A mother’s story, “It hurt my pride to think, ‘How did I get into this situation?’” (page 2)
“It hurt my pride to think, ‘how did I get into this situation,’ because I never had that experience growing up. I didn’t foresee having a substance abuse problem as a young mother, or being divorced.” That’s how Jenny King describes her first trip to a food pantry.

“I was terrified because I didn’t really know what it meant to go to a pantry. I didn’t know what to expect going there. What’s going to be inside? What does this say about me?”

To understand Jenny, and her experience using the emergency food system, you need to know a little bit of her history. Before her divorce in 2010, Jenny was a part-time waitress, and full-time mom. She was also what she called a “normal” drinker, a drink here, a drink there, no big deal. After her divorce she found herself a single mother of a five and three year old trying to manage on a part-time income. She also found that drinking was no longer “no big deal.”

“I drank from about 2010 to 2013, which isn’t a very long time, but alcoholism will take you down pretty quickly. When you rely on alcohol, that’s kind of all you end up eating or drinking, so I had a liquid diet.”

In 2013 Jenny decided to get some help. Her sponsor recommended going to a food pantry. “Looking around, it was people like me. Other mothers, other parents, lots of single people, lots of elderly people, there were all walks of life waiting,” recalls Jenny of the people she met that first visit to the pantry.

How would life be different without access to food pantries or FoodShare (formerly known as food stamps)? “I would be a lot more stressed. It takes all the money I earn just to pay my rent. Having access to the food pantries gives me peace of mind. It stabilizes our home.”

Today, having access to food resources through the emergency food system is the “foundation” of Jenny’s sobriety. One of her goals in recovery is to keep her stress levels even keeled, so according to her “if I know I have groceries, and I know I have food, my stress isn’t going to peak.”

To donors and volunteers of organizations like Second Harvest in the emergency food system, Jenny wants you to know, “I want them to know that it made a difference for me and my family.”

And to those who struggle to put enough food on the table, “I want other people who haven’t gone to a pantry because of the stigma, or because they’re embarrassed, to know that it’s available. People at the food pantry aren’t going to shame you for coming to the pantry, they want you to come, they want to bless you!”

IMPACT: WALK IN STRESSED, LEAVE BLESSED

NB1C15 SHARE YOUR HOLIDAYS PROVIDES ONE MORE MEAL

During the 2018 NBC15 Share Your Holidays campaign we asked you to raise One More Meal than the 2017 campaign that raised 4.18 million meals. Thanks to hundreds of food & fund drives, participation in numerous events throughout our community, and thousands of phone calls and online donations during our Grand Finale you actually raised 4.45 million meals!

We are grateful to all our supporters for being part of the fight to end hunger, including our top schools and businesses...thank you!
Recently a 5th grader in the Madison Metropolitan School District wrote a poem about their struggle with hunger. Part of the poem went “I try not to think about it. My hands move to put the puzzle in place. I can’t concentrate. I can’t talk. I can’t learn. I can’t move… I am hungry.”

Over the last 23 years the NBC15 Share Your Holidays campaign has become Second Harvest’s largest food and fund drive of the year. During the 2018 campaign we focused on childhood hunger because an estimated 44,000 children struggle with food insecurity just in the 16 counties served by Second Harvest. That’s 44,000 children who look to their parents, extended family, teachers, friends and all of us for help. While we talk about the impacts of food insecurity on children, these kids are actually living with the impacts of not having enough nutritious food to eat.

What are we doing about it?

• Our HungerCare Program collaborates with the medical industry to incorporate a 2-question food insecurity screen at well-baby checks. A “yes” answer to either question results in the family receiving information regarding emergency food resources available to them.

• Our Kid’s Cafes provide a safe environment for children to stop after school and get both a warm nutritious meal and important nutrition information.

• Finally, we are supporting food pantries in schools that are in high-need and underserved areas of our territory; this support includes both direct (food and funds) and indirect (logistical) support.

Your generous support provides hope to these children and “wins” for our community. We all “win” if we can prevent early school dropouts. We all “win” if we prevent diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. We all “win” if we can reduce the level of anger, depression and anxiety within the family. We all “win” if we can help struggling families level the playing field for their kids rather than having them start at a deficit.

But we can’t win without the collaborative efforts of many. Thank you for your belief that we can make a difference in our community!
When we look around and see the fabulous wealth and blessings most of us enjoy, it seems a particular tragedy that there are those who don’t have enough to eat. It is particularly horrifying when those affected are children. Enough to eat, along with shelter and decent medical care, seem to us ought to be items in the Bill of Rights. They aren’t. So we try to help with a contribution to Second Harvest, people who work all year to help our neighbors have enough to eat. We wish you all a better 2019.

Jon and Sylvia, Individual Donors

GoMacro has been thrilled to partner with Second Harvest Foodbank over the past year. Our manufacturing process creates a large number of nutritious organic snack bars that are designated for donation, and this valuable partnership enables us to support thousands of people in need through Second Harvest’s extensive network of food pantries and community-based agencies across the Midwest. The relationship we have with Second Harvest aligns with our company values and mission, and provides a sustainable means of donating excess product. Perhaps most importantly, our snack bars provide a soy-free, gluten-free and organic option that might otherwise be challenging for food banks to offer.

Tony, GoMacro

Our relationship with Second Harvest Foodbank has allowed us to serve approximately 400 households per month. Our guests now have access to healthy, nutritious foods.

Anthony, New Zion Baptist Church