Chair
SHFB Advisory Board Member

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SECOND HARVEST
Food Bank
of Lehigh Valley
& Northeast
Pennsylvania

Food Thought

Winter 2010

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF LEHIGH VALLEY &

NORTHEAST PENNSYLVANIA

State of the Food Bank— Reflections on Second Harvest's 28th Year

By Ann McManus



Second Harvest Food Bank commemorates an anniversary of service to hungry people in our region every October. In 1982, we distributed the first load of food from the back of a rented truck in a parking lot in Bethlehem. That 10,000 pound load marked the beginning of a mission that has thus far spanned 28 years.

As is often the case, there was good news and bad news over the past twelve months. Because of a faltering economy, business at the food bank was soaring to new heights. Participation numbers, measured each year in March, showed an increase in

people receiving food assistance. In March, 2009, Second Harvest member agencies served more than 60,000 unduplicated individuals. Compared to March, 2008, that's an increase of 11,000 people – nearly 25% – in just a year. Almost without exception, emergency pantries in our region are experiencing unprecedented increases in the numbers of households requesting assistance, with 100% increases not unheard of.

Then, there was the state budget and the wrangling over it that dragged for more than 100 days this summer. Since most of the food that Second Harvest purchases is funded by the State Food Purchase Program (as opposed to the product donated by industry and individuals), delays in receiving funding caused more than a little hand-wringing.

Of course, with the bad, also comes the good. Because of the generosity of this community, we can boldly say that no one is going hungry due to lack of food in the system. Examples of the community's generosity abound. In November, we added 90 new children to our Backpack Buddies program. Initiated in March, 2005, with just 25 participants, Backpack Buddies is now providing 276 at-risk boys and girls with nourishing food for the weekends when they do not have access to the free or reduced breakfast and lunch they get in school.

In October, on Halloween night, more than 200 members of our community came together to commemorate the work we do. That's a record number of attendees at our annual Empty Bowls: A Feast of Understanding. (See p. 2 for more information.) The committee worked hard and we were rewarded!

Very soon, Second Harvest will announce the launch of a new perishable food program that will benefit our member agencies with fresh produce, dairy, and protein foods. Plans are in the works to add cooler capacity and a staff member to oversee this project.

Because our facility is conveniently located at the hub of a network of interstate highways and industrial developments, we are pleased to be approached regularly by new food distributors that come to the area. As with all distributors, they experience a need to find a home for product that may not be fit for sale, but is still edible. Second Harvest is that home, and we will find a way to get that product to the people who need it—all thanks to our member agencies!

For the past 3 years, I have concluded this "state of the food bank" report with the naming of "ordinary people doing extraordinary things." This year is no exception; however, this year's Hunger Hero is not one person, but rather a huge group of extraordinary people – the volunteers and staff that run our member agencies. They face the day-to-day challenges of providing food to people in need. Whether it's an after-school snack, a hot meal, or a bag of food, the folks who run the non-profit agencies served by Second Harvest are on the front lines every day.

Whenever anyone asks how the food bank is doing, I look around, superstitiously, for wood to knock on before replying that we are doing okay, at least for the moment. That's thanks to another huge constituency that enables us to make a difference – our many supporters, our donors—YOU! Thank you for all that you do to make our work possible.

SHFB distributes food and grocery product to more than 60,000 people in need in six counties through a network of 200 member agencies. These include emergency pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, and child care and rehabilitation centers. Last year, Second Harvest distributed 4.42 million pounds of food through these organizations.

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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.

2009 Empty Bowls: A Feast of Understanding - A 'Spooky Success'

Despite the onslaught of rain, over 200 supporters packed the Second Harvest Food Bank warehouse on Halloween night for the eighth annual Empty Bowls: A Feast of Understanding.

The music of Steve Brosky and His Big Lil' Band welcomed guests as they arrived at the orange and black, pumpkin-laden event. Some paid tribute to the theme of the evening by donating costumes – the crowd included witches, pirates, gypsies, and a couple of scouts. For cocktail hour, guests mingled while enjoying beverages, courtesy of Banko



Steve Brosky and his Big Lil' Band provided the music for the evening. They were even joined for a few numbers by Lehigh County Executive Don Cunningham.

Beverage and wine sponsors Michele Moccio and Tamantha Yanders, and a variety of appetizers served by volunteers from Sodexo of Lehigh Valley Hospital.

The meal, a buffet-style spread of chili, pot pie, salad, and cornbread was prepared by Sodexo and enjoyed by all. Music and dancing ensued, as well as a special musical guest appearance by Lehigh County Executive Don Cunningham.

(continued on next page)



A number of guests came to the Halloween themed evening in full costume – like these two lovely witches.



Thanks to the volunteers from Sodexo for preparing and serving a delicious meal for all our guests!

Guests also participated in a traditional silent auction featuring more than thirty artisan bowls donated by local craftsmen and vendors. This year's auction also offered new "theme bowls," – gift baskets stuffed with gift certificates and products to appeal to all interests.

As the rain and the party tapered, departing guests were treated to a magnificent fireworks display courtesy of Celebration Fireworks. They were then returned to their cars by a courtesy shuttle from Daniels BMW.

Thanks to all in attendance and to everyone who helped to make the evening possible. It was an honor to be able to host you and to show you the inner workings of Second Harvest. Hope to see you again at our 2010 event!!



This year's silent auction featured over thirty artisan bowls and seven new themed bowls



Save the Date
2010 Empty Bowls:
A Feast of Understanding
October 23, 2010 from 6-9pm

Anyone interested in joining the event planning committee should contact Sharon Hall at SHFB (610-434-0875).

Agency Aspects:

Central Elementary and Jefferson Elementary Pantries

If you were to look at a list of Second Harvest's member agencies, you would see that a majority of them are run by groups from area churches. For two emergency pantries in Allentown, people seeking some extra assistance with groceries can visit the basements of Central and Jefferson elementary schools. These two pantries are branches of the Family Centers that are located in the schools.

The Family Centers provide services such as a clothing closet (donated used clothing), after-school and summer programming, and the pantry for area families. Connie Sentz, Program Manager of ELECT and Family Centers, is responsible for managing the pantries. She says the pantries are open twice every month and families can utilize their services once a month. The pantries are currently serving approximately 116 families at Central and 60 families at Jefferson.

According to Connie, a number of dedicated volunteers are key in helping with the pantry each month. Some come in and shelve the food received from Second Harvest; others bag groceries for those in need on distribution day. During the school year, students from service organizations at Muhlenberg College help at Central Elementary. "Our collaboration with them has been phenomenal," says Connie.

The pantry is open twice a month, but Connie says there are sometimes people that call when the pantry is closed because they need help with food. In these cases, she normally helps them with an emergency box of food or directs them to another pantry that is open. "I hate to see anybody go hungry and it feels good to help people out that don't have any food," she says; a statement that is echoed by all of our agencies.