The mission of Northwest Harvest is to provide nutritious food to hungry people statewide in a manner that respects their dignity, while fighting to eliminate hunger.

**A Small Taste of Hunger’s Challenge**

How well can a person eat on the $4 a day budget given by the SNAP (food stamp) program? For Leanne Brown, author of *Good and Cheap*, the answer is surprisingly well.

This seemingly insurmountable challenge is not one of resources, Brown found, but of kitchen skills. If an adequately equipped kitchen is available, learning how to use it well can make all the difference. In her 152-recipe book *Good and Cheap*, Brown provides recipes that maximize every ingredient while providing skills for economical cooking and shopping.

Inspired by the text and sensing a new challenge in the $4 budget, a long-time contributor to our blog, Michael Constantine, set out to change his own eating habits. Once reliant on take-out meals and quick dinners, the book provided an opportunity to gain new cooking skills and change unhealthy habits.

Constantine is still working on his blog post, but has shared a number of updates along the way.

On his first *Good and Cheap* meal: “It may not be the most symmetrical or appetizing-looking picture of a pizza you’ll see, but here is my first crack at the ‘Potato Leek Pizza’ from the *Good and Cheap* cookbook. It was... not terrible! It got better with age. By which I mean that I had some of it for breakfast. So far, so good!”

By the second attempt at a recipe, a romantic meal was on the horizon: “I made the ‘Pasta with Eggplant and Tomato’ tonight. I have enough left over for lunch/dinner tomorrow. It was pretty okay. I would not be embarrassed to share it with somebody else.”

Reflects Michael, “I’m discovering how important basic kitchen skills can be for eating on a budget. I was able to make three meals with (basically) flour, a potato, and two leeks. I did not know that was possible.

“Also: I’m someone that generally has meat with every meal. This book is teaching me that you can have a perfectly enjoyable dinner without meat.”

At the 2015 Northwest Harvest Annual Conference, a free conference for more than 380 statewide partners, attendees were treated to a short lecture from Brown and a complimentary copy of her book. Many partners, including Ferndale Food Bank, later set out to distribute copies of the book with help from the author and publisher.

To learn more, consult your local bookstore or look up “*Good and Cheap* book” online.

**Champion Against Hunger Finds Good Company in Compassionate Community**

For decades, Mike Regis has committed himself to improving our community by feeding our friends and neighbors in need. This year, Northwest Harvest will celebrate two major milestones: Regis’ thirtieth anniversary as an employee of Northwest Harvest and the organization’s fiftieth anniversary.

We celebrate Mike Regis for his kindness, dedication, and years of hard work. When asked about his service, Regis responded: “It’s a privilege and a pleasure. I love the clients, and I love the people who volunteer and donate to Northwest Harvest. People who care about their community and want to make it better—these are my people.”

Mike Regis worked alongside several legendary figures of Northwest Harvest. Top: Mike with former director Mel Matteson circa 1985. Above: Mike in 2009, with former Northwest Harvest executive director Ruth Velozo, Mike’s mentor and close friend until her death late last year.

“As community and private garden donations have tapered off, Northwest Harvest produce has become a more important part of our produce offerings.”

—Hopelink Shoreline, King County
A few months ago, we celebrated the fifteenth year of Home Team Harvest, among the longest-lasting and most powerful of our many wonderful relationships. KING 5 television, U.S. Bank, and Safeway have helped to make November and December the most significant fundraising months at Northwest Harvest. They also help us to share our message of hope with the community, raising up the issue of hunger in our state and reminding participants that each of us can make a difference. A simultaneous drive, Home Town Harvest, was celebrated in Spokane, Yakima, and Tri-Cities. This partnership, and many others just like it, make our work possible.

To mark the fifteenth anniversary of our largest annual food and funds drive, KING 5 asked me to pen a short memo on the topic. I have shared it below to honor our relationship with KING 5, to toast another fifteen years, and to welcome and celebrate our many partnerships, old and new, around the state.

Resilience of Communities Keeps Fight to End Hunger Alive

A message from Chief Executive Officer Shelley Rotondo

Just a few weeks into my new job as Executive Director of Northwest Harvest, September 11th hit. Everywhere, people were stunned; in some ways, time seemed to stop. At Northwest Harvest, our phones ceased to ring. Food and money donations dwindled. Here in the Northwest, we were focused on one tragic event across the country. Just days after starting at Northwest Harvest, I didn’t know what to expect. One thing was clear to me: Our mission and service to our neighbors in need could not, and would not, stop. We still had long lines of people to feed.

KING 5 was covering the news and living the story constantly. As a company deeply rooted in the community, it was clear that KING 5 wanted to do something to lift the spirits of our community, help us heal, and find a way to have a positive impact. This thought—a deeply emotional reaction—was the impetus for Home Team Harvest. It was something we all needed. For me, Home Team Harvest and its reason for being is very personal.

To our delight and immense gratitude, Home Team Harvest has grown every year. In many ways, it has become our premiere event at Northwest Harvest. KING 5 has helped to connect us to our community in ways we could not do on our own. KING 5 and Home Team Harvest have shared the plight of our neighbors in need, lifted up the successes and trials, and told the stories we need to hear as a community. Many have been heartwarming, compelling, and insightful, sparking dialog and reflection. It has given the community a way to come together to make a difference; a way to engage our children in something bigger than themselves; a way to kick off the holiday season with a spirit of love, giving, and joy. And, of course, it really is a lot of fun and excitement. Equally important, the results are amazing. They have an impact that goes so far beyond what any one of us can do on our own. With Home Team Harvest, our community literally creates millions of meals in one day.

For this one day, it is all hands on deck at KING 5 and Northwest Harvest. As the sun sets, our teams set weary eyes on truckloads of food for our community and reflect. We never cease to be amazed by the outpouring of generosity from our community. We are reminded of this generosity for months to come, as we distribute what was raised to our neighbors in need. Every year, it brings the community together. And, for all of us at Northwest Harvest, it is critical—it makes so much of our important work possible.

My heartfelt thanks to KING 5 and everyone in our community.

"Continuing to see folks that are back to work but what the statistics do not show is that our clients still cannot cobble together adequate nutrition. Work is great but at lower wages and not full-time hours."

—Ferndale Food Bank, Whatcom County
Supporting Programs That Support People

The recession is over. But too many in our state are still struggling — even those working two or three jobs. And those who have struggled the most to find steady work will soon be suffering yet another setback.

The loss of food stamps means a deeper need for emergency food services. And federal work requirements for able-bodied adults without dependents (ABAWDs in federal lingo) went back into effect on January 1, limiting SNAP (food stamp) benefits when long-term unemployment has deepened the struggle to put sufficient amounts of food on their tables. ABAWDs must meet a work requirement (20 hours per week of paid work or another qualifying activity) or else they will receive only three months of SNAP benefits per 36-month time period, meaning those impacted will be facing a challenging new budget shortfall this month.

Fortunately, in areas of high unemployment, the USDA grants waivers of the work requirement. Unfortunately, residents of King, Snohomish, and parts of Pierce County do not qualify for these waivers.

This restriction is often considered one of SNAP’s harshest restrictions. It fails to account for individuals tirelessly seeking work but still unable to find a steady job. Temporary or part-time jobs may not provide a steady wage, plunging those on the edge into added uncertainty, instability, and need. Many veterans, pursuing jobs when they are no longer active duty, will struggle with this new limitation. So will many non-custodial parents who rely on food stamp support to feed their kids.

It is estimated that an incredible 41,000 to 65,000 people in Washington will be impacted.

The good news is that Northwest Harvest, DSHS, and other community organizations are working to reduce the number of people who will lose their benefits. Many are exempted, including anyone who is:

- Under 18 or over 50
- Living in a household with a child
- Pregnant
- Receiving disability benefits
- Receiving or applied for unemployment benefits
- Working (including in-kind services or self-employment) for 30 or more hours per week
- Participating in substance abuse treatment
- Certified by a doctor or social worker as being “unfit” to work
- Homeless and cannot find work because of this
- In high school or college half time
- Caring for an older or incapacitated adult
- Living in an area where there is a waiver (i.e., all areas except for King, Snohomish, and parts of Pierce Counties outside of Lakewood and Tacoma)

Those not exempt are guaranteed placement in a SNAP work training program, and DSHS is providing information on certified Workfare sites, that is, community organizations that can offer volunteer opportunities. Volunteering up to 16 hours per week at a certified Workfare site will count as work to maintain SNAP benefits.

Remarkably, Congress is expected to look at proposals to cut SNAP benefits further. Speaker Ryan’s 2015 budget blueprint calls for blockgranting the SNAP program. This proposal, if enacted, could result in the loss of SNAP benefits for millions nationally.

Interested in joining the movement to fight hunger in Washington? Learn more at northwestharvest.org/take-action.

Taking Action to Fight Hunger

Hunger Action Day 2016 was a great success! Northwest Harvest joined partners in Olympia on January 22, meeting with lawmakers to preserve and protect hunger relief programs in our state. Advocates new and old shared their voices with their representatives and learned a little more about how citizens can take action and make a difference in our state.

After a morning of training on the issues, talking points, and some advice on advocacy from Nancy Amidei (UW School of Social Work senior lecturer), advocates spread out, attending 98 appointments with legislators or their staff. Advocates spoke up for the need to support our legislative priorities, including expanding access to school breakfast for low-income children and increasing support for the Farm to School Program that helps Washington growers connect with schools and sell their products for use in school meals. We also talked about important anti-poverty issues that are closely tied to hunger, efforts to finish restoring the TANF cash grant which helps low-income families with children buy necessities not covered by food stamps, and bills that would prohibit discriminatory questions on housing applications about an applicant’s source of income and on job applications that ask about prior felony convictions. These last two bills create a space for conversation between landlords and tenants or potential employers and job applicants, which prevents them from being turned away at the very first stage of an application process.

We invite everyone to speak out on hunger issues at Hunger Action Day and throughout the year. Learn more at northwestharvest.org/take-action.
Growing Connections

Over the past year, the Growing Connections program has sought to engage new partners, increase efficiencies, and provide tools for the burgeoning farm-to-food bank (F2FB) movement.

As a service to the over 380 partner food banks, meal programs, and high-need schools affiliated with Northwest Harvest, Growing Connections fills another vital need in our community and around our state.

As Growing Connections turns one year old this spring, we invite you to check out what we’ve been up to in our first year. Take a look at our guide, Making the Healthy Choice the Easier Choice.

Are you interested in learning what food banks, community organizations and farmers are doing across the state? Browse through our Notes from the Field on the agency blog.

We hosted six workshops for eight counties in central Washington with participants ranging from food bank staff, farmers, and nutritionists to healthcare workers and more. We have also facilitated monthly conference calls to provide a space for food banks and invested community members to move F2FB efforts forward. As we move forward, we are focusing on three goals:

▪ To provide farm-to-food bank education and resources for our partners and their communities.

▪ To develop a program that encompasses the full farm to food bank system, from programming that brings in more fresh produce, to the physical layout of food banks, to client nutrition education.

▪ To assist our partners with capacity issues that prevent them from having or increasing their F2FB program.

This means we will be hosting more workshops in interested communities, further building out tools and guides for our partners, and continuing to address capacity within the hunger response network. We hope that you will join us!

Partnering With Agriculture, Nurturing Growth

As he reviews the agricultural outlook for 2016, Rob Adams, Agriculture Relations Specialist at Northwest Harvest, notes a few points with interest. “The current snowpack outlook for the state is at 115% of normal. This should prevent growers from pulling the water out of some fields to use in other fields that lack water. The current growing degree days (a heat index used by farmers to determine bloom timing and growth) is also slightly behind normal and way behind last year.”

The result, Adams suspects, is a better crop of ‘market seconds’ available at a reduced price to Northwest Harvest. Such abundance is not just a boon for those in need: Northwest Harvest staff faced with an overabundance of one product are able to share our bounty with those in neighboring states.

Adams recently made valuable connections by attending the Washington Horticultural Annual Meeting, the Cherry Institute Meeting, and the Pacific Northwest Vegetable Growers Meeting. At each, he also brought back valuable knowledge useful in the day-to-day operations of Northwest Harvest.

Based in Yakima, Adams is committed to the community he serves. A lifelong Yakima Valley resident, Adams farmed 10 acres of apples with his father during high school and later worked as a field representative for several local growers. His experience has provided critical insight into the lives of grower-partners around the state, allowing Northwest Harvest to add considerable diversity and depth to our distribution of fresh fruits and vegetables.

“Many of our clients have seen a reduction in their EBT service and are finding they are relying on our services to supplement the cut.”

—Maple Valley Food Bank, King County
EVENTS
WASHINGTON
Western | Central | Eastern

More events and up-to-the-minute details at: northwestharvest.org

SEATTLE MAGAZINE
BRUNCH RUN 5K
SATURDAY, APRIL 2, 7:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.
Seattle is all about good food and delicious drinks, so grab a friend and run, walk, or stroll the most beautiful 5K in Seattle on Saturday, April 2! Each participant will receive a Brunch Run t-shirt, Bloody Marys or mimosas, as well as brunch bites from Seattle area restaurants. Register at: www.seattlemag.com/events/brunch-run-registration

GIVEBIG
TUESDAY, MAY 3
Donate to Northwest Harvest during The Seattle Foundation’s giveBIG at seattlefoundation.org and a percentage of your gift will be matched. The online challenge is one day only, May 3!

CREATING A CULTURE OF HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR EVERYONE
With Keynote Speaker Sam Kass
FRIDAY, APRIL 22, 7:00 P.M. - BENAROYA HALL
Join Northwest Harvest and Sam Kass to discuss the intersection of Food and Health in our community. Sam Kass worked at the White House from 2009 to 2014, serving as President Barack Obama’s Senior Policy Advisor for Nutrition Policy, as Executive Director for First Lady Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move! campaign, and as an Assistant Chef. The White House announced his departure on December 8, 2014. In July 2015, Mr. Kass joined NBC News as a senior food analyst, charged with covering topics such as healthful eating, food trends, and food policy. See more about this event at northwestharvest.org.

GLOW RUN FOR HUNGER—SPOKANE
FRIDAY, MAY 6
Fluorescent face paint and glow in the dark gear turn this Spokane fun run for kids into the ultimate race to beat hunger. Join us and up to 1,000 elementary school kids on May 6!

BLUEGRASS & BEER FESTIVAL
SATURDAY, MAY 14
Seattle Beer Week celebrates with Bluegrass & Beer at Hale’s Palladium in Fremont. Ticket holders enjoy live music and beer samples, with proceeds benefitting Northwest Harvest. Tickets are $25 in advance or $30 at the door and available at northwestharvest.org/bluegrass-beer-festival.

TOP POT NATIONAL DOUGHNUT DAY
FRIDAY, JUNE 3
Join us as we celebrate National Doughnut Day! Top Pot cafes will be collecting food and cash donations to celebrate. If you can’t join us in person you can still donate $10 by texting “TOPPOT” to 80888. To find your closest Top Pot location, visit toppotdoughnuts.com.

CRUSH HUNGER—SPOKANE
THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 6:30 - 10 P.M.
Sample fantastic wines from across the globe and tasty bites from local food trucks. $45 per person; tickets available at northwestharvest.org/crush-hunger-2016.

SEATTLE MARINERS
FIGHT HUNGER
SATURDAY, JUNE 11
For 28 years, the Mariners have hosted the Fight Hunger event prior to an M’s game. Volunteers and staff collect food and funds from fans as they enter the stadium. This year the Texas Rangers come to town for the 7:10 p.m. game.

THANK YOU,
EVENT SUPPORTERS!
This year, Home Team Harvest brought in a total of 4.77 million meals. Joining us for our celebration were many friendly dogs, happy children, committed community members, and one gentleman who persevered even after his motorcycle broke down on the way to make his donation.

In Yakima and the Tri-Cities, Home Town Harvest raised 207,092 meals. In Spokane, it raised 323,063 meals.

What a year!

Hale’s “Sidekick” Ale Sales Supporting Northwest Harvest
Northwest Harvest is proud to partner with Hale’s Ales Brewery & Pub and KIRO Radio’s “Tom & Curley” show to launch Sidekick American Session Ale.

The ASA is inspired by two famous local sidekicks, Seattle’s own Tom Tangney and John Curley of KIRO Radio’s “Tom & Curley” show.

Proceeds of every case sold will be donated to Northwest Harvest, Washington’s own statewide hunger relief agency. “Sidekick” was launched on Friday, March 11 at Hale’s Palladium Performance Theater and is now available throughout the region.
Kids For Cans
Gathers Strength From Young Supporters

Each year, Northwest Harvest and KIMA partner to feed hundreds of families across the Yakima Valley through Kids for Cans. Yakima-area schools compete to bring in the most food and money between November and January. A ratio of pounds per student is calculated to ensure that large and small schools are treated equally. Finally, a winner is declared.

The winning school is presented with the traveling KIMA Kids for Cans trophy, to be displayed in their school from February through January of the following year. They also receive an appearance from KIMA-TV’s Alan Sillence at a school function of their choice.

For 2016, the schools collected just over 54,375 pounds, beating last year’s total by almost 12,000 pounds! The event will help Northwest Harvest provide more than 41,800 meals.

Whitney Elementary won this year’s challenge, with an average of 32.8 pounds collected per student. Congratulations to Whitney and a big thank you to all the participating schools!

“Clients and staff often swap recipes for different food products. We have recently introduced ground turkey as a healthy alternative to ground beef. It has been very enthusiastically embraced by our clients. They are excited to share this excitement as well as recipes with each other, including the health benefits they experience. It is very heartwarming to see such community in action among our food bank families.”

—South Whidbey Good Cheer Food Bank, Island County