“I saw a problem that wasn’t someplace else, but all around us.” (page 2)
Tell us about your time before Second Harvest:
Before I joined Second Harvest I felt that I had attained all the things that were important in life. I had a corner office and a great title, a great paycheck and I drove a BMW. But something wasn’t right. As I began exploring things I relied on some of the nonprofit boards I’d served on. I was really impressed by people who came to work every day even though they could have similar jobs in the private sector and make a lot more money but were driven by a mission, I was really inspired by that.

Why hunger?
I thought I knew a lot about hunger. I grew up with a family that had National Geographic on the table and I remember seeing pictures of people starving in Africa, and I thought that’s what hunger was. But the more I learned about the size and scope of hunger in our country, and how so many people are affected by it, that’s what made me gravitate towards it. I saw a problem that wasn’t someplace else, but all around us.

What was the reaction from your family when you told them you wanted the position?
I have an incredibly supportive wife who’s always been a cheerleader for me. Her feelings about it were very positive. She encouraged me to do it.

What did you think you were walking in to, that you quickly found out wasn’t the case?
I came with a lot of experience in the business world and I expected people would gravitate to my way of thinking. I quickly learned that what inspires them isn’t strategic planning, budgeting, forecasting and making money, but making a difference.

What were some of the big plans you thought you were going to be able to accomplish in your time here?
When I started it was right at the beginning of the great recession. It was really survival for a lot of organizations! So big goals of change were day-to-day at that time. We were seeing people that had a simple need, they were doing everything they can to make ends meet, but as they scratch and claw to do that they still fall short. It quickly became apparent that our job was to be there to assist them to get to the next month.

Is there a particular client story that jumps out as “yeah, this is why I’m doing this”?
I was visiting one of our mobile pantry distribution sites a few years ago. Despite the cold morning and that it hadn’t opened yet, there was a long line of people waiting for the doors to open. One of the first people I ran into was a young lady, her name was Ellie. Ellie was standing in line patiently with two small children around her legs. Ellie shared with me about how proud she was. She said that she went back and got additional job training and had landed her first fulltime job with benefits. That job was paying about twice what she’d ever been paid before. She was so excited and hoped that her kids would grow up seeing that hard work pays off, and to be proud of their mother. Then her voice trailed off as she said that despite that, here she was in line again. She was no stranger to using pantry lines, but she thought those days were long gone. But here she was in line again. She didn’t know why. She was making a bigger paycheck and had benefits and she thought would be enough to get by. What became really apparent from that conversation is that she worked very hard to make her life better, but despite her efforts it wasn’t good enough to make ends meet each month.

Anything else to add?
The most important thing I’d like to say, and it really comes from the bottom of my heart, is that we are unable to do what we do without tremendous support from the community, including financial donors, food donors, people who have contributed their time, or those who just lend their voice have helped us serve more than 100,000 people each year, not just once, but on average nine times a year. We can’t do that without the help of so many people in addition to the 50+ employees here. So the last thing I’d like to say is thank you, you’ve made a difference, you’ve helped us make a difference, and we can’t do what we do without the generosity of so many. Thank you!
In January of 2019, current president & CEO Dan Stein informed the Board of Directors of Second Harvest Foodbank that he would be retiring at the end of the year. After a thorough nationwide search, Dan’s successor, Michelle Orge was found. Here are their thoughts on the impact of change on an organization.

It’s often said, “if it isn’t broken, don’t fix it.” Messing with a good thing just to create change isn’t reasonable, but avoiding change altogether is a disservice to our mission of ending hunger in southwestern Wisconsin. The landscape of hunger — the causes, the solutions, and most importantly the people experiencing it — are not static. As circumstances change, we must adapt and evolve. We must collaborate with our stakeholders: partners, volunteers, donors, staff, community members, and our participants to understand the challenges we face and work on the best ways to address them. If we do not strive for continuous improvement, we will miss opportunities and our effect on food insecurity will be minimal.

This is how I view “change”— more as evolution and thoughtful, transparent growth than abrupt and jarring decisions made without input. This type of change is positive and beneficial, and it builds upon the great foundation that is already in place at Second Harvest Foodbank. That is why I chose to work here. In addition to the excellent work that has been done in the past 30+ years, this organization has been forging new paths in nutritious food distribution; partnerships with healthcare and programs that address diabetes; and innovative ways to reach kids, seniors, and students. I am excited to join this work and continue the trajectory of excellence.

Unfortunately what hasn’t changed is overall need. This has to change. It may be less than what it was 10 years ago, but unfortunately the numbers needing our help continue to be large. A large segment of food insecure people are working but just don’t make enough to make ends meet. This also has to change.

I am fortunate for having been a CEO for 14 years in a for-profit organization in addition to the nearly 11 years for Second Harvest. I have seen both sides of the conversation and what really has changed is me. The guests we serve look, act, have dreams, are parents, and struggle a lot like me. Someday it may be me.

Thank you so much for your years of support.
For De’Kendra Stamps, Assistant Director of the East Madison Community Center (EMCC), service and helping others comes naturally. “I grew up in a family that’s very oriented towards helping others,” says Stamps. “We were taught to make sure that we are doing what we need to do to uplift people as a whole.”

Today, Stamps and the rest of the staff at EMCC are uplifting Madison’s East side through multiple programs supported by Second Harvest Foodbank. Programs like a community food pantry, participating in our Diabetes Wellness Program, and feeding kids’ mind and body through their Kids Cafe.

EMCC has three primary goals for the Kids Cafe:

1. Make sure the kids they serve have access to healthy meals
2. Teach the kids how to eat healthy
3. Help them learn how to make good decisions around nutrition and health

During the school year, EMCC’s Kids Cafe will serve a snack and dinner every day Monday through Friday; adding a snack and lunch on Saturdays. When school is out they provide breakfast, lunch, and a snack before the kids go home, plus dinner on Tuesdays and Thursdays. EMCC serves approximately 45 kids a meal or snack per day.

“One of the things we want to do with our Kids Cafe is help parents not have to worry about where their kids are going to get dinner from each night.”

For Stamps and the rest of the staff and volunteers at EMCC, the Kids Cafe program is about more than just providing food, it’s about changing lives. “We’re changing perceptions of this healthy food not only for the kids, but in some cases for the parents as well. We see all our programs as connected.”

September is Hunger Action Month (HAM)!
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 12:**
  - Wear Orange: Wear something orange, take a picture, and post it to NBC15’s Facebook page. For every picture posted Automation Components, Inc., Door Creek Dental, Lands’ End, Princeton Club, Restaino & Associates Realtors, Starion Bank, TASC, The Little Potato Company, UW Health, UnityPoint - Meriter & Quartz will provide much needed meals to those we serve. **Post both individual AND group photos using #Orange4SHFB!**

- **Food Fight Against Hunger All Month:**
  Dine out at a Food Fight Restaurant and help provide thousands of meals for southwestern Wisconsin families. Order from the Harvest menu (**$1 from each Harvest menu item ordered benefits Second Harvest**) or add a donation to your dining bill. Each $1 raised provides up to 3 meals for families facing hunger.

- Thank you to our HAM t-shirt sponsor Wisconsin Bank & Trust

- **Free Seminar - “Financial Considerations Beyond 2019”:** This hour-long presentation will offer insights into planned gifts and other tools for charitable giving. The event will be held twice on September 19 at Second Harvest Foodbank, at 2:00 pm and 5:30 pm. No solicitation will be made. Visit SecondHarvestMadison.org/Plan for more details, speaker info, and to register.

We’d like to thank our recent Kids Cafe donors…