

TABLE TOPICS

Spring 2026

A Blessing to Older Adults

How you're helping neighbors find food in their golden years.

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Meet Phillip, Cassandra, and Our Latest Initiative

Dear Friend,

Phillip has lived in the same apartment for 17 years. He's a familiar face in the community. He volunteers at the community center, walks his rescue dog, Brownie, around the block each morning, and he's recently become a fixture at Second Harvest's monthly Mobile Market distribution. Life has been far from easy, but he's proud of how far he's come.



Cassandra knows that feeling, too. As a retired grandmother raising her seven-year-old great-granddaughter, she must work hard to provide stability for her family on a limited income. It is never easy, but being able to put a meal on the table for her great-grandchild makes it all worth it.

These are your neighbors. For them, when a grocery delivery goes wrong or prices climb higher than expected, it's not just inconvenient — it's devastating.

That's when Second Harvest and your support steps in. Through our Mobile Markets and Partner Agencies, Phillip and Cassandra can count on healthy food close to home.

Testimonies from neighbors like Phillip and Cassandra are why we have pioneered a new initiative to fight hunger. We are excited to debut Food Is Medicine. This program will identify food insecure people struggling with health issues and provide both immediate relief and long-term support. Food Is Medicine uses the power of a nourishing meal to build lasting wellness.

Because of you, these stories of success and revolutionary programs are possible. You can read more about what you've made happen in the pages to come. Every meal, every food box, every smile shared starts with your compassion.

Second Harvest believes everyone deserves the security that comes from knowing their next meal is already waiting. Thanks to your generosity, that belief is becoming reality.

Nancy Keil
President & CEO



Find past issues of our newsletter online at secondharvestmidtn.org/news-room

Your suggestions and comments for Table Topics are always appreciated!
Please send an email to news@secondharvestmidtn.org

Our Mission

Second Harvest's mission is to nourish and empower people so they can thrive

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How You're Helping This Great-Grandmother



“This keeps my great-granddaughter fed. That’s the main thing for me.”

Cassandra is retired and trying to make ends meet on her Social Security income. She lives with her 7-year-old great-granddaughter, who she cares for, and affording groceries for the two of them is tough on such a tightly fixed income.

“Social Security doesn’t last through the month,” says Cassandra. **“When it comes down to it, sometimes I have to think about making choices between food and medicine.”**

That’s why she’s grateful for your support, which provides food for Cassandra at a Second Harvest Mobile Pantry in Davidson County.

“This helps me so much, and it keeps my great-granddaughter fed. That’s the main thing for me,” Cassandra said after a recent visit. **“I appreciate everything donors are doing for us, and I know I’m not the only one!”**

Older adults throughout our community — folks like Cassandra, living on a limited income — are grateful for your help.

“Second Harvest Is a Blessing!”

When Phillip takes his dog, Brownie, for a walk, he thinks about how far he’s come. Because there was a time when he wondered if he’d ever walk again.

He had a hip replacement in 2006, but complications meant three further surgeries and 10 months on his back. He lost 2 inches of bone in one leg, and ended up in a wheelchair.

Upon his release from the hospital, Phillip had nowhere to go. He came to the Vine Hill Community Health Clinic to recover. **“Otherwise,”** he says, **“I would have been on the street.”**

He was living on \$50 a month at the time, and **“went through times when I didn’t have food. If it wasn’t for Second Harvest, I don’t think I would’ve made it.”**

But thanks to supporters like you, Phillip was able to get the food and nutrition he needed to complete his recovery. Today, he hardly needs a cane, and gets around fairly well in a local senior living facility.

But like so many older adults in Middle and West Tennessee, Phillip still needs assistance to make ends meet.

“I’m on a fixed income just like many others,” he says. **“Stuff is expensive right now. There are a lot of people that really need food assistance, and I’m one of them.”**

After picking up some food at a Second Harvest Mobile Market in Davidson County, Phillip expressed his gratitude.

“A lot of people run out of food before they get their next check,” he says. **“But this means I don’t have to worry about going to get groceries before I get my check.”**

“Second Harvest is a blessing!”

Thanks to you, older adults like Phillip are getting the nutrition they need to thrive.



Food Is Medicine

When individuals or families experience food insecurity, they often rely on low-cost, less nutritious foods. Combined with the stress of financial strain, this increases the risk of chronic disease.

That's why Second Harvest Food Bank of Middle Tennessee has partnered with local healthcare systems to launch a 6-month **Food Is Medicine** initiative that integrates nutritious food and nutrition education into healthcare for patients living with food insecurity and chronic conditions like diabetes and hypertension.

The goal is to improve patients' health and well-being by making food a vital part of their care plan. Through this partnership, patients of local healthcare systems receive gift cards for produce and healthy food boxes delivered to their homes, along with support connecting to additional resources like SNAP.



Being in the nation's healthcare capital gives us a unique opportunity to partner with leading health systems like Lifepoint, Ascension, and HCA to bring Food Is Medicine to life so families can truly thrive.

— Amy Qazi, Director, Innovation and Programs

By addressing both medical and social needs, **Food Is Medicine** aims to improve health outcomes, reduce hospital readmissions, and create a sustainable model of care.

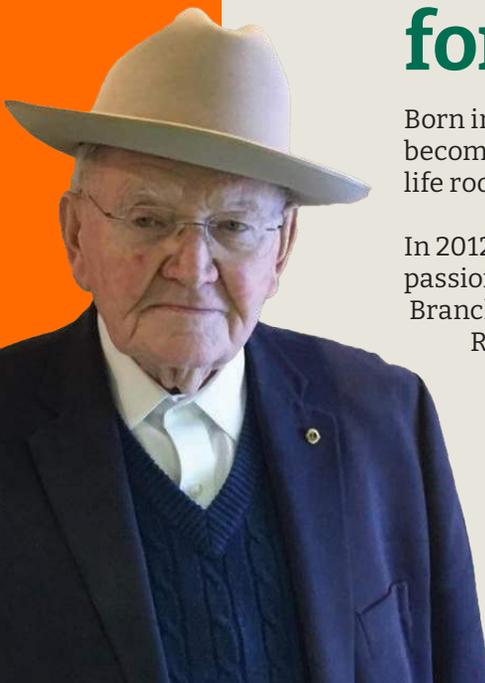
His Legacy Will Live on for Years to Come

Born in Carroll County, Tennessee, Ray Smith rose from humble beginnings to become a successful businessman, civic leader, and devoted philanthropist. He lived a life rooted in faith, service, and generosity.

In 2012, after learning about Second Harvest's mission, Mr. Smith became a passionate advocate for hunger relief. He helped secure the land for our Western Branch in Benton County and then gave a transformational gift that established the Ray Smith Family Distribution Center, serving 14 West Tennessee counties.

Although Mr. Smith passed away in September 2024, his legacy lives on, as he left a generous bequest gift to Second Harvest in his will. His legacy is not just one of generosity, but of love, leadership, and a lifelong commitment to building a better world.

Learn how you can devote a portion of your life's work to local hunger relief by visiting secondharvestmidtn.org/planned-giving today or reaching out to Marian Eidson at marian.eidson@secondharvestmidtn.org.



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



Or visit us online at secondharvestmidtn.org