

LOCAL HARVEST



HOLIDAY
2021



DEAR FRIEND,

I've said it before, but it deserves repeating: you are Harvesters.

Because of your faithful generosity, we are ending strong in 2021, despite the challenges the year has brought with it.

Thanks to you, Harvesters increased not only the amount of food available across northeastern Kansas and northwestern Missouri, but also the type. An incredible 35 percent of the food we distributed this year was fresh produce. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, access to nutritious food couldn't be more critical.

Your partnership also helps make sure Harvesters can offer nutrition classes and other resources so more people in our community have the tools they need to take an active role in their good health.

Flip to pages 4-5 for more highlights from the many triumphs you've made possible this year and read on to hear from just a few of the people in our community who wanted to share their thanks with you.

I'm so grateful for your partnership with Harvesters to make sure nutritious food is available through even the most difficult challenges.

I look forward to partnering with you in 2022 to build an even stronger, healthier community for us all.

Gratefully,

Valerie



Valerie Nicholson-Watson
President & CEO



Make a difference every day of the year — in disaster or ongoing hunger relief — with your monthly donation. Check out <https://www.harvesters.org/Harvest365>

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FAMILY PAYS YOUR GENEROSITY FORWARD

Samantha and her husband are both pediatric nurses and were working at a local children's hospital. But at the beginning of the pandemic, Samantha was laid off and her husband's hours were cut in half. They began having trouble making their mortgage payments and fell behind on their bills.

"Things definitely got really tight," Samantha says.

That's why she's been so grateful to be able to pick up food from the food pantry at Kansas City Kansas Community College when she needs groceries for her family.

Making sure her kids have healthy food is Samantha's top priority. While Annabelle, 8, doesn't have any food restrictions, Lincoln, 1, has severe food allergies.

"Any little mess-up [with Lincoln's diet] is disastrous," Samantha explains.

Food Allergy Research & Education, which advocates for people with allergies, reports millions of Americans who are food insecure face limits on what they can eat.



Samantha with her son, Lincoln, at the student food pantry at Kansas City Kansas Community College.

The food pantry has been so accommodating of Lincoln's special dietary needs that it's a huge weight off Samantha's shoulders. If she ends up with an item Lincoln is allergic to, she can bring it back in exchange for fresh fruits and vegetables that Lincoln can tolerate.

"Without Harvesters, [we] would have been eating rice and beans every day," she says, thanking generous donors like you.

Samantha and Annabelle are so thankful that they've started

paying your generosity forward by giving their time distributing food through Harvesters partner agencies. You, Samantha and Annabelle are all working together to strengthen our community!

"Without Harvesters, [we] would have been eating rice and beans every day."

FISCAL YEAR 2021 YEAR IN REVIEW

Thank you for providing food and hope to thousands of families, children and seniors in our community!

YOU HELPED HARVESTERS PROVIDE **67,883,565 MEALS** BY:



Holding food drives that provided 4,114,039 million meals



Volunteering a combined total of 74,106 hours of service



Donating money enabling the purchase of 310 truckloads of food



Advocating in support of hunger relief

OTHER NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS:

- This year, Harvesters surpassed 1 billion pounds of food that has been distributed in our region in the 40+ years of fighting hunger with partners like you.
- 35% of total food distributed in 2021 was fresh produce!
- Harvesters added nearly 100 new partner agencies, all located in areas of immediate need or where specific at-risk populations reside.
- Multiple local hospital systems are now screening people for food insecurity, along with other social determinants of health, and referring people in need of food to Harvesters' network of agency partners.
- Approximately 562,784 meals were provided to students and their families through 10 High School Mobile and On-Site Pantries.

+ HARVESTERS COVID-19 RESPONSE +

+ Harvesters continued to operate in a disaster emergency mode throughout 2021, working to get as much food as possible to families, children, and seniors facing hunger while keeping agencies, staff and volunteers safe.

+ Harvesters hosted four "Mega Mobile" distributions which served 2,995 households.

+ 8,737,618 meals were provided through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), a new federal program created in response to the pandemic.

+ We added 60 one-time or occasional mobile distributions, on top of 232 monthly mobile distributions throughout the year.

+ Harvesters allocated nearly \$1.7 million in grants to network partners to help ensure agencies remained operational.

YOU'RE EASING BURDENS FOR FAMILIES

Angela, 38, 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, she says of your generosity, "You were there to help pick up the pieces."

That's because Angela could take home nutritious groceries for her family from Harvesters' Mobile Food Pantry.

"If it wasn't for you guys doing this, we wouldn't have made it," Angela says through tears.

Though one of Angela's sons also contracted the virus, the family is healthy today, thanks in part to your generosity.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of people experiencing food insecurity — often for the first time in their lives — has continued to surge. Food insecurity is when a person doesn't have reliable access to affordable and nutritious food for themselves or their family.

With the support of friends like you, Harvesters has been there to help.

"Thank you," Angela says to generous donors like you. "That matters."

Your generous support ensures more of our neighbors have ongoing access to nutritious groceries during this especially difficult time.



FAMILY SHARES GIFT OF TIME

"We live in such a wealthy nation, yet still have people that are hungry... That motivates me to do more and more every year."

Don Thomson is a retired Army Veteran, a proud husband, father of four children and grandparent of four grandchildren. And one other title that Don wears proudly is Harvesters volunteer.

From sorting boxes to packing BackSnacks, Don is ready to help wherever he is most needed. During the holiday season, Don's whole family comes together to serve.

"We don't exchange Christmas gifts," he adds. "Instead, we donate to Harvesters with the money we had set aside for gifts."

Don says the time he's spent volunteering has taught him that he can help promote a culture of giving in his family by being a part of the fight against hunger.

"There are so many ways to give and so many opportunities to volunteer," he says. "Hunger is such a basic thing. Everyone has to eat."

Thank you to Don and your entire family for making our community healthier and happier this holiday season and throughout the year. Your kindness is inspirational.

"Hunger is such a basic thing. Everyone has to eat."



HARVESTERS' RECIPES for HOPE

Celebrate your family and friends this holiday season by sending a heartfelt gift that also helps nourish our community!

Order your Recipes for Hope now at: www.harvesters.org/holidaytributes

GIVE TIME



Join Harvesters helping neighbors facing hunger. Give the gift of your time. Please visit <https://www.harvesters.org/volunteer> for the latest volunteer opportunities and policies. In as little as two hours you can make a real difference!

AMY SHARES APPRECIATION FOR YOU



Amy and her husband outside the food pantry at First United Methodist Church in Lawrence.

Amy never expected to be laid off from her job as a nurse — especially during a global pandemic. When she was, your generosity helped her keep nutritious food on the table for her family.

“We are really grateful for your help,” Amy says to donors like you.

The clinic Amy works for was not seeing as many patients for well visits as people opted

“I appreciate all you guys do for us and others in the community.”

to stay home instead during the pandemic. Amy ran out of unemployment benefits and was waiting on a return-to-work date at the time that we spoke to her.

“My husband is carrying the weight,” Amy says.

The couple has a son, 8-year-old William, who is on the Autism spectrum. Sensitivity to texture, taste and smell is often difficult for people with Autism, so Amy tries to choose food that is both healthy and palatable for her son.

William does like many fruits, but Amy says “we can’t typically afford fresh fruits and vegetables. Sometimes we don’t have enough

of the right foods to feed our son and ourselves to be healthy.”

Thanks to your generous donations, the couple can visit the food pantry at First United Methodist Church in Lawrence, a partner agency of Harvesters, where fresh produce is abundant.

“I just appreciate all you guys do for us and others in the community,” Amy says.

Thank you for helping fill tables this holiday season and throughout the year. Your generosity is building a healthier, happier community for us all.

PASS IT ON!

Share this newsletter with a friend so, like you, they can join us in feeding hungry people today and working to end hunger tomorrow! Every dollar donated helps Harvesters provide food to the people who need it now. Should disaster relief donations exceed what is required, funds will be used to fight hunger beyond the pandemic.



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