



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Chris Ryan, Senior Communications & Analytics Manager  
Telephone Number: (831) 232-8186  
Email Address: [chris@thefoodbank.org](mailto:chris@thefoodbank.org)  
Web address: [www.thefoodbank.org](http://www.thefoodbank.org)

# Second Harvest Launches Holiday Food Drive at Kickoff Luncheon

**Aptos**—Second Harvest Food Bank just entered its most intense two months of the year, in which it encourages and empowers the community to organize the dozens of local food and fund drives throughout the county which together raise over half of the food Second Harvest provides all year long. This is the Holiday Food & Fund Drive, which was launched at the Annual Kickoff Luncheon on November 2<sup>nd</sup> at Twin Lakes Church in Aptos.

The drive is Second Harvest's biggest campaign of the year, and 100% of the food and funds it raises will support its network of 200 pantries, soup kitchens, shelters, food distributions, and programs throughout the county.

This year's co-chairs— Jess Brown, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, and Martina O'Sullivan, engaged citizen—rallied the crowd to meet this year's goal of 4.75 million meals, up from 4.5 million meals last year.

A range of compelling speakers shared their own strategies and tips for different food and fund drives, and some allowed their competitive spirit to shine through, like Plantronics CEO Joe Burton, who proclaimed his intent to rally the Plantronics community to raise more than ever this year.

Another compelling speaker had only eight years under her belt. Third-grader Dorothy DeLisle from Valencia School read a speech in which she shared her experience educating her classmates about hunger in the community and raising funds to feed people in need. It only costs 25 cents to give a meal to a hungry person, Dorothy explained. "The more people who know this, the more hungry people can be fed."

Second Harvest CEO Willy Elliott-McCrea closed the lunch by sharing the three things that make the Holiday Food & Fund Drive so powerful.

“Every single dollar goes to food for our network of over 200 partner agencies and programs—with their 3,000 volunteers—on the ground throughout the county . . . food pantries, soup kitchens, assisted living homes, youth programs, and more,” he said. “So, every quarter, every can, every carrot donated goes straight to nourishing hungry neighbors.”

Continuing with tradition, Second Harvest staff distributed “mini barrels” for the assembled leaders, coordinators, and volunteers to take to their workplaces or private fundraisers to collect funds.

“A dollar is not a dollar,” Elliott-McCrea explained. “Every single dollar raised is really more like eight dollars.” That’s because Second Harvest buys in large quantities, gets steep discounts, and trades food with other food banks.

“Taken together [in this room],” Elliott-McCrea concluded, “we’ve got centuries of experience, and a bottomless reservoir of compassion and energy. So, as we kick off the Holiday Food and Fund Drive, let’s learn from each other, challenge each other, and work together this holiday season to ensure no one goes hungry in our community,” Elliott-McCrea said.

Images are available at <https://adobe.ly/2zsFt1l>.

### **About Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County**

Founded in 1972, Second Harvest Food Bank was the first food bank in California and the second in the nation. Its mission is to end hunger and malnutrition by educating and involving the community. Its network of 200 local agencies and programs feeds 55,000 people in Santa Cruz County every month. For every dollar donated, it provides four healthy meals. “Together we fight hunger all year long.” [www.thefoodbank.org](http://www.thefoodbank.org)

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