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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Channel One, Second Harvest Heartland, and partners announce Make Hunger History initiative with goal to cut hunger in half for all Minnesotans by 2030

ROCHESTER, Minn.—Make Hunger History, a plan initiated by [Second Harvest Heartland](#) and championed by [Channel One Regional Food Bank](#), among other statewide partners, offers a bold goal to cut hunger in half for all Minnesotans by 2030.

The Make Hunger History initiative will unite communities, policymakers, and business leaders to reduce hunger today by increasing access to emergency food and prevent hunger tomorrow through policy and partnerships, tracking shared progress along the way.

Minnesotans visited food shelves a record seven million times in 2023, a clear indicator of the rising need in the state and the result of sky-high grocery, gas and utility prices coupled with the expiration of pandemic-era emergency relief programs. Channel One Regional Food Bank and Second Harvest Heartland, along with an extensive network of local food shelves and hunger relief partners, is challenging community leaders to find the necessary urgency and creativity to tackle the issue of hunger once and for all.

“We have long been asking questions of how to reinvent food banking to meet the increase in need and believe this is our answer,” said Virginia Witherspoon Merritt, Channel One Regional Food Bank executive director. “We will rely on lawmakers, hunger relief partners, and our communities to help us rise to the occasion to end the status quo of food insecurity with this impactful statewide collaboration.”

“This is a defining moment in our mission to end hunger,” said Allison O’Toole, CEO of Second Harvest Heartland. “We’re not settling for short-term fixes anymore. Through new connections, advocacy and insights, we’re working together towards systemic change and a future where every Minnesotan has the food they need to thrive.”

To make hunger history, the Make Hunger History partners will work with neighbors to:

- **Power up partnerships to get more of the right food, right where it’s needed most** – with new mapping capabilities to identify hunger hot spots, new delivery and pick-up methods and prioritizing in-demand produce and proteins.
- Reimagine the emergency food delivery network to serve more neighbors – the network will lean into mobile distributions and community identified pick-up sites, increase delivery efficiencies and keep food local whenever possible.
- Make hunger less common by delivering one-on-one services – Second Harvest Heartland’s new Care Center team will proactively work with neighbors to find grocery help and connect them with other economic and social services.

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- Increase economic stability across the region through coalition building and policy wins – root causes of hunger like access to affordable housing, transportation and healthcare will be addressed by a coalition made up of food shelves and other nonprofits, community members and leaders, creating a shared legislative agenda to ensure every Minnesotan's basic needs are met.
- Track our progress to do more of **what's working, less of what isn't** – with a clear, measurable goal to reduce Minnesota food shelf visits long-term, Channel One Regional Food Bank, Second Harvest Heartland, and partners will track progress publicly using new data sets and metrics that allow the food bank to track food insecurity with more accuracy and urgency.

Through operational changes, new community partnerships, and active engagement in advocacy and policy change, Second Harvest Heartland, Channel One Regional Food Bank, and partners are building on past efforts and leveraging these new connections and insights to Make Hunger History.

For anyone interested in getting involved, there are several ways to make a difference, including donating to a local food shelf, volunteering for a local hunger relief program, or lending a voice to statewide advocacy efforts. Learn more at 2harvest.org for advocacy and helpingfeedpeople.org for local volunteer opportunities.

Interview requests may be directed to Jessica Sund, director of development and communications, at jessicasund@channel-one.org or 507-424-1729.

About Channel One Regional Food Bank

Channel One Regional Food Bank, a member of Feeding America, strengthens food access and builds healthy communities. Channel One operates food programs to serve local and area needs such as: a food bank, a food shelf, mobile pantries, Childhood Hunger Programs, Kitchen Coalition and the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP). Channel One Regional Food Bank mobilizes organizations, volunteers, and donors to serve the network of over 160 nonprofit programs that provide food for children, adults, and families in need. Channel One serves 14 counties across southeastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin. For more information, call 507.287.2350 or visit helpingfeedpeople.org.

About Second Harvest Heartland

Second Harvest Heartland is a leading hunger-relief organization. In partnership with more than 1,000 food shelves and hunger-relief programs in Minnesota and western Wisconsin, we provided 128 million meals to neighbors last year. We also help families enroll in food assistance and provide prepared meals for people who need more than groceries. Second Harvest Heartland is a leader, convener and voice in hunger-related policy discussions. Learn more at 2harvest.org.

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