



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contacts:

Elizabeth Cooper, Second Harvest Heartland 651-209-7913, ecooper@2harvest.org

Briana Gruenewald, Belmont Partners, 612-255-1108, briana@bellmontpartners.com

Second Harvest Heartland Announces Healthy Foods Policy

Minnesota food bank prioritizing lean meats, dairy, produce donations; moving away from candy, soda

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (April 18, 2019)— [Second Harvest Heartland](#) is making a commitment to ensure Minnesotans experiencing hunger have easier access to healthy foods. The Minnesota-based food bank has set an ambitious goal to double the amount of lean protein it delivers and ensure year-round access to milk by 2023. The plan also includes an increase in the amount of fruits and vegetables it delivers, as well as removing candy and soda from its shelves.

Lean meats, dairy products, and fresh fruit and vegetables are expensive and hard to come by for too many members of our community. In contrast, candy and soda are readily available and low cost to purchase. By eliminating candy and soda from its shelves, Second Harvest Heartland will be able to make room for more than 830,000 additional harder-to-find, protein-filled meals each year.

Last month, Second Harvest Heartland kicked off renovation on its new hunger-relief campus in Brooklyn Park. The new facility – set to open in 2020 – moves the food bank from 11,300 square feet of its current temperature-controlled space to 29,300 square feet, enabling it to store and provide more fresh, healthier foods.

While Second Harvest Heartland will no longer accept donations of candy or soda, there may still be some donated by retail partners through the Retail Food Rescue program—honoring a longstanding partnership with retailers that makes it possible for food banks and pantries to access millions of pounds of produce, dairy, meat and other high-value client favorites.

Diet-related chronic disease is common among food shelf clients, and it is six times higher than in the general population. For many people, their main or only source of nutritious food is their local food shelf. In fact, more than 50% of clients served by Second Harvest Heartland food shelf partners obtain more than half their food – including 60% of their produce – from a food shelf.

“Everybody deserves access to healthy, nutrient-rich food,” says Thierry Ibri, Second Harvest Heartland chief operations and program officer. “This new healthy foods policy will help us do our part to contribute to a healthier community.”

Second Harvest Heartland is part of a growing group of food banks and meal program partners that are devoting their sourcing and distribution efforts to more nutritious food. The Minnesota food bank, along with key agency and program partners, has been making steady changes over the years to ensure it is delivering nourishment, not just food. Just a few years ago, 23% of the food Second Harvest Heartland delivered was fresh; now it’s



nearly 60%. Sourcing innovations and improvements will allow the food bank to deliver more fresh produce year-round, more lean protein than ever before and more high-demand items like milk consistently.

In 2018, Second Harvest Heartland and its vast network of agency partners distributed 8.43 million pounds of 20 unique types of produce from 29 different Minnesota growers.

###

About Second Harvest Heartland

Second Harvest Heartland is one of the largest, most efficient and most innovative hunger relief organizations in the nation. In close partnership with nearly 1,000 food shelves, food pantries and other meal programs, Second Harvest Heartland helps the one in 11 people in Minnesota and western Wisconsin who face hunger every day. On average, 74% of food our partner agencies distribute comes from Second Harvest Heartland. In 2018, Second Harvest Heartland helped provide a record 89 million meals to more than a half million people. We will continue to leverage our unique position in the emergency food chain to advocate, educate and provide food until everyone in our service area has what they need to thrive. For more information, visit 2harvest.org or call 651.484.5117.



1140 Gervais Ave. • St. Paul, MN 55109 • 651.484.5117 • 2harvest.org