

Need Abstract

1 in 4 children in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho live in a household that struggles with hunger and food insecurity. That is approximately 108,871 children in the service area. It is reported that in Spokane County, more than 25,000 children go regularly without a meal. 45.6% of children in household with incomes below the poverty line admit to food insecurity. Research has shown that children suffering from food insecurity have increased trouble focusing in school, score lower on standardized exams, are more likely to be absent from school, have delayed social skills, and display behavioral problems. Hunger in children also heightens the risk of making impulsive decisions that can lead to early pregnancy, incarceration, and other life-altering events. Many times the only consistent meals children have are those provided by school lunch programs. These children depend on school lunches to make it through the week, but on weekends and during the summer, they often go hungry.

Project Proposal

Second Harvest is a charitable food distributor in the Inland Northwest and has been operating for 44 years. Second Harvest has provided more than 304 million pounds of food to households and communities struggling with hunger. 2 million pounds of food is distributed every month across 250 partner foods banks, meal centers, and other programs that assist in feeding hungry people throughout communities. Second Harvest serves 21 Eastern Washington counties and 5 Northern Idaho counties. Second Harvest feeds 55,000 people each week who are affected by poverty and hunger.

Back in 2013, Second Harvest introduced a new program called Bite2Go. The program is used to fill the nutritional gaps for children in need in the region. Bite2Go provides school children with a food kit for the weekend. The Bite2Go kits include a healthy selection of food that is kid-friendly and nonperishable. Shelf-stable milk, juice, cereal, fruit cups, beef lasagna, and mixed dried fruit are just a few examples of the nutritious foods children will find in their Bite2Go kits. To confirm the kits' nutritional value, a sample menu is provided to be reviewed by Washington State University Extension of Spokane County. Every Friday, a school staff member at participating schools will discreetly put a Bite2Go kit into the backpacks of students in need. Bite2Go kits will stabilize and improve the lives of children in need. Bite2Go supplies food that gives hungry children the necessary nutrients over the weekend so they can arrive to school focused and ready to learn.

Second Harvest purchases the food and packing materials which costs an average of \$4 per kit. In order to maintain the program, operating dollars are used to cover costs. Partner charities and other collaborating fundraisers are only used to reimburse Second Harvest. Bite2Go directly benefits more than 3,000 children at 64 schools in just Spokane County, and recently the Bite2Go program has been expanding to include middle and high school students (Bite2Go XL). It is anticipated in the upcoming year that the number of children served will increase to at least 3,500 in Spokane County alone. As Bite2Go grows, Second

Harvest has welcomed many partner organizations to assist with sponsoring the cost of the kits and volunteers. As the program expands, Second Harvest is continually closely at work with local schools to find ways to get increased information out about Bite2Go, and help as many children and families as possible.

A \$3,000 grant from Evangelical Lutheran Church of America will provide 750 Bite2Go kits to children in need. New support for Bite2Go from your generous donation will give children in need a better chance at excelling in the classroom and growing into healthy adults who will succeed in the workplace and give back to their communities. A grant of any sum will assist with Second Harvest staff in keeping pace with the rapid expansion of the Bite2Go program.