



# GIVING THANKS



**SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK OF METROLINA**

500-B Spratt Street, Charlotte, NC 28206 | 704.376.1785

SPRING | 2021

## KEEPING KIDS A PRIORITY

COVID-19 has turned our world upside down, especially for single moms like Shequella. She has her hands full dealing with the ongoing impact of the pandemic, including unemployment and lack of school food programs to help feed her children.

"I was working at the school district but currently I'm unemployed," Shequella explains. Like so many other hard-working parents, the pandemic has taken Shequella's job away, leaving her and her children struggling to get enough food.

Shequella is not alone. Nearly one in five residents in the Carolinas are food insecure. Sadly, 29% of those going without food, or not sure where their next meal will come from, are children.

Thanks to our caring donors, Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina has been able to fill the gap for many hungry children, like Shequella's. Our Backpack and School Mobile Pantry programs have continued throughout the pandemic. All of the food is kid-friendly, meaning it can be opened by the kids and eaten without having to cook it. This program has sustained a lot of kids, and probably their families, through this difficult time.

"It helps me out, because food, we need the food," Shequella said. "Thank God for Second Harvest." It's because of you that Shequella can take care of her children during a worldwide pandemic that has changed lives forever. "I don't really worry," she says, "because I know Second Harvest is here to help me when I need it." Thank you for making a difference where it counts.



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Thank God for  
Second Harvest.”

# COVID-19

## One Year Later

We have accomplished the following because of you:



more pounds of food than the same timeframe the prior year



Packed over 500,000 Boxes filled with nutritionally balanced food



Served 50,000 families at our school-based mobile pantries



Distributed 17.5 Million more pounds of fresh produce, meat, and dairy products than last year during the same timeframe

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

COVID-19 has challenged us in ways we never thought imaginable. When the state shut down last year in March, we saw a 57% increase in demand for food. No one could have predicted that. Were we overwhelmed? Absolutely, but you wouldn't let us fail. Donors donated, volunteers enlisted, and partners gave their time, talent, and resources in unprecedented ways. Even though the demand was higher than we've ever experienced, we continued to win the battle against hunger throughout our service area.

Let me show you what we achieved together from March 2020 through March 2021:

- Distributed an additional 20 million pounds of food over last year during this same time frame.
- Provided over 500,000 nutritionally balanced food boxes throughout our 24 county region (14 counties in NC and 10 counties in SC).
- Served more than 50,000 families at our school-based mobile pantries.
- Distributed 17.5 million more pounds of fresh produce, meat, and dairy products than last year during this same time frame.

In this issue you'll read life-changing stories that continue to happen during a disastrous pandemic. Although we are tired and challenged, your encouragement and unending support kept us going — extending help and food to the hungry. Because of your loyalty and sacrifice, I have hope and so do the thousands of our neighbors, families, and friends who desperately need food in these difficult times. Thank you for the hope you extend to us and to those we serve.

Sincerely,

*Kay Carter*  
Kay Carter, CEO



Kay Carter  
CEO

## SURVIVING ON GRITS AND OATMEAL

“

It's so nice what they're doing to help me and others.”





# PANDEMIC INCREASES DEMAND FOR FOOD

At 64, Sheila has beat cancer twice, but her victories have cost her a lot, “I took chemo and radiation and it really made me sick. My body was shutting down,” she explained. Yet with her bright personality, Sheila couldn’t help but say, “To God be the glory. God is good.”

After retiring from Black & Decker as a forklift operator and working the line, Sheila was employed in the kitchen of an elementary school part-time, because things “are a little rough,” she says.

Sheila is responsible for taking care of and feeding her 89-year old mother. That’s an enormous challenge. Like a perfect storm, COVID-19 has pushed families like Sheila’s to the brink, struggling to adequately feed everyone in their household.

When the states of North Carolina and South Carolina shut down at the end of March last year, food banks saw a 57% increase in demand, including Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina. About one third of those reaching out to food banks are new to the system.

To meet the growing needs of families during the pandemic, Second Harvest has increased their food distribution through mobile pantries. What used to be a shop-what-you-need model is now a pre-packed food box that families receive filled with meat, dairy, fresh produce, eggs, and non-perishable items. For health reasons, the new system helps protect staff, volunteers, and recipients from any contact. To keep up with the demand,

Second Harvest is hosting multiple mobile pantries a week, rotating between different schools across the service area.

Thanks to everyone who supports Second Harvest, hungry families like Sheila’s are able to get the food they so desperately need through our mobile pantry program. “This is awesome and makes a big difference for us,” Sheila said. Thank you for giving sacrificially to help so many families who need your help during the pandemic.



This is awesome and makes a big difference for us.”

When asked if she had any food at home, Lisa shyly said, “I have a little bit.”

Lisa has worked for years as a librarian and now is an administrative assistant. With the onset of COVID-19, work opportunities in her field are scarce, especially because “I’m not from this area, so it’s hard to find full-time work,” she admits. Add the fact that she is fighting a back injury that limits her ability to qualify for a lot of jobs, her new adventure in South Carolina is not what she expected. Even so, she is working hard trying to survive.

Sadly, survive clearly describes Lisa’s existence right now. With just part-time pay, she cannot afford to eat like she should. “I miss lunch quite a bit,” she says. “I’ll eat grits, like a week of grits or oatmeal.” She has nothing else, because that’s all she can afford. Sometimes finances are

so tight, Lisa has to make the tough choice of paying her utilities or buying food — what is called heat or eat.

Soon after the pandemic was declared, tens of millions of people like Lisa, lost their jobs or saw a decline in the number of hours they were allowed to work. The demand for food has risen dramatically and continues to sustain record levels a year after COVID-19 entered our lives.

Because of your generosity, folks like Lisa are able to get the nutritious food they so badly need. “It’s so nice what they’re doing to help me and others,” she says. Thank you for giving so Lisa doesn’t have to live on grits and oatmeal. Thanks for helping people make it through hunger and the pandemic.



## WHEN I DON'T HAVE FOOD, I DRINK A LOT OF WATER

Seniors are some of the most vulnerable in our neighborhoods, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Aging bodies fraught with constant health issues, limited mobility, loneliness, side effects of medications, and lack of food are a daily battle.

Lois finally got to the point where she couldn't live without support. Disabled, trying to pay bills on Social Security while caring for her 40-year-old son, as he recovers from open heart surgery in her home, was just too much. "Do we have any food at home? No, we don't," she admitted. When asked if she ever misses meals due to lack of food, without hesitation, she said, "Oh, yes! And when I don't have food, I do what I can do, I drink a lot of water."

Like Lois, more than 345,000 seniors in North and South Carolina live below the poverty line. Due to COVID-19, a greater number of older adults are experiencing food insecurity and are lonelier than before the pandemic. So, how do we help this quiet generation that rarely asks for help and lacks the resources to pay for basic needs?

With pandemic restrictions, most seniors aren't able to safely get out of the house. They've missed precious human interaction with family and friends and don't have access to food like they used to. To overcome the challenge of poverty, hunger, and COVID-19, we have the Senior Box Program every Monday. Quarantined seniors can drive through and pick up a box of food that has been nutritionally designed for them. They can also request food to be delivered through our partner Meals on Wheels agencies.

We couldn't reach seniors in such an effective way without the help of our donors and partners. To you, Lois says with a huge smile, "I thank you a lot, and I thank God for people who give to help other people like me. This is a real blessing."

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**CONTACT US**  
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Stay up-to-date on all of our upcoming events by following **@shmetrolina** on



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