Like most of us, Aaron Crawford hadn’t heard of COVID-19 in the early months of 2020. He was too busy looking for work following a recent layoff. As the calendar turned to mid-March, COVID hit our community—and the Crawford household—with the force of a late-season blizzard. Aaron, a Navy veteran and father, turned his attention to the full-time care of his two young sons who were attending school from home. His wife, Sheyla, continued her essential work at a childcare program.

Just as the family was adapting to a new normal, Sheyla’s hours were cut and COVID diagnoses hit the household, bringing expensive ER visits and weeks of unpaid sick leave. The kids were eating more at home—missing school meals—just as the grocery budget was shrinking. With winter coming, hope was fading for the Crawfords.

A brochure at an Apple Valley public library pointed the Crawfords to 360 Communities, a south-metro community organization offering the family monthly fresh food boxes from Second Harvest Heartland. The team at 360 Communities also helped with a SNAP application just in time. The fridge was full again and precious financial resources were protected to cover urgent expenses like rent payments and clothes for the kids. Aaron and Sheyla felt a moment of stability. They could do this.

Come late fall the boys were back in school and Aaron had secured two part-time jobs. By day, he’s a maintenance worker at a long-term care facility. By night, he’s outside for two to three hours moving freight for UPS (and wishing he could have afforded the subzero Carhartts rather than the $100 pair). While his new jobs pay 42% less per hour than his previous work, he’s grateful that they will soon provide health insurance benefits for the entire family. He keeps his focus there and on the cybersecurity courses he’s just enrolled in.

After the most trying year they can remember, Aaron and Sheyla have the peace of mind that comes with food security. “When you’ve got food in the fridge … that just makes all the difference. You feel like you’re ready for what’s ahead. You’ve at least got that. And that’s huge,” said Aaron.

History will remember 2020 as the year of the pandemic, with all its human and economic tolls. The Crawford family story is one of resourcefulness and resilience in the face of these tough times. They met the moment, accepted help when they needed it and are set up for better things to come.

Our partnerships with organizations like 360 Communities enable their support of clients and community.

Our Annual Report to the Community shares stories of the ways our teams, partners and communities adapted to meet the many challenges and opportunities 2020 presented. Read the full report: 2harvest.org/community-report.

We are nowhere near done and we are ready to do more work, more equitably, to fight hunger in the years ahead.
THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR, our neighbors have needed more help staying fed and well than ever before. Getting food to people safely and in new ways was an around-the-clock effort, requiring us to reinvent our service model again and again. We were honored to do it, and to bring urgency to our work every day because our scale and efficiency makes us a critical player in keeping food moving when times get tough.

Meeting the Moment
Partner-powered adaptation and innovation in remarkable times

It was already clear by early March of 2020: our sourcing and operations teams could see that the pandemic was taking hold. They worked around tightening supply chains and heard from more people worried about their next meal. Knowing that people could no longer safely come indoors to shop at food shelves, organizing new curbside-to-trunk emergency grocery pop-ups was the order of the day. Meanwhile, grocery stores—a critical source of food donations for the hunger-relief network—were beginning a similar high-stakes operational shift to keep staples on shelves and ensure staff and shopper safety. Through it all, Mike Stigers knew one thing for sure: the Cub Foods CEO and his team would practice servant leadership and do everything they could to take care of their customers and their communities. One of his team’s first calls was to Second Harvest Heartland, to see how Cub Foods could help.

Last year we distributed 259,538 emergency food boxes, enabling quick, contactless curbside delivery. While representing only 3.5% of our distributed pounds last year, they’ve kept Gaylon Moody breathing a bit easier. He’s president of the Le Sueur Food Shelf, an hour southwest of the Twin Cities, where he saw his volunteer workforce shrink as the pandemic took hold. Meanwhile more and more neighbors were calling about food assistance, including many first-time visitors asking for help staying safe and fed.

“Overnight, folks who found themselves suddenly unemployed were showing up. Now they’re regulars,” Gaylon explained. “We sure are missing the connection that our food shelf creates for community members and visitors, but while COVID keeps our operations contactless, we’re keeping people fed. We’re meeting them where they’re at until we can meet again in person. That’s important.”

Our teams take pride in these efforts and feel called to offer stability when it’s needed most. One of our drivers, jumping into action on an early Saturday morning to get needed baby formula out to the community, said, “Everyone wants to help. We know it’s how we keep our town strong, it’s just that sometimes the troubles of the world seem so overwhelming, we think we can’t make a dent in them, but we can.” He’s right.

Read the whole story of our ongoing pandemic response: 2harvest.org/COVID-response.

A longstanding partner and our largest source of rescued food last year at 11.3 million pounds, Cub Foods powered our emergency food deliveries. Many farmers and retailers followed suit. The team at Fresha, in Morris, Minnesota, is a great example. They were searching for buyers for their delicious carrots that were just a little too imperfect in their appearance for grocery store shelves. A few calls to Second Harvest Heartland’s sourcing team led to weekly deliveries of three-pound bags of carrots, many of which have since been provided to families through emergency grocery pop-ups. To date, Fresha has provided 277,000 of these three-pound bags.

With the food ready to go, our volunteers—socially distanced, masked and limited in numbers per shift—could get to work sorting and packing boxes containing 10 to 12 meals each. Volunteer Dave Windsperger has logged 129 shifts in our new Brooklyn Park Volunteer Center since the beginning of the pandemic. On one drive to his shift last summer, he slowed as he saw cars backed up, cautious and expecting an accident. Instead, he realized the cars were queued up to receive food distributions from a neighborhood church. It choked Dave up, and reinforced why he’s been called to serve (five days a week) packing emergency food boxes.

Many new approaches to hunger-relief were developed this year, like the 219 emergency grocery pop-up distributions we organized throughout the state to increase connection with food shelves and other partners.

A volunteer loads food into a trunk at an emergency grocery pop-up distribution, hosted by the Sanneh Foundation.
By Monday morning of June 1, amid sustained unrest, we had distributed a pallet of formula, nine truckloads of emergency food boxes and fresh produce, nearly sound essentials and 1,500 hot meals from our Minnesota Central Kitchen initiative partners.

Our team of 19 drivers made those deliveries possible. Driver Juan Morales joined Second Harvest Heartland just days before the pandemic took hold. Juan’s daily routes take him to Willmar, Ivanhoe, Mankato and spots in-between. Spots, following the uprisings, like the Kmart parking lot on Lake Street. “In the days following the unrest, you’d arrive at an address, but it didn’t seem right. You’d call the customer from the random parking lot, and there they’d show up.” Sometimes it was canopies or tents, alleyways, parks and parking lots. Whatever the inventory, wherever the drop location, Juan and the team delivered.

We now work to consistently stock essentials like diapers, formula and personal hygiene products. And we’ve learned how to listen to what’s needed and dispatch it safely to the right hand when it’s needed most. We hope we’re overprepared. What we know for sure is that no level of change or hardship should leave us hungry where it’s needed most. We work all week. You come home and all you have to do is put it in the oven. It helps to change the world. It helps to bring families together. It helps to provide nourishment. It helps to support children in our system. It helps to provide peace of mind. It helps to provide the opportunity to live and thrive in our communities. It helps to provide the opportunity to live and thrive in our communities. It helps to provide the opportunity to live and thrive in our communities. It helps to provide the opportunity to live and thrive in our communities.

For Taylor, a working mom of four young kids enrolled in our in-school meal sites, “Having a prepared meal means a lot. You work all week. You come home all say you have to do is put it in the oven. It helps a lot. Not only financially, but it helps you to a little more extra time.”

Learn more about what it means to have dinner ready: 2harvest.org/Hunger-divide.

In its first nine months, Minnesota Central Kitchen’s revolving team of 15 kitchen sites prepared more than one million meals, available for free to anyone at more than 50 meal sites throughout the Twin Cities metro. Three of those meal pickup sites were Roseville Area Schools elementary schools elementary schools where culturally connected, family-sized meals were made to accompany student meals thanks to a Minnesota Department of Education grant and Second Harvest Heartland volunteers.

For Taylor, a working mom of young kids enrolled at one of the elementary school meal sites, “Having a prepared meal means a lot. You work all week. You come home all say you have to do is put it in the oven. It helps a lot. Not only financially, but it helps you to a little more extra time.”

Learn more about what it means to have dinner ready: 2harvest.org/Hunger-divide.
We saw a historic rise in hunger in 2020, leading to a 30 percent increase in demand for food just as it became more expensive and harder to find. The community’s generosity allowed us to meet the moment, adapting to fight hunger through and beyond the pandemic and to prepare for future challenges.

We’re proud to announce the creation of an endowment to ensure resources are available when hunger spikes, to strengthen the hunger-relief network, to deliver food more equitably and to prepare for crises in the future.

Learn more: 2harvest.org/endowment.

**2020 Financial Statement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEALS PROVIDED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>105 million meals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Prepared for a Hunger-Fighting Future**

We asked for help fighting the COVID-era hunger surge and the community showed up in a big way, powering our crisis response and building an investment in a hunger-free future.

We’re proud to announce the creation of an endowment to ensure resources are available when hunger spikes, to strengthen the hunger-relief network, to deliver food more equitably and to prepare for crises in the future.

Learn more: 2harvest.org/endowment.

**Revenue Sources**

- **63%** Contributions
- **28%** Food Donations in Kind
- **6%** Program Services
- **3%** Government Contracts
- **0%** Off Expenses

More than 500 stores donated a combined 20.5 million pounds of food through our Retail Food Rescue program.

**Calculation of 95% includes combined value of cash and in-kind expenses.**
We've always known that the community is only as stable as its emergency response system is strong, but COVID has reminded us that access to food is the bedrock of braving any crisis. COVID has shown us that if people can't fill their fridges, they can't stay well or do their part to help their communities respond and recover.

With this knowledge comes a keen sense of responsibility, so we've set aside resources to prepare for crises to come, ensuring that whatever challenges come our way, food will be available to help us power through. Our new endowment will safeguard—and grow—our hunger response for good times and bad to come.

Please stick with us and keep showing up. It's hard work, and it'll take us all, but it's urgent. Together, we're ready, we're set and we're going.

In gratitude,
Allison O'Toole,
CEO
Second Harvest Heartland
We couldn’t do this work without the generous contributions from our donors. Thank you.