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.

50 Years and Still Fighting
A message from Chief Executive Officer Shelley Rotondo

Northwest Harvest has been here for those in need since 1967. We have seen many changes, but the fundamentals of our work are the same: Let struggling families know they have a place to turn for help and that it is okay to ask for it. Let the community know they have the power to make a difference and they will give generously.

For fifty years, we have had the rare privilege of seeing the best of compassion, gratitude and community spirit. At no time of year is the spirit of giving as great as during the holidays. When we gather to celebrate, we are reminded of our blessings and want to share them. That kindness makes this season our busiest, most thankful time of year.

During its first year of operation, Neighbors in Need (as we were known then) provided food for over 70,000 people—44% of them children. They collected and distributed 15,000 cases of food, raised $23,765 to buy food, bought and distributed 1,200 cases of wholesale food, and involved about 1,000 volunteers in distributing food.

Today our network provides more than 2 million meals every month. More than half of those we serve are children and seniors, as 1 in 5 kids in Washington still don’t get enough to eat. We still collect and distribute donated food and raise money to purchase food in bulk, now providing 33 million pounds annually through a network of over 375 food banks, meal programs and high-need schools.

Our volunteers donated more than 103,000 hours of their time last year—a resource equivalent to 52 full-time staff members.

What have we learned in 50 years?
- Treat clients, donors and volunteers alike with dignity and respect. This philosophy has been embraced and supported for 50 years by the caring community which continues to support our mission.
- Community-based efforts often provide the best solutions. Our partnerships with other independent networks (Emergency Food Network, Rotary First Harvest, the Anti-Hunger and Nutrition Coalition, and our many partner food programs throughout the state) have positively impacted clients statewide. Thanks to a network of independent hunger relief agencies, clients have access to a wider variety of fresher, more nutritious food.
- Nutrition matters. The demand for nutritious food has increased significantly even in the last decade, as local food movements and the direct links between nutrition and health gained greater awareness. We believe healthy eating initiatives will continue to be a significant part of a long-term strategy to end hunger.

We have stayed true to our roots, mission and philosophy and that has served us well. Our giving community has done the rest. Thank you. May all the best of the season be yours.

See Northwest Harvest at work over the last five decades in photos from our archive included throughout this issue. We hope you enjoy this scrapbook view of our history. Thank you for making it possible!

Everyday Struggles of Hunger
Each year we cross the state, visiting hunger relief programs to hear directly from people who are struggling to feed themselves and their families. These compelling, personal stories are compiled into our report on the state of hunger in Washington, Focus on Food Security.

Look for our complete report in January. Previous reports are available at northwestharvest.org.

“Towards the end of the month, you make do. You try to arrange meals you’re going to have the last week of the month. It gets real, real tight. You don’t know what you’re going to eat. You deal with the scraps you have.”

—Tracey, Port Angeles

“It’s pretty much the last two weeks of the month. You get real creative in that last week. Cook what you got. It may not be what you want, and it’s not going to be what the doctor says [to eat].”

—Randy, Port Angeles

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Send Seasons Greetings to Brighten the Holidays for Those in Need

When you donate and send our beautiful holiday greeting cards to honor your loved ones, you help put nutritious meals on the table for our neighbors in need. It’s as simple, real and positive as that.

To learn more and place your holiday greeting card order today, go to: northwestharvest.org/greeting-cards or call Anne Salter at 206.923.7437.

“We have an older gentleman who visits Caritas weekly for our Bread and Produce service. He is in his second round of cancer, and this time it is terminal. We accommodate his dietary restrictions as best we can. His favorite item is canned fruit which is expensive and typically low in stock. Thanks to Northwest Harvest, we have been able to gift him with a surprise fruit basket to help with his diet and brighten his day.”

—Caritas Outreach Ministries, Spokane County
Millionair Club

Nearly one hundred years ago, the city of Seattle experienced an intense economic downturn. In the months after World War I, plummeting post-war demand for airplane manufacturing and shipbuilding cast thousands of people out of work. In those dire days, the Millionair Club Charity, or MCC, was founded to help those afflicted to find jobs and provide a good meal.

Surrounded by luxury developments in the Belltown neighborhood, the MCC remains a vital resource for those experiencing homelessness or struggling to re-enter the workforce. According to recent estimates, about 4,500 people in Seattle and King County are living unsheltered. Thousands more are sleeping in homeless shelters or living in transitional housing. And it’s not for lack of effort that these thousands are without homes. “It’s always amazing how hard it is to get out of that situation,” said Brent Herrmann, the Director of Food Programs at the MCC. “It’s so hard, and it takes so much dedication to do that.”

A long-standing Northwest Harvest partner, the MCC helps their clients by providing resources they need to become job-ready. Their supportive employment program provides food, showers, laundry service, work clothes, job training, licensing, housing and jobs through a temporary staffing agency—essential resources for people seeking re-entry into the workforce.

“If you are living on the street or living in a shelter, you do not necessarily have access to clothes that are appropriate for going even on a basic interview for general labor,” said Alexandra Comstock, the Director of Development at the MCC.

“And if you have not showered in a couple of days and your clothes are dirty, it’s noticed, and you’re not going to get that job. It’s a huge, huge challenge.”

Access to food is another frequent challenge for clients, especially near the end of the month as SNAP and other benefits run out. The MCC’s meal program fills this gap by serving an average of 350-400 restaurant-quality meals each weekday, including breakfast and lunch. The meals also create an opportunity for clients to enjoy the valuable human interaction they often go without.

“We want to thank them and want them to feel like they’re appreciated while they are here. So they get at least one positive experience per day,” notes Brent. “If you’re homeless, a lot of times people walk around you; they don’t want to make eye contact. All of our volunteers are trained to make eye contact and thank them for coming in.”

The meals program also provides sack lunches for clients who have successfully found work. All told, nearly 87,000 meals are served each year.

The MCC gets about 15% of their food from Northwest Harvest, including a consistent supply of produce that helps ensure vegetables will be served with every meal.

The value of the meals program cannot be understated. Sometimes a meal at the Millionair Club Charity is the catalyst to bigger things.

“I asked a guy, ‘What did you get out of coming here?’,” recalled Brent. “He said, ‘I came in here looking for a meal, and I left that day with a job.’ That sums up what we’re doing.”

Find out more about the mission of the Millionair Club Charity at millionairclub.org.

Advocacy: What’s Coming Up?

There are times when 33 million pounds of food per year just isn’t enough. Though statewide food banks and meal programs have come to rely on the 33 million pounds of fresh fruits, vegetables, proteins and staples from Northwest Harvest deliveries, many require additional staples that aren’t always available. For many, the independent Food Buying Service was a critical support, providing inexpensive bulk food for statewide food banks.

When Food Buying Services closed their doors in April, emergency food programs around the state faced a crisis. Longstanding, sustaining food purchases disappeared at a time when food bank lines are still at record levels.

With leadership from our staff and community, Northwest Harvest was able to step up and fill the gap. In July, Northwest Harvest SmartBuys Plus launched statewide with nearly 25 different products. Over the coming year, the number and variety of bulk buy products are expected to increase as we build out the new system.

For our partner network, the new system will make their work easier and more impactful. Many will receive SmartBuys Plus purchases bundled with their deliveries of free Northwest Harvest food. Purchases are also billed after receipt to help already-stretched food bank budgets in times of greatest need. Programs not part of the Northwest Harvest network will be served too, allowing the best use of resources in fighting hunger statewide. The program itself is run at cost, ensuring that food bank partners are paying only the cost of the goods, warehousing, and transportation and not a penny more.

“Wonderful fresh veggies and fruit from Northwest Harvest and local farmers had made a great difference on the tables of our clients. They look forward to the unexpected fruits fresh from the trees of Washington. Our senior population continues to grow. It is good to know that they are getting such nutritional food.”

—Brinnon Food Bank, Jefferson County
An Apple Story

Washington orchards are like the Hollywood of the fruit world. And in the Yakima Valley, apples have it all. So it’s a pretty sweet gig being a crisp and tangy Pink Lady like me. I’ve always known that I had something special to offer.

As harvest time approached, I dreamed of the day I would make my debut at the grocery store. Maybe I’d inspire a pie. Maybe I’d be paired with peanut butter for an after-school snack.

But after harvest, I found myself sitting in a box. Each of us was plucked from the tree, but only select apples were sent away to stores. Hundreds of us were left behind. We weren’t cosmetically perfect, but surely someone could see past our inconsistencies to the deliciousness inside.

I almost gave up and figured that I would rot in the bin. But that was not the end of my journey. I was added to a box of uniquely designed apples. We were trucked off to a warehouse, stored overnight in a refrigerator and then put in a large, sanitary room with bright lights and smiling faces.

Smiling faces! Folks young and old, wearing shirts printed with “volunteer”, gathered around our bins. They treated us like gems and packed us accordingly. Bruised or damaged fruit did not make the cut, of course. The rest of us knew that we must be going somewhere even more special than a store.

After the smiling faces decamped, we were boxed back up. Trucks from around the state arrived and picked up a few boxes each. We were bound for glory.

After the trip, I was set out with the other apples. It was a nice enough place with a humble collection of shelves with dry goods, a modest refrigerated section and some well-arranged produce aisles. When people started to arrive, they seemed relieved to come in, as if they had been waiting a while.

There were all sorts of folks, and they chose their foodstuffs carefully. The onions dwindled, recipes were exchanged and still I was waiting, hoping I wouldn’t be overlooked. Finally, a woman came by. She was picking her items with the utmost care, as if calculating every meal. She held the hand of a little girl.

They came to the apples and paused. The little girl tugged at her mother’s skirt and pointed. The mother picked me up and handed me down to her daughter. She let go of her mother’s hand so she could hold me in both of hers.

Her dimples came out as her face broke into the happiest of smiles. It was then I knew for sure that I had been sent to an extra special place.

Ways to Give

DONATE
Whether your gift is cash, stock or loose change, your generous support makes a big difference. With our purchasing power, a gift of just 67 cents can provide a nutritious meal for a family of three!

END OF YEAR GIVING
Traditionally, the dark, wet and cold winter months are the busiest time of the year at food banks. Making an end of year gift will help put food on the tables and in the school backpacks of the most vulnerable among us.

SET UP A RECURRING GIFT
Making a monthly or quarterly gift is easier on your budget and is a great way to provide sustained support for Northwest Harvest throughout the year. A $10 monthly gift will provide a meal a day for the entire year! To set up a recurring gift, visit northwestharvest.org/recurring giving or call our Development Team at 206.923.7480.

“Our clients are very interested in fresh produce, often more than dry goods. They love the potatoes, apples, onions, oranges—we have no problem giving those items out every week in the community.”

—VOAWW - Bitter Lake, King County
**EVENTS**

**WASHINGTON**

**Western** | **Central** | **Eastern**

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

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**THE KHQ HOMETOWN HARVEST FOOD DRIVE**

**FRIDAY, DEC. 2, 5 A.M. - 6:30 P.M.**

We are excited to once again partner with Albertson’s and Safeway for this year’s event! KHQ will broadcast live from four Spokane store locations; however, the food drive will take place at all Spokane Albertson & Safeway locations all day Friday. For more information and locations, visit northwestharvest.org.

**NBC RIGHT NOW HOMETOWN HARVEST FOOD DRIVE**

**FRIDAY, DEC. 2, 5 A.M. - 6:30 P.M.**

Albertsons and Safeway stores in Central Washington will be selling pre-packed bags of food and collecting cash from shoppers. Your favorite NBC RIGHT NOW personalities will broadcast live from three select Albertsons and Safeway locations in Yakima and Tri-Cities all day Friday. For more information and locations, visit northwestharvest.org.

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**KIMA KIDS FOR CANS - YAKIMA NOVEMBER THROUGH JANUARY**

Yakima area schools compete in a food and fund drive challenge to benefit Northwest Harvest. For more information, email Community Engagement Manager Sheri Bissell at SheriB@northwestharvest.org.

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**SEATTLE CHOCOLATES **

**#CHOCOLATE GIVES**

**NOV. 1 THROUGH DEC. 31**

From Nov. 1 through Dec. 31, Seattle Chocolate Company will donate a serving of fresh food to someone in need for every jcoco 3oz bar sold, every post of the hashtag #chocolategives on social media AND every Seattle Chocolates holiday chocolate bar purchased. More info at chocolategives.com.

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**THANKSGIVING IN WINE COUNTRY “TASTE TO FIGHT HUNGER”**

**NOV. 25-27**

Enjoy wine from 40+ of the best wineries WA has to offer for this holiday weekend of fun! All participating Yakima Valley wineries collect funds to benefit Northwest Harvest. For more information, visit northwestharvest.org.

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**SPECIAL THANKS TO A HUNGER HERO**

Northwest Harvest wishes to express our deepest gratitude to Betsy Robertson for fifteen years of amazing support through her work on KING 5 Home Team Harvest. Betsy’s tireless efforts as a champion of this remarkable event have been critical to raising awareness of hunger in our community and to providing more than 30 million meals to those in need statewide. Betsy has recently moved on from her position at KING 5 to a different role in service to the community at American Red Cross. We know she will continue her positive impact on all of us and wish her the very best in this new chapter. Thank you, Betsy!
Everyday Struggles of Hunger (continued from page 1)

“I get $122 a month in food stamps. I have a little apartment. Trying to eat off of $122 for 30 days is not easy. I can—it’s not easy, but I try the best I can. I supplement myself with places like [Cherry Street Food Bank]: try to help out and stuff. That’s how I get by. I’m on Social Security.”

—Derek, Seattle

“I can’t buy what I want any more. I have to buy what I need. I worked my whole life, then things got easy—we both worked. When he died, that cut off a big piece of my income. I’d been there 18 years, then another year later, no job. I’m now on Social Security. Now I have to buy what I need, not what I want. That’s a big, big transition when you get older. It’s a total regeneration of your life.”

—Eileen, Battle Ground

“The biggest thing here with the food bank in Port Angeles is... You get to go in and keep your dignity. Does anyone want to come here? No. None of us want to come here, but here, you walk in, you feel like a real human being. That’s why I started volunteering here: I was so impressed with how helpful and decent everyone was.”

—Charles, Port Angeles

“I live alone and I’m getting old. I’m starting to get confused. I don’t remember things anymore. I have Parkinson’s. I call for help and people think I’m drunk—they hang up on me. And I try to tell them I have a speech problem, but I have nobody.”

—Starring, Seattle

“I have had many incidents of homelessness and unemployment, but I am also a person who possesses two bachelor degrees. Being poor can happen to anybody.”

—Colleen, Walla Walla

“We had a young woman come for the first time. Her family had just moved here. The husband had just started a job but hadn’t gotten a check yet. Someone told her about us as they were short on money to buy food. She was so happy with the food we were able to give them. Said as soon as they could they would donate back to us.”

—South Whidbey Good Cheer Food, Island County