



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Second Harvest to Launch Holiday Food Drive at Kickoff Luncheon

**Watsonville**—Second Harvest Food Bank is about to enter 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 are the Holiday Food & Fund Drive. County business, civic, and community leaders and activists will come together on **November 2<sup>nd</sup> from 11:30am-1pm at Twin Lakes Church in Aptos** to launch this annual campaign.

The drive is Second Harvest's biggest of the year, and 100% of the food and funds it raises supports food donations to its network of 200 pantries, soup kitchens, recovery centers, assisted living homes, and food and nutrition programs throughout the county.

At the event, the community will hear from speakers like Plantronics CEO Joe Burton and successful organizers of past community food drives, share strategies and ideas, and get equipped and inspired to spearhead drives at their own businesses, schools, and other organizations.

This year The Food Bank has raised its goal for the drive from 4.5 million meals last year to 4.75 million meals, an ambitious target that the drive's co-chairs— Jess Brown, Executive Director of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, and Martina O'Sullivan, engaged citizen—intend to meet.

"With the stock market at record highs, you might think fewer people need food assistance these days," said Second Harvest Food Bank CEO Willy Elliott-McCrea. "Unfortunately, the economic recovery has not done as much for working families, and expensive housing continues to strain people's budgets. So high numbers of local individuals and families still rely on help from The Food Bank."

"However," Elliott-McCrea continued, "the holidays are a great time for those of us who are a little more fortunate to come together and help those around us who are most in need."

O’Sullivan added, “As Co-Chairs of the Second Harvest Food Bank Holiday Food & Fund Drive, Jess Brown and I are thrilled to be a part of this necessary community effort which will ensure 4,750,000 meals will be provided for children, families, and individuals who struggle to keep themselves fed with healthy food in our very own community. Thanks to each and every one of you who participates, rest assured you will be changing the lives of thousands of our Santa Cruz residents.”

For the fourth straight year, Dignity Health--Dominican Hospital and Dignity Health Medical Group--Dominican are Presenting Sponsors of the Holiday Food & Fund Drive.

Event and ticket information can be accessed at [thefoodbank.org/kickoff2017](http://thefoodbank.org/kickoff2017).

### **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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