

WINTER 2025

THE INSIDE SCOOP

SECOND HARVEST

FOODBANK
OF SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

IN THIS EDITION

Thea's Table

From The President's Desk

Impact Report

Share Your Holidays

THEA'S TABLE

Hunger takes many forms—and so do the ways we support those facing it. For instance, giving uncooked food to someone without a kitchen, or canned food to someone without a can opener, may not actually help. These are real challenges for unaccompanied youth and unhoused families.

One of the ways we support those who are unhoused is through Thea's Table. Originally started by Lea Aschkenase in 2016 as part of her Food For Thought organization, Thea's Table is named after Lea's mom, Thea Aschkenase. Thea was a Holocaust survivor who experienced hunger first-hand in Auschwitz. **Never forgetting the hunger she felt while being held prisoner, she spent much of her life after WWII working to reduce food insecurity in children.**

Thea's Table provides bags containing ready-to-eat food for unaccompanied youth or families who are currently unhoused. The bags are intended to provide very short-term food support while the individual or family connects with longer-term resources.

Currently, two types of bags are provided, one for those who don't have a way to cook food, and another for those who do have access to basic cooking supplies and appliances, despite being unhoused. Each bag provides 2-4 days of breakfasts, lunches, snacks, and dinners.

Bags are currently distributed through Madison Metropolitan School District (MMSD) school counselors, social workers, and the MMSD Administration office. **Last year, the number of bags distributed increased by a staggering 73%, which offers a testament to the housing crisis our community faces.**

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

People have asked how policy changes at the federal level, like the elimination of pandemic-era support, tariffs, immigration, and the "One Big Beautiful Bill Act of 2025" (OBBB), have affected our work. These shifts in policy are presenting significant challenges to Second Harvest and our network of partners and programs. **More importantly, they are hurting those who rely on us for support.**



We're already seeing some of the effects of these policy changes, including:

- Fewer families are receiving SNAP benefits, which, in addition to having less food at home, means less to spend at local farmers' market vendors and rural grocery stores, hurting the local economy.
- Our partners are reporting that Hispanic families are afraid to access the resources they need and rely on to keep food on the table.
- Families who were learning how to eat healthier through federally funded programs no longer have access to that important resource.

On average, our network of partner agencies and programs has reported that the number of people seeking their assistance has risen by 70%. We cannot predict the full impact of these policies on families who already lack adequate resources—but I do know this: only with your support, alongside the relentless work of our staff and partners, can we make sure every neighbor in southwestern Wisconsin has the nutritious food they need.

We are at a pivotal moment and your support has never mattered more. Thank you for being part of our work. **Together, we are bringing nourishment to families, children, and seniors in our community.**

(Thea's Table continued from cover)

"These food bags mean the world to our families when they are in dire need of food," said Jani Koester, Transition Education Program Resource Teacher with MMSD. "The bags help them until they can get to another food source that can support them in a longer, more sustainable way."

We realize that, unfortunately, unhoused families and unaccompanied youth aren't just in Madison. Every community in our 16-county service area includes families and kids who don't have safe places to lay their heads every night. **That's why we're looking at ways to expand Thea's Table, so we can support more neighbors.**

To grow Thea's Table and meet more of the needs in the unhoused community, we are constantly seeking input from our community and asking questions such as:

- How do we distribute the food when unhoused families or unaccompanied youth don't want people to know their situation?
- How do we maintain dignity throughout the process—from the brand names of the sourced food, to the sharing of 'best by' date information, to the methods and locations of distribution?
- How do we efficiently accommodate each person or family's unique situation, whether they're living in their car, a hotel, or staying with friends or family?



As you can see, the challenges of meeting the needs of those facing hunger are numerous. Thankfully, with your support, we're ready for every challenge we face. **Please consider supporting those in our community who may not know where their next nutritious meal will come from.** Visit secondharvestsw.org/Donate today. If you are inspired by Thea's story, choose "Thea Aschkenase Endowment Fund" under, "What would you like your donation to support?"

MID-YEAR REPORT

JANUARY - JUNE 2025



230,000



SOURCING **MORE MILK FOR FAMILIES**

We've sourced over 230,000 half-gallons of milk for families facing hunger—thanks in part to our Adopt A Dairy Cow campaign.

We distribute half-gallons instead of full gallons to help reduce food waste from spoilage.

If you would like to help us provide more half-gallons of milk to families facing hunger, visit secondharvestsw.org/Milk.

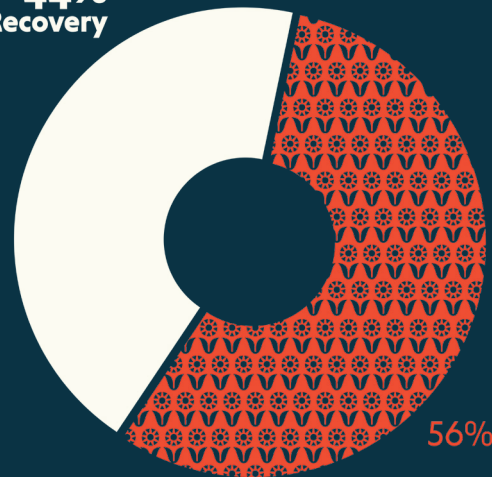
REDUCING FOOD WASTE WITH **FOOD RESCUE**

Our Retail Recovery Program partners with approximately 300 grocery and convenience stores to rescue food near its sell-by date.

By working with retailers and local partners, we ensure fresh food gets to our neighbors fast.

44% (5.6 million pounds) of all food distributed by our network came from the Retail Recovery Program.

44%
Retail Recovery



56% Other

WORKING TOWARDS **ENDING CHILDHOOD HUNGER**

In southwestern Wisconsin, 1 in 7 kids (nearly 40,000) face food insecurity. We support a number of programs that are specifically designed to address childhood food insecurity. They include:

20 BACKPACK PROGRAM SITES



25,000+ bags of food sent home for weekend meals

24 YOUTH MEAL SITES (KIDS CAFÉS + HARVEST SNACKS)



122,000+ lbs of food served after school

24 SCHOOL MARKET SITES



400,000+ lbs of food accessed during the school day

30 YEARS



2025 is the 30th anniversary of the WMTV 15 News Share Your Holidays campaign. What started out as a fleeting idea to hold a simple food drive at a local grocery store by then-WMTV News anchor Mike McKinney has grown into one of the largest food and fund drives in the entire country, providing more than 75 million meals since its inception. In fact, last year's campaign received national recognition for excellence, winning an Honorable Mention for Fundraising Campaign of the Year from PR Daily.

The Share Your Holidays campaign has grown into hundreds of food and fund drives across businesses in our 16-county service area. You can also give at local grocery stores in November and December, on Giving Tuesday, and during our Phone-A-Thon, where your gift will be matched.

Here are the many ways you can support this year's campaign:

- **Give To Food Drives:** Did you know hundreds of businesses and organizations have food donation barrels on site to make it easy to donate non-perishable items? **Scan the QR code to find a Share Your Holidays food drive location near you!** →
- **Give At Your Grocer:** Through December 31 you can donate food or round up at the register at major retailers across southwestern Wisconsin. Participating grocers include Metcalfe's, Hy-Vee, Woodmans, Pick 'n Save, and Metro Market. Ask your cashier how you can donate!
- **Giving Tuesday:** Our generous campaign sponsors will match the first \$25,000 we raise on Giving Tuesday! Be sure to donate at secondharvestsw.org/GivingTuesday to have your donation doubled.
- **Phone-A-Thon:** Make your gift go even further! Donations made during the Phone-A-Thon will be matched by generous sponsors and individual donors (up to the matching funds available).



THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS AND PARTNERS!

