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## Support Second Harvest this holiday season

Second Harvest Food Bank fills an important role in the Santa Cruz and UCSC community

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By Haneen Zain

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Food insecurity affects the lives of many across Santa Cruz County, including UCSC students. One in three residents of Santa Cruz County reported food insecurity in 2022. Second Harvest Food Bank helps combat that insecurity by reaching 65,000 people across the county each month and relies heavily on volunteers to do so.

UC Santa Cruz has partnered with the Second Harvest Food Bank to help alleviate food insecurity, participating in [holiday food drives](#) and coordinating volunteer efforts. Of the 1,896 people who [volunteer with Second Harvest Food Bank](#) in Santa Cruz County, many are UCSC retirees.

Ilse Lopes, the former director of Physical Plant at UCSC up until 2008 and an active member with the university's Retirees Association, has both given her time and money to support the food bank. She highly recommends the experience for those looking to give their time to a worthy cause this holiday season. In her time as a volunteer, Lopes would work in teams to help sort food into baskets for families in need.

"The organization is filling an important role in our community," Lopes said. "It is rewarding to be part of a solution to local food insecurity efforts. We live in an expensive area, and many families are not able to support their families without the help of Second



Harvest.”

Closer to home, Second Harvest Food Bank supplies resources that are used in UCSC food pantries across campus. 3,174 students visited the Redwood Free Market one or more times in the 2022-23 academic year.

In recent years, Lopes has chosen to give monetary donations to Second Harvest rather than volunteer her time. Through the food bank’s purchasing power, they are able to provide three meals for every \$1 donated.

The annual [Holiday Food and Fund Drive](#) hosted by Second Harvest Food Bank has a goal of raising \$1.5 million by Jan. 15, 2024. UCSC partners with Second Harvest Food Bank annually to raise funds for those in need. One hundred percent of funds raised go towards food distribution in Santa Cruz County. This year, UCSC’s efforts are bolstered by a \$50,000 matching gift from Tibi McCann and Eric Jensen. So, any donation made via UCSC is effectively doubled! Will you join UCSC in feeding hope?

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[Link to original story.](#)