

Second Harvest hosts fundraiser kick-off in Atchison

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Second Harvest Community Food Bank, which offers programs to residents in 19 counties across Northeast Kansas and Northwest Missouri, including Atchison, hosted its annual Fund Drive Kick-off luncheon at Paolucci's on Tuesday afternoon.

“The Annual Fund Drive is an extremely important time for us to encourage our community to help us build hunger-free communities, especially with summer coming when schools will be closed – as well as to help us meet the ongoing needs for families and seniors,” Second Harvest Executive Director Chad Higdon said in a release.

The kick-off luncheon highlighted the organizations work to build hunger-free communities, including its Backpack Buddies program, which last school year provided nutritious food resources to more than 4,000 children across its service area each weekend, and its Summer Feeding program, which feeds children between 1 and 18 years old during the summer. Second Harvest provided 75,000 meals to children across its service area through the Summer Feeding program in 2015.

“People are usually a little taken back by the numbers,” Higdon said. “Nearly 54,000 children, families and seniors suffer from food insecurity in Northwest Missouri and Northeast Kansas. We know around 20 percent of these are children.”

In 2015, Second Harvest distributed 5.9 million pounds of nutritious food, the equivalent of 4.9 million meals. These meals were delivered to individuals and families that would not otherwise have had access to nutritious foods.

During the luncheon Tuesday, Higdon announced the organization's fundraising goal for 2015 of \$550,000, of which almost \$140,000 has been raised to date. The fundraiser will run through April.

“Each year, we get a chance to talk about building hunger-free communities, and we see lives changed as people come to this event,” said Gale Stowers, director of development for Second



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Zach McNulty/Atchison Globe Executive Director of Second Harvest Chad Higdon (left) addresses the crowd at the organization's annual fund drive kick-off meeting at Paolucci's on Tuesday.

Harvest. “They see the need and join us in our mission. We want people to become an active part of our organization and join us in serving our neighbors. The Annual Fund Drive is a key part of building excitement toward that involvement.”

Second Harvest joins in the efforts of more than 100 partner agencies, working together to fight hunger in Northwest Missouri and Northeast Kansas. The donations that Second Harvest receives are put directly to work helping provide food resources to Members. For every \$10 that is donated to Second Harvest, 30 meals can be provided.

“We’re committed to efficient and responsible use of our resources, with 97 percent of all donations going directly to programs, food acquisition and distribution,” Higdon said. “With these donations, Second Harvest is able to support its four initiatives: Nourishing Families, Nourishing Children, Nourishing Seniors and Nourishing Neighborhoods.”

To learn more about Second Harvest, please visit www.ourcommunityfoodbank.org/.