

Second Harvest Brings Fresh Food to Watsonville Community Hospital's Patients in Need

Health care includes seeking medical attention when you need it. Equally important is being food-secure and staying healthy in the first place with good nutrition.

Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County is combining those two key factors by partnering with Watsonville Community Hospital to bring the new Nourish fresh pantry to the hospital, starting February 2024.

"At Watsonville Community Hospital, Second Harvest is addressing one of the root causes of food-insecurity in our county," says Second Harvest CEO Erica Padilla-Chavez. "The Food Bank recognizes the link between food insecurity and health adversities and is addressing both causes by promoting wellness by distributing healthy, fresh foods and also providing nutrition education within the hospital."

This is a unique concept. Stephen Gray, CEO of Watsonville Community Hospital, says, "We are excited to partner with Second Harvest Food Bank Santa Cruz County and to be one of the first hospitals in California to have a food bank-led fresh-market pantry within the hospital for prenatal and post-natal mothers and patients."

Gray added, "Good nutrition is such an important determinant of health, especially among prenatal women. Studies have shown that a healthy diet, including a variety of nutrient-dense, whole foods like fruits, vegetables, legumes, whole grains, and

healthy fats, in place of processed food, contributes to optimal fetal growth, better outcomes in childbirth, and the potential for better long-term health in both the mother and child."

While the specific mission of the pantry is to promote wellness by providing access to fresh, nutritious food options to pre-and post-natal patients, other discharged patients of the hospital are also welcome.

The pantry will also be a resource for all the services that Second Harvest and the hospital provide. In addition to healthy food such as produce, grain, and legumes, the pantry will offer some of Second Harvest's direct-to-client services including CalFresh enrollment, CalWorks enrollment, MediCal recertification, home food delivery, prenatal education class signups and support group information.

Information for Second Harvest's programs and assistance will be available in the pantry in both English and Spanish.

You can learn more about the new Nourish fresh pantry, as well as the locations and times of other Second Harvest's food distribution sites, at thefoodbank.org/nourish.

The pantry is located near the main lobby of Watsonville Community Hospital, 75 Neilson Street, in the section formerly occupied by the gift shop. Beginning February 2024, Nourish fresh pantry's hours will be Monday through Thursday 1 to 6 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to noon.

Healthy food for everyone.

Second Harvest Food Bank's nutrition programs offer food staples, healthy produce, nutrition tips and social support across Santa Cruz County.

- ✓ Healthy Food Distribution
- ✓ Nutrition Education
- ✓ CalFresh Food Assistance

**Nourish
fresh pantry
opens
Feb. 9***



Food Hotline: 831-662-0991
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thefoodbank.org

We are the Food Bank

**In partnership with Watsonville Community Hospital. See article for more information.*

