

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patty Gibbs
Patty Gibbs & Company PR
651.653.7302
patty@pattygibbscompany.com

Missing: 125 Million Meals for Low-Income Minnesotans

Second Harvest Heartland report uncovers staggering shortfall in meals needed to feed Minnesota's hungry; Target donates 600,000 pounds of food to start filling the gap

SAINT PAUL, Minn.—(March 2, 2009)—Second Harvest Heartland, the Upper Midwest's leading voice on hunger relief, today announced that low-income Minnesotans are missing 125 million meals every year—the equivalent of those in need going to bed without dinner two weeks out of every month. The staggering figure was released as part of the organization's "Missing Meals" report, a collection of secondary data that for the first time pinpoints exactly how many meals Minnesotans in need are missing each year.

"We are heartbroken by the findings we uncovered with our Missing Meals report," said Rob Zeaske, executive director of Second Harvest Heartland. "Despite our best efforts and the best efforts of those who have joined in the fight to end hunger, an unprecedented number of Minnesotans are missing an unprecedented number of meals. Truthfully, the number is far larger than we could have possibly imagined."

The Missing Meals data is available on a county-by-county basis for each of Minnesota's 87 counties. Among the seven counties in the metro area, low-income residents of Carver County are missing the most meals annually at 1.09 million (14.27 percent). The other six metro counties breakout as follows: Anoka—3.90 million meals missed (10.24 percent); Dakota—4.53 million meals missed (11.72 percent); Hennepin—13.6 million meals missed (6.12 percent); Ramsey—13.28 million meals missed (10.45 percent); Scott—908,000 meals missed (9.54 percent); Washington—2.28 million meals missed (12.24 percent).

While many of the numbers are well above expectations, Zeaske added that he is encouraged by data in the report that indicates low-income Minnesotans provide for 61 percent of their own meals. The data also shows that they rely on public assistance programs for 22 percent of their meals and on non-profits like Second Harvest Heartland for five percent of their meals, leaving 12 percent of their food needs unmet.

- more -

Second Harvest Releases Missing Meals Report—Page 2

“The breakdown of how Minnesotans in need are getting their food is both encouraging and disappointing,” said Zeaske. “We are very pleased to see that low-income Minnesotans are working so hard to provide for more than half of the meals they need. But clearly there is work to be done to improve our own ability to get more food into the hands of the hungry and to promote greater participation in existing government programs.”

Moving forward, in an effort to overcome the 125-million meal shortfall, Second Harvest Heartland plans to double its capacity by 2017 from its current distribution of more than 40 million pounds of food annually to 80 million pounds. In addition, it is already in the process of partnering with community food shelves to ensure they are able to handle the increase in food and quickly get it into the hands of those who need it. And the organization is enhancing its advocacy efforts to ensure those eligible for government assistance receive it.

After announcing the meals shortfall at a news conference at its Maplewood distribution center, Second Harvest Heartland accepted one of its largest single corporate food donations from Target, which donated 600,000 pounds of non-perishable food items to the food bank in support of Minnesota FoodShare’s March Campaign. The March Campaign is an annual food and funds drive that last year raised nine million pounds and dollars to feed Minnesotans in need.

The Target donation is part of the company’s continuing involvement in hunger relief through its national partnership with Second Harvest Heartland’s parent organization, Feeding America. In 2008, Target donated more than 16 million pounds of food to the organization, providing meals to those in need, and Target will continue its support in 2009.

“Target is honored to step forward with this gift of food that we know is needed today more than ever,” said Laysha Ward, president, community relations, Target. “It is our hope that our commitment to hunger relief nationwide and our gift to Second Harvest Heartland in support of the March Campaign will serve not only to help to start filling the gap in meals in Minnesota but also to encourage other corporations and individuals alike to do whatever they can to ensure that no one in Minnesota goes to bed hungry.”

In addition to its donation of food items, Target Volunteers spent the afternoon helping Second Harvest Heartland pack and ship food to area food shelves.

“With this donation, Target is setting a clear example of how we can work together to meet the needs of our hungry neighbors,” said Zeaske. “We extend our sincere and deep gratitude to our friends at Target as we humbly accept its generous gift on behalf of all those in Minnesota who struggle to put food on their tables.”

- more -

Second Harvest Heartland's Missing Meals report was released in partnership with the University of Minnesota's Food Industry Center, which validated the findings. The complete report can be found at www.missingmeals.org.

About Target Corporation

Minneapolis-based Target Corporation (NYSE:TGT) serves guests at more than 1,675 stores nationwide and at Target.com. Target is committed to providing a fun and convenient shopping experience with access to unique and highly differentiated products at affordable prices. Since 1946, the corporation has given 5 percent of its income through community grants and programs like Take Charge of Education. Today, that giving equals more than \$3 million a week. To learn more, visit www.target.com.

About Minnesota FoodShare's March Campaign

Minnesota FoodShare is a program of the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, co-sponsored by the MN Rabbinical Association, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis, Jewish Community Relations Council of MN and the Dakotas, MN Catholic Conference, MN Council of Churches, and the St. Paul Area Council of Churches. To learn more, visit www.gmcc.org/foodshare.

About Second Harvest Heartland

Second Harvest Heartland is the Upper Midwest's largest hunger-relief organization, with a mission of ending hunger through community partnerships. 41 million pounds of grocery products were distributed last year to hungry seniors, families and children through more than 1,000 non-profit member agencies and programs, including food shelves, soup kitchens, shelters, senior centers, faith-based organizations, and children's after-school programs serving 59 counties in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. For each \$1 donated, Second Harvest Heartland can distribute more than \$9 worth of grocery products for those in need. For further information, visit www.2harvest.org or call 651.484.5117.

###