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Contact: Mary Sutherland
651.209.7913
msutherland@2harvest.org

Second Harvest Heartland Announces 2016 Hunger Hero Awards

Hunger Hero Awards publicly recognizes six outstanding charitable partners for their roles in providing for hungry neighbors in the heartland

SAINT PAUL, Minn. (March 24, 2016)—Second Harvest Heartland, a member of Feeding America and one of the nation’s largest food banks, is pleased to announce the recipients of its seventh annual Hunger Hero Awards, an award created to honor and recognize organizational partners who make a compassionate and transformational impact on those who are hungry in the heartland.

No one should have to worry about where their next meal comes from, yet 1 in 10 people in Minnesota and western Wisconsin experience the stress of hunger on any given day. As the demand for emergency food increases, so, too, does the generosity of many of Second Harvest Heartland’s charitable partners, six of whom have demonstrated extraordinary leadership in meeting the unprecedented demand for food. It is these six partners that Second Harvest Heartland honors this year with its Hunger Hero Award, a seal of appreciation designed to publicly acknowledge those who contributed the most by way of food, funds, hours, ideas, awareness and more.

“By providing donations of food, volunteer hours, financial support, innovation, and helping build awareness of the need, these partners are helping us to achieve our mission—to end hunger through community partnerships,” said Second Harvest Heartland CEO, Rob Zeaske. “Making a difference to hungry neighbors in the communities we serve is achieved through the support from our generous partners. We are proud to recognize this year’s Hunger Heroes for their leadership and are honored to be the recipients of such tremendous support.”

Hunger Heroes are recognized in six categories, each of which is critical to Second Harvest Heartland’s work and all of which must work in tandem to collectively achieve Second Harvest Heartland’s goal. This year’s award recipients and categories include:

2016 Hunger Hero Volunteer Award: Cargill

Cargill provides tremendous support to Second Harvest Heartland’s volunteer program by driving employee engagement—increasing employee volunteer hours by 40 percent in 2015. Cargill retirees are also committed to hunger relief, and contributed more than 1,600 volunteer hours last year. In addition to volunteer hours, Cargill contributes to our exceptional volunteer experience through their sponsorship of the Cargill Community Room at our Golden Valley volunteer center.

2016 Hunger Hero Awareness Award: CUB

CUB has been a long-standing partner to Second Harvest Heartland through both Retail Food Rescue, donating millions of pounds of food each year, and financial support. This past year, CUB retooled its annual customer round-up campaign to create “CUB Cares,” an innovative collaboration that brought in their partnership with Gopher Sports, key food vendor sponsors, media partners and more to help raise increased funds and awareness of the issue of hunger. CUB created a very robust promotional campaign incorporating former Gophers football coach, Jerry Kill, and mascot Goldy Gopher to encourage CUB customers and our community to round up their purchases at checkout. Their multi-faceted marketing and promotional campaign drove more than \$90,000 in donations in the first year!

2016 Hunger Hero Food Award: GNP Company

GNP Company, makers of the Gold'n Plump and Just BARE chicken brands, has generously supported Second Harvest Heartland for the past 12 years, and was our largest food donor in 2015. As the demand for food assistance continues to grow in our communities, so does the need for high-quality protein to provide a balanced diet for those in need. GNP Company's charitable contributions of premium chicken products have made a difference. We appreciate their partnership in our hunger relief efforts, as well as their continued dedication to healthy food, families and farms.

2016 Hunger Hero Innovation Award: Hennepin County Medical Center

Hennepin County Medical Center (HCMC) has partnered with Second Harvest Heartland through the HCMC Food Shelf and Summer Food Service Program. In 2015, HCMC expanded its hunger relief efforts in a new, innovative way by building an order for food assistance into their electronic medical records. The referral can be used by any HCMC provider to send names and contact information of food insecure patients to the Second Harvest Heartland SNAP Outreach team. In the first year of this pilot, HCMC providers generated more than 1,000 patient food referrals to Second Harvest Heartland, where food insecure patients received assistance in completing SNAP applications and information of other ways to access healthy food in their communities.

2016 Hunger Hero Retail Food Rescue Award: Kowalski's Markets

Kowalski's Markets have helped pave the way for transforming hunger relief in our region, as Second Harvest Heartland's pioneer Retail Food Rescue partner. Kowalski's early engagement and support for expanding donations to include perishable departments led to revolutionizing retail donation practices. Today all Second Harvest Heartland grocery retail donors contribute wholesome perishable products through the Food Rescue program. Kowalski's longtime support continues to grow while the need for fresh, healthy food continues to rise. In 2015, Kowalski's stores achieved the largest percentage increase in donations from the previous year by engaging their team members to donate all eligible fresh items through the Retail Food Rescue program.

2016 Hunger Hero Financial Award: Medtronic

Medtronic had the largest growth in financial donations to Second Harvest Heartland this past year through engaging their employees in giving back and matching these donations. It is Medtronic's flexibility that allows its employees to give to organizations they feel passionate about, that helps us at Second Harvest Heartland ensure more nutritious foods are on the plates of our hungry neighbors.

About Cargill

Cargill provides food, agriculture, financial and industrial products and services to the world. Together with farmers, customers, governments and communities, we help people thrive by applying our insights and 150 years of experience. We have 150,000 employees in 70 countries who are committed to feeding the world in a responsible way, reducing environmental impact and improving the communities where we live and work. For more information, visit Cargill.com and our News Center.

About CUB

CUB, based in Stillwater, Minn., was established in 1968 as one of the nation's first discount grocery stores. The organization was purchased in 1980 by SUPERVALU and currently operates 79 stores in Minnesota and Illinois that offer customers fresh produce, a wide selection, and food expertise throughout the stores to meet their everyday grocery needs. As the hometown grocer for over 47 years, CUB has made it a priority to be a good corporate citizen by helping to create healthy and thriving communities that enhance the quality of life for its customers, employees, and neighbors. For company news and information, follow us on Twitter at @CubFoods and Facebook at www.facebook.com/Cub, or visit our website at www.Cub.com.

About GNP Company

GNP Company, based in St. Cloud, MN, is a provider of premium branded and custom chicken products to retail, deli and foodservice customers nationally. Founded by E.M. Helgeson in 1926 and purchased in 2013 by Maschhoff Family Foods, GNP Company remains family-owned. It distributes products under the Just BARE® and Gold'n Plump® brand names. Together, the company's more than 1,700 team members and 360 family farm partners in Minnesota and Wisconsin provide enough chicken for about 4 million consumers annually. For more information about the company and its mission of "dedicated to healthy food, families and farms," visit www.GNPCompany.com.

About Hennepin County Medical Center

Hennepin County Medical Center is a nationally recognized Level I Adult Trauma Center and Level 1 Pediatric Trauma Center with the largest emergency department in Minnesota. The comprehensive academic medical center and public teaching hospital includes a 472-bed acute care hospital as well as primary care and specialty clinics located in downtown Minneapolis its surrounding communities. For more information, go to www.hcmc.org.

About Kowalski's Markets

Kowalski's Markets is a local family owned and operated business with 10 locations throughout the Twin Cities. For over 30 years, Kowalski's has been providing our community with the freshest, highest quality foods with an emphasis on personal service. Their markets offer a wide assortment of specialty and gourmet products along with local, organic, natural and healthful foods. Kowalski's stores also feature the best selection of local and organic produce, a fully all-natural meat department, a full-service deli (including fresh handmade salads, sandwiches, hot entrées, grab-and-go dinner options and a gourmet soup and salad bar), artisan breads baked fresh daily, gift and floral departments, and the Twin Cities' best selection of specialty and imported cheeses.

About Medtronic

Medtronic plc (www.medtronic.com) is the global leader in medical technology – alleviating pain, restoring health and extending life for millions of people around the world. Medtronic Philanthropy (MedtronicPhilanthropy.org) focuses on expanding access to quality chronic disease care among underserved populations worldwide, in addition to supporting health initiatives in communities where Medtronic employees live and give.

About Second Harvest Heartland

Second Harvest Heartland is one of the nation's largest, most efficient and most innovative food banks. In 2015, our work provided more than 77 million meals to nearly 1,000 food shelves, pantries and other partner programs serving 59 counties in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. Second Harvest Heartland helps relieve hunger not only by sourcing, warehousing and distributing food, but through data-driven thought leadership and community partnerships that help improve the region's larger hunger relief system. For more information, visit 2harvest.org or call 651.484.5117.

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