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**Harvesters Tour Script – Topeka**

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| **Location** | **Basic Information** |  | **Details/Key points** |
| **Volunteer Check-In** | * Check volunteers in through CERVIS * Invite them to enjoy coffee as they wait |  | * Make sure all volunteers are wearing closed toe shoes and that they have approved water bottles. * Like Harvesters on social media – Facebook, Instagram and Twitter! |
| **Welcome** | * Your Name, Title, Role/Affiliation   After discussion points returning volunteers will head into the TVEC to start the project. New volunteers will remain in the HEC for Presentation and Tour. | * Explore Group Experience with Harvesters * Discuss any special events or campaigns that are coming up. * Discuss the VEC Rules:   + No gum is allowed in the warehouse   + Jewelry to a minimum – don’t want to loose a ring or earing during the packing! * Instructions for Confirmation of Volunteer Hours * Thank volunteers for bringing in food donations – if all of our volunteers in KC and Topeka donated just one can we would be able to provide more than 5,000 more meals a month. | * Our vision is a healthy, thriving community where no one is hungry. * Harvesters mission is to mobilize the power of our community to create equitable access to nutritious food and address the root causes and impact of hunger. * Harvesters is a food bank – we are often confused with a food pantry. As a food bank, Harvesters acquires, stores and distributes food to our network of 760 nonprofit agencies. * Through our agencies, we feed more than 226,000 different people each month. * Geographically diverse service area of 26 counties (16 in Northeast KS and 10 in Northwest MO). Includes urban, suburban and rural communities. * Member of Feeding America, nation’s network of 200 food banks * Awarded Food Bank of the Year for Excellence in 2011. * During our last fiscal year, Harvesters distributed 68,843,920 pounds of food providing 61,326,143 meals |
| **Video** | Play Video – What We Do  Ask for questions | Include seasonal messaging points whether or not you show the video. | * It’s a new year and a good time to think about how you can help our hungry neighbors. * As temperatures drop, the cost of utilities and heat forces many low income families to make a difficult decision: heat or eat? Sixty-three percent (63%) of our clients tell us they’ve had to choose between buying food and paying for heat or utilities. * We have four initiatives: Feeding Children, Feeding Seniors, Feeding Families, Promoting Healthy Eating |
| **Hunger Education Center (HEC)**  **1 in 7 Sign**  **(to the left of door to VEC)** | * + 1 in 7 individuals in our service area are food insecure |  | * Harvesters is the bridge between the people who have food to give and those who need food. * Nearly 3 million times each year, Harvesters’ network provides food assistance – a meal, bag of groceries or fresh produce -- to someone in our region who is food insecure. * What does being “food insecure” mean? It means that someone does not have consistent access to healthy food because they either don’t have enough money or they have to decide whether to buy food or pay their utilities or rent or pay for their medicine. * What does a hungry person look like? Those who are food insecure are usually not homeless. They are all ages and races. * 49% of households who need food have at least 1 person who has worked in the last year. * How you can help: give food, money, time, voice. |
| **Volunteer Engagement Center (VEC)**  ***Because of You Sign*** | * + The purpose   + Volunteer contribution   + The activities |  | * The VEC is where the majority of volunteer projects take place, we can host up to 20 volunteers at one time. * Volunteers are key to Harvesters being able to carry out our mission. * In a normal year, we average nearly 6,500 volunteer visits each month, between the VEC, our Topeka facility and various off-site events. * Our volunteers process an average of 200 lbs. of donations per hour. |

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| **Who we Serve: Families** | * Harvesters’ network serves 141,500 people every month. | Reference bread sorting where  volunteers help sort and box bread to go out to families.  Also mention that volunteers help bag  Bulk acquisitions of basic fruits &  vegetables, as well as gleaning from  donated produce. | * Many of theneighbors our agencies serve are families. * 49% of households who need food have at least 1 person who has worked in the last year. * 54 percent of households have had to choose between paying for food and paying the rent or mortgage. * 24 percent of those who receive food assistance have some college or a college degree.   **Family Story:** Angela is the proud mother of two young sons. To support them, she worked as an Instacart shopper. But when Angela was diagnosed with COVID-19 before vaccines were available, she had no choice but to stop working. Like any parent, she was stressed about how she’d pay the bills and keep food on the table. But, that help ended when she found she could take home nutritious groceries for her family from Harvesters’ Mobile Food Pantry. Though one of Angela’s sons also contracted the virus, the family is healthy today, thanks in part to your generosity. |
| **Who we Serve: Children**  **(BackSnack area)** | * 25 percent of those we serve are children. | Use this story or a child feeding story of your own. | * BackSnack is just one example of how we help kids that are food insecure. BackSnack provides backpacks of food to elementary and middle school children to combat weekend hunger (4 meals, 2 snacks). * Reasonably nutritious, kid-friendly, shelf-stable, w/ 3 rotating menus. * More than 13,000 children will receive a BackSnack every week this school year – we have the largest program of this type in the US. * All food is purchased by Harvesters and packs are assembled by volunteers. * Cost for 1 BackSnack per child for the school year is $250. * Shipped to schools, who work with community partners to clean and refill backpacks every week. * Schools determine which students are in need. * We provide training to schools, and we collect data from schools, students and parents. * Data shows higher grades, lower incidents of tardiness/ absenteeism and misbehavior when children are not hungry. * Also have Kids Café which provides meals and snacks to agency or program sites after school and during the summer.   **BackSnack story:** Jasmine is in middle school and each Friday goes home with a BackSnack. This is a huge help for her family because her mom was laid off from her job in customer service and has been having a hard time finding a job that allows her to meet the basic needs of her children. Jasmine love the BackSnack bags and her mother loves the peace of mind that the food in BackSnack bags provide. |
| **Feeding Seniors** | * 20% of who we serve are 60+ years | Use this story or a senior one of your own. | * Volunteers assemble boxes of commodities that are distributed to seniors on a monthly basis. * The network also feeds seniors through Senior Mobile Food Pantries and regular food pantries. * Seniors often have to make hard choices between medication, utilities, and nutritious food. * They are the least likely to ask for help. * 16 percent of our senior clients are raising their grandchildren.   **Senior Story:** George is a 65-year-old retired Army sergeant whose decorations include two bronze stars, who has volunteered with Harvesters in the past to give back to his community and help neighbors who are struggling to afford food. But last year he drove through a Harvesters food distribution on the receiving end — for himself and his niece and her four children because “they don’t have enough.” George said he could count on one hand the number of times he’s needed Harvesters, but he knows the summer months will be especially difficult for his niece and other families when their children no longer have access to the nutritious meals they receive at school. |
| ***Warehouse:***  **Where the Food Comes From** | * Local * Feeding America * Food Purchased * USDA (the government) * Food Drives * Food Rescue * Other Food Banks |  | * Last FY we acquired nearly 71 million pounds of food and household items from:   **Local:** grocery stores, wholesalers (AWG), producers (MO apple growers), manufacturers (American Italian Pasta, C&C Produce).  **Feeding America:** benefits of being in network of 200+ food banks is equitable access to national food donations and campaigns.  **Purchased by Harvesters:** this year we will spend more than $3 million, of that $1.7 million is for BackSnack.  **USDA:** we distribute 5,000 boxes of commodities (CSFP) to qualifying senior citizens monthly, we distribute 2,700 boxes of emergency food assistance (TEFAP) to qualifying households in Kansas monthly.  **Food Drives:** often the first touch for many with Harvesters is participating in a food drive; fills need for most nutritious or needed items; a small slice but an important component is the Virtual Food Drive, since every $1 donated = 3 meals acquired.  **Other Food Banks:** we work together to meet the need by exchanging surplus-to-need donations. |
| ***Where does the Food Go*** | * Food Pantries * Kitchens * Shelters |  | * Last FY we distributed more than 68 million pounds of food. * Agency network and programs operate in a geographically diverse area. * **Pantries:** brick and mortar, or mobile distributions. * **Kitchens**: prepare and serve an on-site meal. * **Shelters:** prepare and serve meals, short-term or residential facilities. |
| **Warehouse** | * Since 2010 * Warehouse is 41,232 square feet; Office area is 4,441 square feet. | Talk about these things to receiving. | * Continually look for ways to improve operational efficiency, reduce waste. We compost food that is not edible. * Computerized inventory control systems ensure we can quickly and efficiently respond to product recalls. * Our total food stock at both facilities turns over 14 times a year – that’s about every three weeks our warehouses could be empty except that we always have food coming in. * Renovation added 100 more dry pallet spaces, new lighting. |
| **Receiving Area** | * Purpose * Activities | Mention scale on the way into Receiving. | * Goal is to have available for agencies to order within 24 hours of receipt * Everything that comes in or goes out of the warehouse is weighed and inventoried. Promotes accountability and allows us to provide a receipt for all donors showing the amount of food donated. * AIB Standard – Harvesters is 1 of just a few Food Banks in the nation to receive a superior rating – this means we meet all the food safety standards in our warehouse. * Fleet of 33 trucks, w/ largest having fuel capacity of 300 gallons. * We collect household items, cleaning/laundry supplies, personal care products, diapers, etc. for distribution through our agencies. |
| ***Healthy Eating***  **Cooler and Freezer** | * Cooler now 15,500 square feet. Added 100 pallet spaces. * Freezer is now doubled in size. (2,800 total square feet) |  | * Last FY we distributed more than 19 million pounds of produce. * Fresh produce is a priority—represents some of the most nutritious food; also often some of the most expensive for clients to buy. * The need to acquire and distribute more fresh produce led us to expand our cooler by 13,000 square feet in Kansas City and to expand our facilities here in Topeka as well. * Produce is kept in the cooler; frozen items in the freezer. * Freezer is -10 deg, Cooler is 38 degrees. * November and December – distribute Holiday Meats to agencies – includes turkeys and chickens. * Nutrition Services reaches out to neighbors at food pantries & mobile distributions – providing recipes & tastings to encourage healthy food selection & preparation (our recipes are online!). |
| **Disaster Relief: The Supply Line to the Front Line**  **Sign that shows locations were we’ve traveled.** |  |  | * We are one of Feeding America’s regional sites for disaster relief. * Feeding America coordinates w/ FEMA & state response to request support. * We provide disaster supplies, such as bottled water, cleaning supplies, and shelf-stable food.Harvesters’ 53-foot disaster response trailer is available to be used by our disaster cohort of food banks in Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. * We store disaster supplies, such as bottled water, cleaning supplies, and shelf-stable food. * Example; Harvesters transported more than 250,000 pounds of food to Joplin to feed tornado survivors, first responders and disaster relief volunteers. Included in this were 10,000 sack lunches. |
| **Agency Pickup** |  | Show pallets of agency orders ready for pickup. | * For greater operational efficiency, agency orders are picked a day in advance and placed here so they can be quickly and easily loaded out the doors and into agency vehicles outside at our agency pick up area. * Agencies make appointments for pickup. * Creates minimal wait time for agencies and avoids problem of everyone showing up at the same time. |
| **Closing** | * Ask for questions * Thank group | * Log tour | Visit our website [www.harvesters.org](http://www.harvesters.org) for more information. Follow us on social media: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram to stay up to date on what’s happening, volunteer opportunities and other ways you can help. |