Many parents know that feeling...something isn’t quite right with their child. It can be difficult to explain, and despite multiple health professionals saying there’s nothing to worry about, that feeling just never goes away. That’s how Sara, and her wife Amber felt just a few months after their daughter Kennedy was born a month early.

“She was fighting too hard to breathe,” said Sara. “We took her to the doctor several times and we were assured that everything was OK. But I just knew something was wrong, so we took her to Madison.”

After some tests were done, the doctors found out Kennedy had a hyperinflated left lung; basically, it could take in air, but couldn’t let it out. Her lung was ballooning up so badly, it was pushing her heart and lung to the other side of her little body.

The answer? A surgery that would remove the top portion of Kennedy’s left lung, and close the part of the lung that takes in air.

“Right after the surgery she was a completely different baby,” said Sara. “She’s so happy. She’ll never be an Olympian, and we have to watch her if she wants to play sports when she grows up, but she should be OK.”

But the reality is that Kennedy wasn’t out of the woods entirely. Her lung condition has meant that if she gets sick, she generally gets sicker than other kids who have the same illness. In fact, just as the multiple doctor’s visits for her lung condition were starting to slow down, Kennedy got Influenza – B. Three weeks later she got RSV (Respiratory Syncytial Virus, the most common cause of bronchiolitis and pneumonia in children younger than 1 year of age).

“She’s had a hell of a year,” said Sara.

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

I’ve been a food banker for more than 20 years. I’ve seen disaster responses to floods, hurricanes, fires, tornadoes, you name it. The common threads between all the responses to these types of things is resolve, cooperation, and compassion. These are also the common threads that will pull us out of the current pandemic disaster.

The reality is that the spike in the need for emergency food assistance that has happened since March has been somewhat tempered by the incentives provided by the federal government. Stimulus checks, bonus unemployment benefits, and a temporary suspension of foreclosures and evictions have helped ease some of the difficult choices people had to make be sure their families had enough to eat.

Unfortunately, the help these benefits provided was only temporary.

At some point, and maybe even by the time you are reading this, these incentives will go away. Families will find that the gap between their financial resources and the bills they need to pay has widened. While many will have gone back to work, many will have permanently lost their jobs. And, in order for parents to accommodate
Pandemic Impact Report
March 15 - July 4

- Pounds of Food Distributed: 7,544,029 pounds
- Meals Provided Through Food Distribution: 6,286,691 meals
- Boxes of Food Provided: 322,250 boxes
- FoodShare Applications & Renewals: 628
- Total Volunteer Hours: 29,897 hours
“It was incredible how Second Harvest pivoted so quickly at such a chaotic time to get this food into the hands of those who needed it the most. We are so grateful for our partnership with Second Harvest!”

Mark Thompson
Sun Prairie Emergency Food Pantry

“Our systems, finances and people have been challenged in ways we had never considered just one month ago. What we’ve learned, or perhaps simply been reminded of, is that we belong to a community of committed individuals and nimble organizations that can move mountains when called upon.”

Marcia Kasieta
Badger Prairie Needs Network

“We wouldn’t be able to continue our operations as a Food Pantry if it wasn’t for our partnership with Second Harvest. We are grateful for their leadership!”

Ellen Carlson
Middleton Outreach Ministry
MANY THANKS

We are grateful to everyone that has given and continues to give to our COVID-19 Response Fund including these private entities that made cash donations greater than $5,000 (March 13-July 8, 2020):


GIFTS MATCHED

The response to the pandemic by Second Harvest is just beginning! Feeding America is projecting that the number of food insecure people in our community will go up by 61% as a result of the pandemic. Until all displaced workers are back to work and kids are back in school, the need for emergency food will remain at an all-time high.

YOU CAN HELP!

Right now, when you make a gift online by visiting SecondHarvestMadison.org/Donate, or use the enclosed remit envelope, YOUR GIFT WILL BE MATCHED (up to a total of $25,000). Give today!
In April representatives from Dane County Executive Joe Parisi’s office reached out to Second Harvest to find out how they could help meet the needs of those facing hunger in Dane County. The result was a $3 million grant designed to not only provide healthy food for those facing hunger in Dane County, but to also help struggling Dane County farmers at the same time.

“Our partnership with Second Harvest allows us to support markets for local agricultural producers and make sure shelves at food pantries remain stocked,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi. “This win-win partnership creates new markets for our agricultural producers while making sure the shelves at Dane County food pantries are stocked for the months to come with healthy meals.”

With the funding in place for the next three months, Second Harvest was now tasked with finding and cultivating relationships with local food producers to source nutritious product. One of the growers that eagerly became part of the program was Eric from Elderberry Hill Farm in Blue Mounds.

One of Eric’s first reactions to the program was, “How awesome that there were resources available to have local fresh food available for people who might not be able to afford it.” As of Mid-June 80% - 90% of what he was growing was coming to Second Harvest as part of the program, which makes his life simpler.

Eric’s staff is also excited about the program, “It adds a little extra important feeling knowing as we’re working, that all this food is going to be providing nourishment and a good healthy meal to people down the road who need it.”

Another relationship that was forged out of this grant opportunity was with Scott from Garden To Be. They are a produce aggregator who traditionally works with many small farms to meet the needs of area restaurants. Rather than each individual small farm building and cultivating their own relationships with multiple restaurants, Garden To Be is the centralized contact for both the farms and the restaurants.

The pandemic caused Garden To Be to look for new ways to distribute its product. According to Scott, “When news first broke about the pandemic I was really nervous, scrambling to figure things out. There was a lot of anxiety for a few weeks, but I knew people were going to eat.”

Now, Scott and his fellow growers are making the most of their opportunity as a result of this grant. “I can’t tell you how many of the growers have said week after week, ‘Thank goodness this is happening! Without this Second Harvest project, we wouldn’t be selling all this product.”

The final piece to the puzzle was to get all of the amazing product we were getting from the farms boxed up and ready for distribution to those facing hunger. That’s when Epic raised their hand offering to help. Their normally bustling campus in Verona includes more than 200 culinary staff to feed its employees. With the pandemic pushing many Epic employees to work from home, and cancelling their signature Spring and Summer user meetings – that bring in tens of thousands of customers for training – their culinary staff suddenly had some extra time and cold storage on their hands.

Carolyn, from the Epic culinary team shared, “It’s wonderful to be able to use the time to impact the community.”

By late June they had packed more than 12,000 boxes of fresh produce, dairy, and meat for Second Harvest. Carolyn went on to say, “It’s great for our team to get to be a part of what you’re doing. It’s amazing to see.”

In late June the Dane County Executive’s office, knowing the difference Second Harvest was making with the initial funding, extended another round of funding to help us better meet the needs of Dane County residents who are food insecure through October.
Then the COVID-19 pandemic hit the country. As if worrying about the health of Kennedy and her soon-to-be-eight-year-old sister Kali isn’t enough, the pandemic hit Sara and Amber’s household particularly hard in a different way. While Sara has been off from her chef’s job at a Wisconsin Dells-area hotel since before Kennedy was born, Amber’s job as a table game dealer at Ho-Chunk had become the primary source of income for the family. Unfortunately, with the hospitality industry hit particularly hard by the pandemic, both Sara and Amber are now out of work.

With limited resources, Sara and Amber have turned to Second Harvest and one of its partners in the Dells area – the Happy Kids Network – for help. But with COVID-19 happening, and an immunocompromised child at home, getting the help they needed was even more challenging.

“Amber was the only one going out,” said Sara. “And when she came back from wherever she went she’d sanitize her hands and take off her clothes before she even came in the house. It was terrifying.”

So, Sara reached out to the Happy Kids Network to see how they may be able to help. It turned out that they lived just a few blocks away, and Autumn from the Happy Kids Network offered to deliver the much-needed food directly to their door.

“One Monday they bring us boxes of frozen food, breads, canned stuff, diapers, formula...more than enough to last a week,” said Sara. “With the Second Harvest stuff we don’t really have a need to go anywhere else for food.”

When asked about the volunteers who bring the food to her house, Sara said, “The people that are bringing this stuff and organizing this are very kind, they’re volunteering their time, they’re loving, and making sure everything is sanitized. We’re very thankful for what they do because we know it comes from a loving place.”

For Sara, Amber, Kali, and Kennedy, the help they receive from Second Harvest and our local partner agencies is critical. As Sara puts it, “The resources through Second Harvest have really helped us and so many other families. I don’t know where we’d be without it.”

Feeding America has projected that there is a 61% increase in the number of food insecure people in southwestern Wisconsin as a result of the pandemic. That means that in our community more than 166,000 people may not know where their next meal will come from!

We know that we will not get 61% more food donated to us to meet the need. We know that our recent unprecedented need to buy food to make up for the reduction in food donations will continue for the near future. And, we know the only way to meet that increased need will be through the continued support of people like you who trust that we are efficiently and effectively ending hunger in our community.

I am ready to go back to the idea that “long-term planning” can be in terms of months and years rather than days or weeks. I am ready to resume our focus on working with other organizations in our community to address bigger issues of poverty, inequality, education, and justice.

Knowing that an end to the challenges our community faces because of the pandemic is a long way away, the question is, how will you respond? Will you respond with resolve, cooperation, and compassion? Will you continue to raise your hand and say, “I am ready to help!”

Can you imagine the beautiful things we can create in our community if we weave our common threads together to provide a better life for families who are struggling right now?
FIGHT HUNGER YEAR ROUND

Become a Monthly Donor

Every day, thousands of children, seniors and struggling families are counting on food provided by Second Harvest Foodbank to get by when times are tough.

We count on a special circle of supporters, too. You can become one by joining the monthly giving program. There’s no easier way to help fight hunger.

Reasons to become a Monthly Donor

• **Effectiveness.** Your monthly commitment helps us to plan ahead, budget more effectively, and respond to hunger concerns as they arise throughout the year.

• **Impact.** Every $10 of your monthly gift provides one Second Harvest Care Box to men, women and children facing hunger in our community.

• **Stewardship.** Your ongoing support helps us save money by reducing administrative costs.

• **Convenience.** Monthly credit card gifts save you time and postage.

• **Flexibility.** You can change or stop your donation at any time.

Plus, if you are able to give $100 or more every month you would become a member of our Sustainers Circle, an exclusive group of individuals who are recognized for their dedication to fighting hunger in our community.

Use the enclosed remit slip today to become a monthly donor, or visit us online to give your support at SecondHarvestMadison.org/Monthly.

SEPTEMBER IS HUNGER ACTION MONTH

Check out how you can take action in September:

**Download, print and post our 30 Ways in 30 Days calendar** (which can be found at SecondHarvestMadison.org/30Ways). It contains 30 ways you can take action — 1 for every day — towards helping us end hunger.

**Go Orange on September 10**

• **Wear something orange, take a picture, and post it to NBC15’s Facebook page.** For every picture posted Emmi Roth, The Little Potato Company, Quartz, and TASC will provide much needed meals to those we serve. **Post both individual AND group photos using #Orange4SHFB!**

**Go Orange • Fight Hunger September 10**

**Food Fight Against Hunger All Month**

• Dine-in, get delivery, or order curbside carryout at any Food Fight Restaurant and help provide thousands of meals for southwestern Wisconsin families. Order from the Harvest section of the menu and $1 from each item ordered benefits Second Harvest. Each $1 raised provides much-needed meals for families facing hunger. Visit FoodFightInc.com to check out all the participating restaurants.