

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Samantha Solberg
(605) 261-1138, ssolberg@2harvest.org

KITCHEN COALITION CELEBRATES DISTRIBUTING 5 MILLION PREPARED MEALS MADE BY COMMUNITIES, FOR COMMUNITIES

Second Harvest Heartland's prepared meal program works with restaurants and caterers to provide meals that are a critical part of the organization's mission to end hunger

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. -- Kitchen Coalition, a program of Second Harvest Heartland, reached a huge milestone—the prepared meals program has distributed 5 million meals in four years.

For far too many people facing hunger, receiving groceries only solves part of the problem. Through a network of local restaurants and caterers, Kitchen Coalition's partner chefs turn food bank ingredients into nutritious, freshly prepared meals. Then, trusted nonprofits get those meals to neighbors on a predictable schedule.

Kitchen Coalition currently distributes about 25,000 meals each week and has 20 partners in the restaurant and catering business—half of which are BIPOC-owned—and 100 nonprofit meal distribution partners. The donation-funded program employs the equivalent of 70 full-time culinary workers and has invested more than \$22 million in local businesses.

Since its founding in the early days of the pandemic, Kitchen Coalition has provided nourishment to individuals and families with inconsistent access to a kitchen, people with challenges caused by physical mobility issues or illness, or those who are managing a crisis, challenge or time of transition.

Kitchen Coalition reaches seniors facing health challenges like Cris, a resident of Pathways on the Park, an independent living community in St. Paul. "I'm being treated for cancer right now," she said. "The two meals I get from Kitchen Coalition [each week] are perfect."

The meals received by Pathways on the Park residents are made by Create Catering, a small business in Northeast Minneapolis. "With Kitchen Coalition, we get to engage with community organizations that we otherwise wouldn't have," said Philip Dorwart, chef and owner of Create Catering. "Our meals vary every week depending on what's available which I think our distribution partners really like."

Loretta, another Pathways on the Park resident who receives Kitchen Coalition meals made by Create Catering, also faces challenges to accessing food due to a mobility issue. "The meals help me a lot," she said. "I have a foot problem, so I can't do a lot of standing and walking to the grocery store is hard. So, these really help."

Following the success of Second Harvest Heartland's Kitchen Coalition program, other Feeding America food banks have launched Kitchen Coalition programs of their own, including Channel One Food Bank in Rochester, MN, and Great Plains Food Bank in Fargo, ND.

ABOUT KITCHEN COALITION

Kitchen Coalition serves up culturally connected, freshly prepared meals because we know that not everyone facing hunger has the home, health or ability to use the groceries our food bank offers. In 2023, Kitchen Coalition provided 1,212,165 freshly prepared meals at locations across the region, in partnership with more than 100 community organizations and 20 kitchens. Learn more at 2harvest.org/kitchencoalition.

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