

# TABLE TOPICS

Holiday 2023



## IN THIS SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE:

*You're giving  
our neighbors  
real joy!*

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Ethan is energized.  
See why.

### Page 8

You gave  
Jeff and Kim  
help — and hope.



# Thanks to You, Our Neighbors Have Joy at the Table

Dear Friend,

If you're like me, you love the spirit of the holiday season: meeting with friends and family, sharing greetings and gifts, and enjoying the comforts of home.

Often the centerpieces around such gatherings are delicious meals which sadly, is something not all of our neighbors enjoy regularly.

The high costs of food and housing continue to exacerbate budgets throughout our community, forcing many to make gut-wrenching choices between paying a utility bill or preparing a healthy meal.

Luckily — this holiday season — these individuals and families have you in their corner.

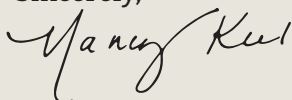
I've witnessed the meals that you provide nourish neighbors both physically and spiritually, especially around the holidays. As you'll read in the pages of this newsletter, regular, healthy food has the power to energize and heal the mind and body. Eliminating worry about where one's next meal is coming from provides relief and peace.

As our organization approaches its 46th anniversary this coming year, all of us at Second Harvest want you to know just how impactful your partnership is.

Our staff is often approached by recipients asking who exactly provides the food for them. When told the meals are shared by kind neighbors like you, feelings of gratitude and joy last through the holidays and beyond.

Thank you for your selfless generosity during this special time of year and beyond.

Sincerely,



Nancy Keil  
President & CEO



Find past issues of our newsletter and our current donor acknowledgment page online at [secondharvestmidtN.org/news-room](https://secondharvestmidtN.org/news-room)

Your suggestions and comments for Table Topics are always appreciated! Please send an email to [news@secondharvestmidtN.org](mailto:news@secondharvestmidtN.org)

## Our Mission

We provide food to people facing hunger and work to advance hunger solutions.

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# Ethan is Energized:

## How You Help Our Young Neighbors Thrive

Ethan loves baseball. His smile widens when he trots out to take his place at third base. He also loves math, “because we use it every day,” beams the sixth-grader.

But Ethan’s daily activities require loads of on-the-go energy—an invaluable resource that you help provide. Ethan has enjoyed activities at the Easley Community Center for five years now. Your gifts supply our Partner Agencies with nutritious food for the young people they serve.

**When Ethan plays baseball, he likes to have a hearty snack before and during a game to keep his energy up. He knows how important it is to stay full and focused both in the classroom and on the field.**

“I’ve grown up with all the kids here,” says Ethan in describing the center’s family-like atmosphere. “We get crackers, apple sauce, orange juice, fruit punch. I love the fruit punch! I do my homework at school, so when I get here, I can have a snack and play with my friends.”



Ethan

**“I have to have my granola bars before I go into a game. They’re the best.”**

“Food is so important for sports,” Ethan continues. “I have to have my granola bars before I go into a game. They’re the best. I always get sleepy and hungry in class, but snacks help me focus.”

Our local community center partners receive nutritious food through the generosity of kind neighbors like you. When you see kids like Ethan smile, please know that you’re making incredible differences throughout our communities. Thank you for your selfless compassion.



Warren Family

**To join the Warren family as monthly donors, sign up at [secondharvestmidtn.org/monthly](https://secondharvestmidtn.org/monthly).**

**Or upgrade your monthly donation today by contacting Jennifer Jackson at 615-627-1583 or [Jennifer.Jackson@secondharvestmidtn.org](mailto:Jennifer.Jackson@secondharvestmidtn.org).**

## Why We Give Monthly

### Meet Jenny Warren and Her Family

“The first year my son was in Metro Nashville Public Schools, school was canceled unexpectedly for several days due to weather. We got an automated call one day from the district, letting families know where to go for food while school was closed.

“I remember tearing up as I realized that many families in our community must rely on the public school system to help feed their children. And that sometimes kids in my own neighborhood don’t eat when school is closed. As a mother of young children, that was a heartbreaking realization.

“I like knowing that my donations are helping to feed kids and their families right in my community. Being a Second Harvest monthly donor is a concrete way I can help ensure that kids in my community have access to food, even when school is out. My husband and I have taken our own children to volunteer at Second Harvest, and we appreciate the opportunity for them to learn about food insecurity and the importance of sharing your own time and resources to help make other people’s lives a little better.”



# News Briefs

## Ms. Cheap's Penny Drive This Holiday Season



The 14th Annual Ms. Cheap's Penny Drive is back! Led by Main Street Nashville columnist Mary Hance, the Penny Drive has raised more than 5.6 million meals for our neighbors experiencing hunger. Participate online this year or make your donations at any Wilson Bank & Trust or Pinnacle Bank

location. Find out more at [secondharvestmidtn.org/pennydrive](https://secondharvestmidtn.org/pennydrive)

## Giving Food Day November 28

Every November, we have a day for giving thanks and a long weekend for great retail deals. Then comes Giving Tuesday, a global day dedicated to giving back. On Tuesday, November 28, you can help your neighbors access the healthy food they need to thrive by participating in our Giving Food Day Virtual Food Drive. **Watch for an email and social media posts about how you can help!**

#GIVING  
TUESDAY  
*Food Day*

## MLK Week of Service

Week of January 15

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lived a life of service to others. Join millions of Americans in honoring his legacy by volunteering during the week of his birthday. Second Harvest has a variety of opportunities available at our three distribution centers in Nashville, Smyrna, and Camden. Like Dr. King, you can make a difference in your community this season. **Reserve your shift today at [secondharvestmidtn.org/volunteer](https://secondharvestmidtn.org/volunteer).**

## Spread the Love

February 2024



Peanut butter is a staple in almost every home, including those experiencing hunger, because of its nutritional value and long shelf life. Due to its widespread popularity, peanut butter is one of our most needed items, yet it is not often donated. Throughout the month of February help us #SpreadTheLove by donating jars of peanut butter and other nut butters. **Learn more at [secondharvestmidtn.org/love](https://secondharvestmidtn.org/love).**





# More Ways You're Making a Difference

## We All Get By With the Help of Our Friends



Our friends at Church of Harpeth Heights offered neighbors nutritious food and messages of hope at a recent Mobile Pantry distribution. The mission and vision of Second Harvest is not possible without dedicated partners like these.

## Metro Police Food Drive

Metro Police hosted a drive-through food distribution to provide boxes of fresh produce and shelf-stable essentials to our Davidson County neighbors.



## CEO of Feeding America Visits Second Harvest



Claire Babineaux-Fontineau visited Second Harvest Food Bank for a conversation about Food Banking and her lived experience with food insecurity. In addition to sharing some of the latest strategies in fighting food insecurity, she emphasized the importance of food bank staff working hand in hand with volunteers and donors to create holistic solutions.

## Hunger 101 Family Night

Volunteers of all ages joined us for a special volunteer shift at the Martin Distribution Center in Nashville, where families were able to give back and learn about hunger in our community together. No one wins this fight alone. It takes collective compassion and charity to truly eradicate hunger for our neighbors in great need.



## Camden Junior High Volunteer Shift

Over 80 students and chaperones from Camden Junior High joined us at the Ray Smith Family Distribution Center in Camden for a volunteer shift. Second Harvest is deeply grateful that younger people in our community understand just how pressing issues like food insecurity are for the well-being of our community today and into the future.





Stephanie and Brandy

**“I grew up without a lot of things, so we went without food when I was a kid. But I don’t want my kids to feel that... — Stephanie”**

## Sisters Lend a Hand During Hard Times

Life’s struggles happen. We all go through tough times. But when things go south all at once, it’s difficult to press on without a helping hand.

After Stephanie lost her job, her husband, who suffers from a genetic heart problem, began fainting from high blood pressure and could no longer work. Fearing he’d pass out during daily activities like cooking or driving, Stephanie became a caretaker for her husband and two young daughters.

“It’s been one thing after another the past two years,” Stephanie laments. “We’ve just been in a hard spot. Things get heavy sometimes. I tried to hide my struggles from the rest of my family, but when you’re eating only rice and beans, they notice. For the kids, you want real food — like meats, fruits, and veggies.”

With bills mounting, income halted, and meals limited, Stephanie’s sister brought her to a Second

Harvest-supported mobile food distribution at Highlands Church in Smyrna for the first time.

“I grew up without a lot of things, so we went without food when I was a kid. But I don’t want my kids to feel that, so when my sister recommended that we reach out to the church, we did.”

Today, Stephanie is happy to report that she’s back to work, and her husband watches the kids during the day while she works from home. But her new income still doesn’t make ends meet, while disqualifying her from most government assistance. For now, this grateful family will need to lean on the compassion of kind neighbors like you.

“Thank you for blessing our family,” Stephanie shares with friends like you. “Hopefully one day we’ll be able to bless another family like you, and the church have blessed us.”



# Comfort Food

## How you helped relieve Ada's worry

Ada loves her tight-knit family. She'd do anything for her husband, two teenage children, and mother-in-law, who all live together in the same Ashland City home.

She sells life insurance. Her husband installs countertops. The couple have lived paycheck-to-paycheck for years, but working together, have somehow made ends meet. Until her husband got hurt.

Ada's husband was forced to take unpaid time off due to an unforeseen medical procedure, tossing a vulnerable family into disarray. Down to one paycheck, Ada couldn't afford to cover both groceries and utility bills. "I was trying to figure out how to get food," Ada worried. "I didn't want my gas to get cut off, or my lights."

Then a friend told Ada about a Food Bank-supported Mobile Pantry she could visit in nearby Pleasant View. With her family in mind, Ada arrived at the distribution site with a heavy heart.

After collecting groceries and fresh produce, made possible by people like you, Ada was relieved to know she could pay her monthly utility bills. "This is the most helpful food I have," she said. "It's way more than I expected."

Now equipped with healthy food for her family, Ada returned to her house with a much lighter spirit — realizing the number of people who truly cared for her extended beyond the walls of her home.



Ada

**“ This is  
the most  
helpful food  
I have. ”**  
— Ada



### PLANNED GIVING:

## Karen is Leaving Behind a Personal Legacy *You can too!*

In the summer of 2021, **Karen** — a vacation and travel professional — volunteered at a South Nashville school, sharing food with families in need who had children enrolled there.

After learning that Second Harvest was a source of that shared food, Karen began volunteering with us. Every Tuesday morning, Karen helps sort and box nutritious food for neighbors in need. "It's not unusual for our group to sort 7,000 pounds of food in three hours," she shares. "That translates into 5,800 meals!"

Karen has also set up a strategic giving plan that shares funds directly from her Individual Retirement Account (IRA). "The Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) gift counts toward my annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) and is excluded from my taxable income," she says.

"This is more impactful than simply giving cash or securities and taking the tax deduction because it's a direct reduction in my taxable income. I'm pleased with the plan."

For more information about including Second Harvest in your charitable gift plans, please contact Marian Eidson at (615) 627-1564 or [plan@secondharvestmidtn.org](mailto:plan@secondharvestmidtn.org).

# "Thank you. Without y'all I don't know what we'd do."

Jeff and Kim have worked their whole lives, rarely needing anyone to depend on. Then misfortune struck.

Jeff, once a cable company lineman, suffered consecutive heart attacks. Kim, an office assistant and bookkeeper, broke her back after slipping on black ice.

Caring for Kim's mother, their two children, and two grandchildren — all living under one roof—became impossible. Food stamps weren't enough. The family needed another lifeline.

"Inflation is tough," says Kim. "Prices are beyond what we can afford."

"It's been bad this past year," Jeff adds. "We didn't know what we were going to do."

The couple arrived at one of our mobile distribution sites in Springville in search of hope. They found that and more when smiling staff and volunteers greeted



them and offered their help — a reminder that no one successfully navigates life alone.

"This past year, we didn't think we were going to be able to celebrate the holidays," Kim reflects. Now, with a little help from neighbors like you, Kim says they will. "Thank you," Kim continues, "Without y'all, I don't know what we'd do."

## PROGRAM UPDATES:

### *Progress only made possible by people like you*

The **Mobile Market** began this past September in Davidson County with plans to expand to surrounding counties. Communities where the need is high, and food assistance is low, have been targeted to receive nutritious food options like fruits, vegetables, dairy, eggs, and meat. The Mobile Market also allows neighbors to receive wrap-around services including dental, health care, SNAP assistance, and more based on location.

**Neighbor to Neighbor Council** is an exciting new endeavor led by Second Harvest Board Member, Dr. Juliana Ospina Cano. The initiative aims to hear directly from community members about their most pressing food issues in order to better custom-fit our services to each area we serve. By hearing firsthand

from recipients, we'll better ensure that neighbors we serve have a seat at the table when important organizational decisions are made.

The **Workforce Development Program** officially kicked off on September 5. This program teaches valuable skills in food manufacturing while providing stipends to cover childcare, travel, and living costs so participants are able to provide for themselves and their families while receiving this valuable training.

**Davidson County Convening** is a new opportunity for Partner Agencies in Davidson County to gather with Second Harvest leadership to discuss food insecurity and work collaboratively to solve local issues.



Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee  
The Martin Distribution Center  
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Nashville, TN 37228

[secondharvestmidtn.org](https://secondharvestmidtn.org)

To learn more about getting involved, join our online community @ 2HarvestMidTN



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