

# LOCAL HARVEST



HOLIDAY  
2022





## DEAR FRIEND

As I reflect on the first six months in my role as CEO of Harvesters, I want to pause and say *thank you* for your incredible partnership with this thriving organization.

Your support made this time of transition seamless and ensured we could not only continue providing nutritious food across our communities, but also increase our services in areas of greatest need.

Over the past year, we've gone from a health crisis to an economic crisis and the need for nutritious food remains higher than it was before the start of the pandemic.

In response, Harvesters has added 42 new partner agencies to help meet the need. But at the same time, the cost of acquiring and distributing food to all parts of our service area has increased. The same high food prices you see at the grocery store are affecting Harvesters, too.

It's only through your generosity that we are able to keep up with the need. For example, with your help, we were able to serve 9,900 children last year through the BackSnack Program. Flip to page 8 of this edition of Local Harvest to hear directly from just one of the many students who benefit from this vital program.

You can also read more highlights from the many triumphs you've made possible this year on pages 4-5.

I'm so grateful for your partnership with Harvesters to make sure nutritious food is available for every neighbor, every day. I look forward to partnering with you in 2023 to build an even stronger, healthier community for us all.

Gratefully,



*Stephen*  
Stephen Davis  
President & CEO



Make a big difference every day of the year with your monthly donation. Check out [www.harvesters.org/harvest365](http://www.harvesters.org/harvest365).

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## FAMILY PAYS YOUR GENEROSITY FORWARD

When Kim's job as an early childhood educator was suspended during the pandemic lockdown, the family relied on Harvesters, picking up groceries for themselves and their neighbors. Now, they are paying that kindness forward.

"If you have the time, skills, and ability, I think it just makes sense to give back, and serve, and be helpful to the community," says Kim, mother of two children, Violet Noel, 11, and Teddy, 13.

Over summer break, Kim says the children created a "bucket list" of summer activities. One of the items on their list: community project. Kim encouraged her kids to volunteer at Harvesters to help distribute food in the school district where the kids are enrolled.

"By volunteering in our own community, we saw teachers and families we knew," she says. "It got the kids excited about volunteering."

Despite feeling the pinch at the grocery store due to recent high inflation, Kim and her husband are back on their feet financially. But the parents still want to emphasize the value of experience over material goods.

Before the start of the pandemic, Kim celebrated her birthday with a party at Harvesters' distribution warehouse, with guests



Kim with daughter Violet Noel, 11, and son Teddy, 13.

volunteering at the event. Now, the children have taken mom's cue and have started asking for canned goods to donate to Harvesters in lieu of gifts at their own birthday parties.

Thank you for giving so generously to help our neighbors get back on their feet — and inspiring a never-ending chain of kindness across our communities!

*"It just makes sense to give back and serve and be helpful to the community."*

## ROBERT IS GRATEFUL FOR YOU

Robert was about to get off the bus to head home, just like any other day. That's when your generosity surprised him and provided him and his family with needed food, at just the right time.

"I just got off the bus and saw this," Robert says of Harvesters' monthly Mobile Pantry Pop-Up at 31st and Troost. "I know it will be helpful."

Robert is the proud father of two teenage girls. He previously worked in a warehouse, but he's unemployed right now and looking for a new job to help support his family.

That's why the food he's taking home will come in especially handy. As he talks, he's gathering up rice, beans, cans of tuna and bottled water, "just some things to help us get by."

"It helps bring more food in the home and helps us out on the bills and things like that," he says.

Robert is also a proud uncle and spends his spare time helping his brother care for his new twin babies. He makes his selections quickly so he can get to his brother's home to help for the rest of the day.

Thank you for joining Harvesters to make Mobile Pop-Up Pantries like this one possible, and for meeting our neighbors in every part of our communities to make sure healthy food is accessible for everyone.



Robert pauses to share a smile of appreciation for your generosity.

*"It helps bring more food in the home."*

### PASS IT ON!

Share this newsletter with a friend so, like you, they can join us in our mission to mobilize the power of our community to create equitable access to nutritious food and address the root causes and impact of hunger. Every dollar donated helps Harvesters provide food to the people who need it now.

## LENORA MAKES VOLUNTEERISM HER HOBBY

"If you are going to be involved, give it the best you have."

This is a philosophy that Lenora has embodied since she first began volunteering with Harvesters a couple of years ago — and a mantra for her career and personal life as well.

Lenora retired in 2019 after a 40-year career as a librarian. Volunteerism has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember, but since her retirement, she dedicates even more time to help make a difference in her community.

"I enjoy meeting a lot of people," she says. "It has just been fun."

Lenora regularly helps pack boxes at Harvesters and encourages her friends to join her when possible. She says she also wants to challenge herself to volunteer for more Harvesters community events such as Festival.

But Lenora's ultimate goal is to keep volunteering as long as she is physically and mentally capable — she considers volunteer service both her passion and her hobby.

"No one should have to be hungry," Lenora says.

Thank you, Lenora, for generously giving your time and advocating for our community's better health. Your passion is an inspiration for us all.

*"No one should have to be hungry."*



Lenora poses with Harvesters' mascot, 'Harvey,' at the Downtown Topeka Touch a Truck 2022.

GIVE TIME



Join Harvesters in 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!



# FISCAL YEAR 2022 YEAR IN REVIEW

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

## You Helped Harvesters Provide **61,326,143 Meals** by:



Holding food drives that provided **2,950,648 meals**



Volunteering a combined total of **94,178 hours of service**, which equates to 45 full-time employees. That's an **increase of 20,000 hours** from FY21.



Generous financial donations enabled the purchase of over **240 truckloads of food**, at a cost of approximately \$665,000 each month.



Advocating in support of hunger relief

HARVESTERS' NETWORK PROVIDES FOOD TO MORE THAN 226,000 PEOPLE EVERY MONTH IN OUR 26-COUNTY REGION.

## Other Notable Achievements:

- 28% (19,369,703 pounds) of total food distributed was fresh produce.
- 9,900 children were fed through the BackSnack Program for the 2021-2022 school year.
- The school pantry program significantly grew this school year, from 17 schools participating in 2020-2021 to 34 in 2021-2022. A total of 940,999 pounds of food distributed equaling 784,166 meals through several distribution models. The program reached over 6,000 households.
- Harvesters acquired more than 68,000 pounds of halal chicken, naan bread and other culturally relevant foods for Afghan evacuees who resettled in our region and worked with partner organizations to distribute it.
- In addition to the existing targeted bus-stop food distribution at 31st & Troost, we deepened the relationship with RideKC, adding SNAP Outreach at the East Village Transit Center, and engaged in deeper planning for new efforts in the future.
- We also added a mobile healthcare partner, Care Beyond the Boulevard, bringing both healthcare and food to neighbors who do not have good access to either.
- Utilizing social referral platforms, UniteUs & FindHelp, Harvesters worked with Swope Health Services and Saint Luke's Health System to incorporate referrals for hunger relief into their clinical workflow and provide more effective and transparent support for patients.
- 3,196 SNAP applications were submitted as a result of Harvesters' SNAP outreach efforts in Missouri and Kansas. This translates to an estimated \$8,259,250 in SNAP benefits and \$12,719,080 in estimated economic impact.

Jayla shares a big smile of thanks for the food she receives through Harvesters' BackSnack program.



## YOU HELP JAYLA STAY HAPPY AND HEALTHY



"I'm actually really happy because I'm at a school that gives me food."

Jayla, 11, has one older brother and two younger sisters. She's a student at Turner Elementary School where she's a recipient of Harvesters' BackSnack program.

The program provides a weekly backpack filled with nutritious, child-friendly food for schoolchildren at elementary and some middle schools to take home over the weekend.

Jayla says her mom was relieved when Jayla came home with her first bag of food through the program.

"It's pretty hard for my mom to go to the store because she has a low

*"Thank you guys for giving us some good food for us to have for the weekend."*

budget," Jayla says. "I'm actually really happy that I get a food bag because I can feed my sisters if they want some."

Some of Jayla and her sisters' favorite items from the bags are the cereal, goldfish crackers and water.

BackSnack is a partnership between Harvesters, a participating school and a local community partner. Harvesters provides the food and the backpacks, and local community partners facilitate picking up the BackSnack food

kits and distributing them to the schools.

School principals and/or counselors help determine which children receive BackSnacks at each school.

"I'm actually thankful you guys give us food here," Jayla says to donors like you.

Thank you for helping make sure every child has nutritious food to fuel each day. Your generosity is building a healthier, happier community for us all.



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